



Masterpieces: Great Paintings of the World in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

By Gilian Shallcross

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Mixed from egg whites and vegetable tints, water and soot, oils and rare minerals and applied to bone, wood, metal and canvas, the plastic and expressive properties of paint have stirred artists and their admirers throughout history. The holdings of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston have grown into a formidable appraisal of one of humankind's oldest and most diverse forms of artistic expression--from its first acquisition, Washington Allston's "Elijah in the Desert" (1818), to recently acquired works by Edgar Degas, Georgia O'Keeffe and Takashi Murakami--and now constitutes one of America's largest permanent collections. The first version of *Masterpieces* has long been a favorite among museum-goers and art lovers. This new edition expands on the scope of the old, adding new acquisitions and featuring 150 master works by artists from Asia, Europe and the Americas--from delicate Song-dynasty handscrolls to jewel-like images of medieval piety, scenes of mythic drama, austere still lifes, sensitive portraits, grand landscapes and jarring Modern visions. Featuring artists such as Rembrandt, El Greco, Copley, Monet, Sargent and Picasso, anonymous masters of medieval Europe and Asia and living artists of uncompromising vision such as Gerhard Richter and David Hockney, this book is a celebration of the possibilities of paint.

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