

Lent 1

## Museum Observation #1

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While most know of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the main museum is not the only collection the MET has to offer. The Cloisters, located in Fort Tryon Park, NYC, is an offshoot of the MET that focuses solely on medieval European architecture and art. This museum is housed in a medieval-style building at the top of a large, rocky hill, with a winding road that brings you to the entrance – or, if you fancy some exercise, a long, rather steep staircase cut into the side of the hill. The museum's collection includes medieval art, tapestries, sculptures, even a few tombs and a garden at the center. The building itself could be said to be an exhibit, with its stone walls and winding staircases. The Cloisters is smaller than the MET itself, yet still holds an incredible amount of history and art within its walls.

As part of the MET, the Cloisters is afforded quite a large social media presence, as well as interactive elements that may not be as easily found in smaller museums. The Cloisters has its own page on the main MET website, which not only provides hours and an address for the museum, but also lists upcoming events, a map and history of the museum, links to accessibility options, and more. At the bottom of the page are links to the MET's various social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

On this website, you are also able to search for individual exhibits, which come with photographs, the same description as what is located on the wall plaque, a description of the exhibit or artifact itself, and the specific audio file used in the museum's audio tour for that particular object. In this way, a patron can experience an exhibit from home, complete with the audio file used in audio tours on the actual premises.

The screenshot shows the homepage of The Met Cloisters. At the top, there's a red navigation bar with links for "THE MET", "Visit", "Exhibitions", "Events", "Art", "Learn", "Join and Give", and "Shop". Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads "Visit / Plan Your Visit / The Met Cloisters". The main title "The Met Cloisters" is prominently displayed. To the left, there's a section for "Hours" and "Address", followed by a red "Buy Tickets" button. To the right, there's a photograph of a cloister garden with a woman sitting on a ledge. The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar with various icons and a search bar.

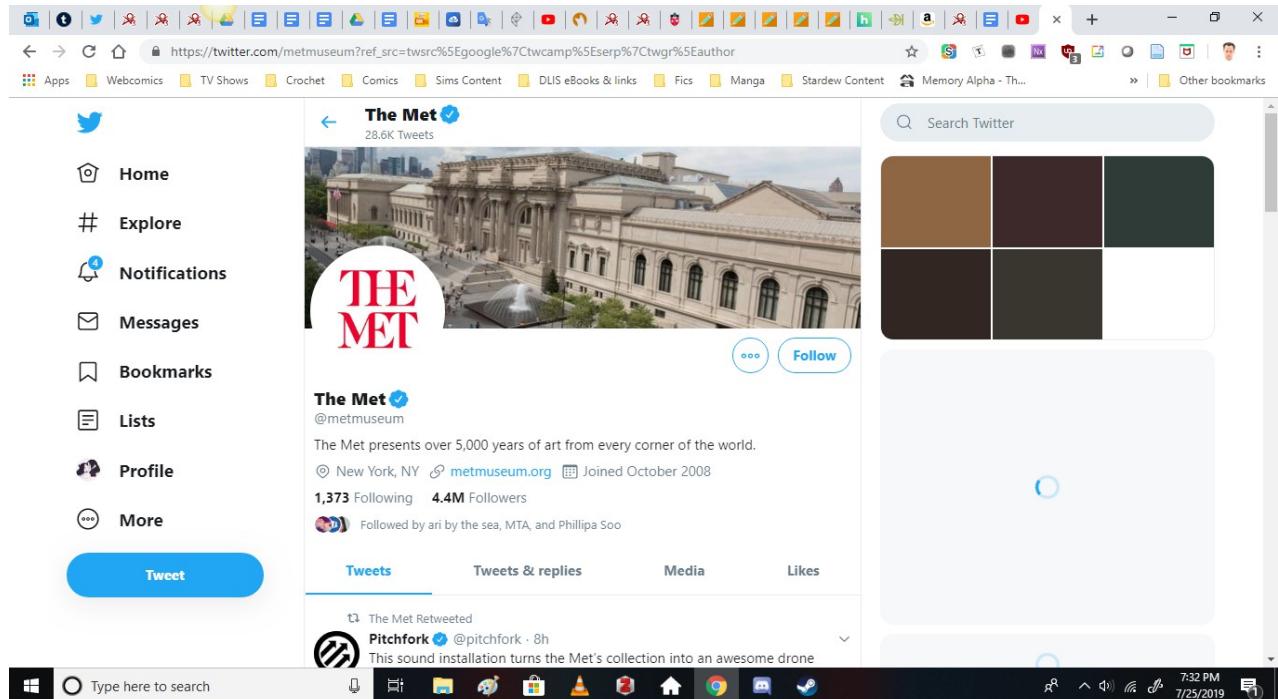
*Screenshot of MET Cloisters homepage*

The screenshot shows a page from the Metropolitan Museum of Art website dedicated to the Tomb of Ermengol VII, Count of Urgell. The title is "Tomb of Ermengol VII, Count of Urgell, ca. 1300–1350" and it is described as "Catalan". The text provides historical context about the tomb's construction and its current location. To the right, there's a large image of the tomb itself, which is a stone relief sculpture set into a wall. Below the main image, there are smaller thumbnail images of other parts of the tomb. The bottom of the page shows a Windows taskbar.

*Screenshot of page for the Tomb of Ermengol VII, Count of Urgell*

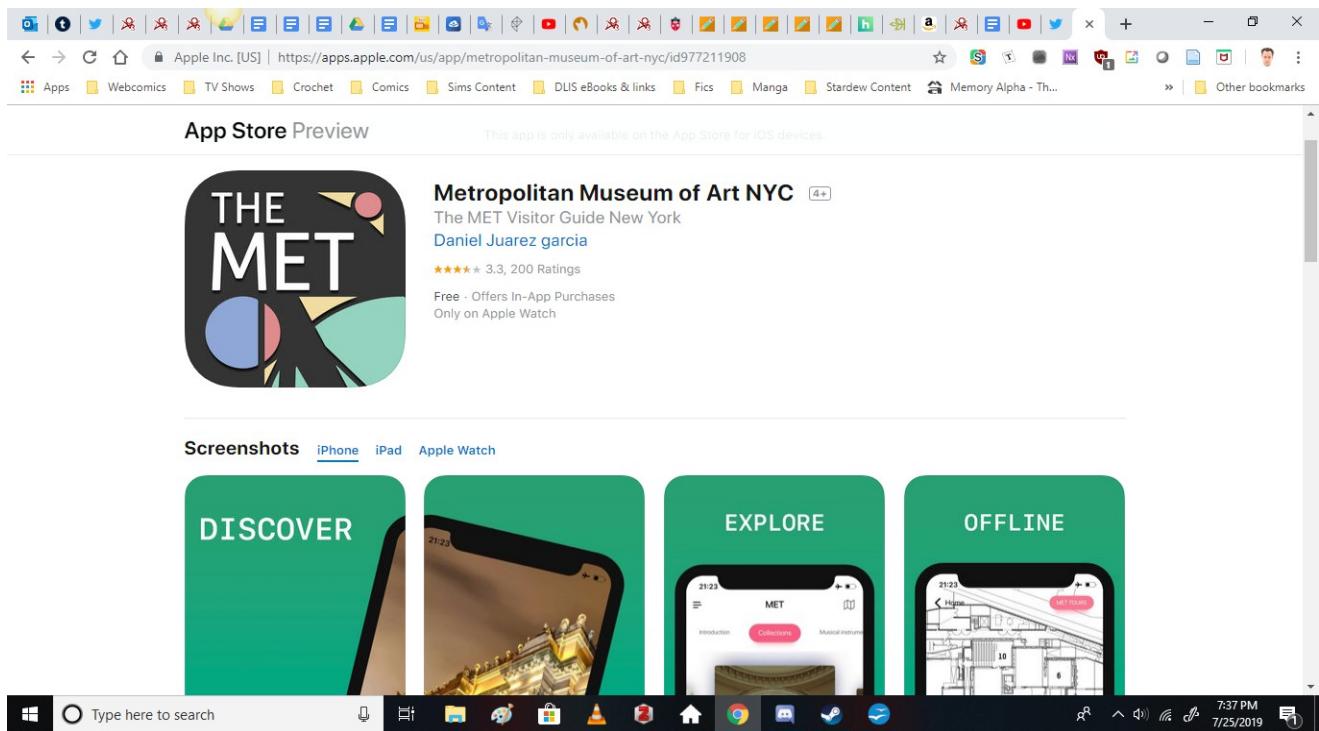
When it comes to social media, the MET has accounts on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest, all of which can be accessed from the museum's website. Unfortunately, as

the Cloisters is a part of the MET rather than a museum on its own, it does not have official individual social media accounts, instead having news and pictures posted through the MET's main accounts. There are some unofficial accounts on Twitter for the Cloisters specifically, but none are officially associated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



*Screenshot of the MET's official Twitter page*

On top of all of these social media accounts, the MET also reaches out to patrons through a phone app, which is available both for iPhones and Androids. This app includes a map for the main MET building on Fifth Avenue and the Cloisters, as well as features that assist patrons in discovering what they are most interested in at these museums. It is a free app, released in 2015, and gives patrons the ability to decide on what they want to see, where they can see it, and how they can get there before they even step foot in a MET museum.



*Screenshot of the MET app in the Apple Store*

As said in the NMC 2016 Horizon Report, “[m]obile devices are playing a major role in facilitating more inclusive learning experiences” (2016), and the MET is definitely an example of a museum rising to use this resource to make its collections more accessible. However, though it is a part of the MET in name, the Cloisters itself could use more specific programs to draw attention to its stunning collection; or, at least, its own section of the app, and its own social media accounts. The Cloisters suffers the unique situation of being part of a large, well-funded museum, while also technically being small and less well-known. Perhaps, with more specific off-site connections provided for the Cloisters, it could see a greater amount of visitors, both to the museum itself and also to its collections.

## References

“Metropolitan Museum of Art NYC”. App Store. Accessed July 13, 2019.

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“Mobile Content and Delivery”. *NMC Horizon Report: 2016 Museum Edition*, (2016): 22-23.

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<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/472387>