

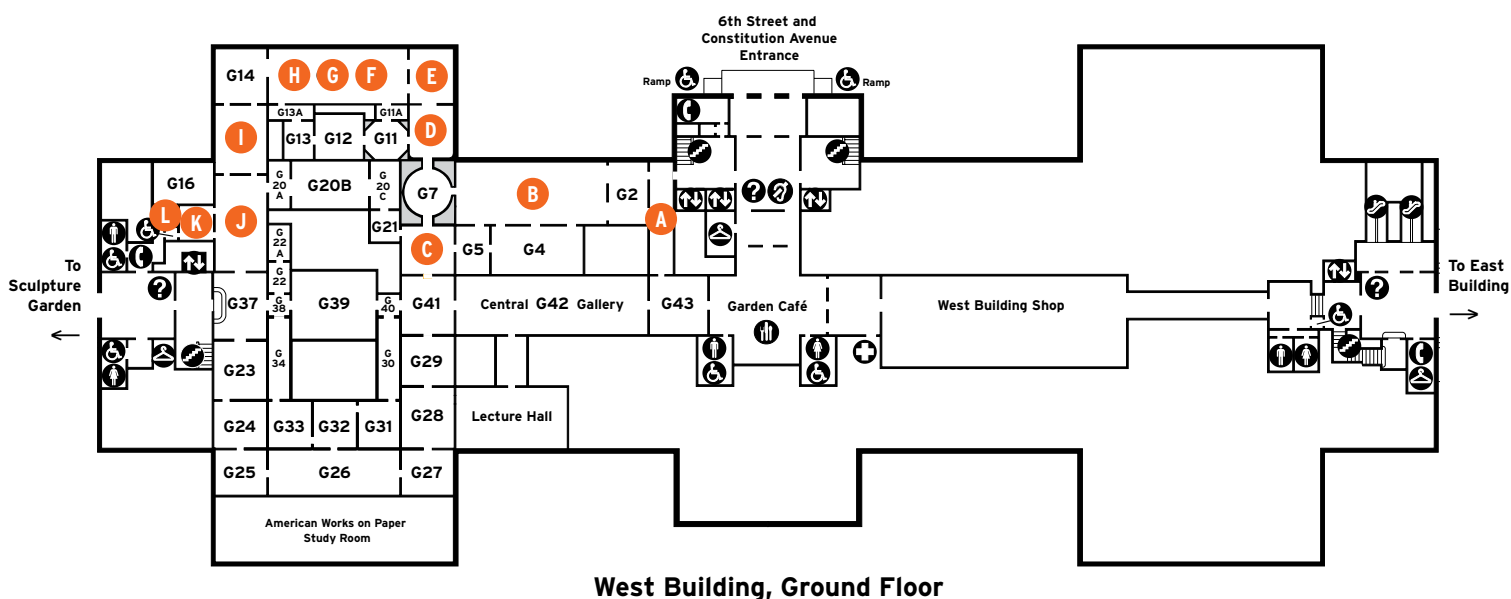
LESS THAN AN HOUR?

West Building Sculpture Highlights



A brief overview of some of the not-to-be-missed works in the National Gallery of Art sculpture collection, all located in the West Building Ground Floor galleries. Information about the works may be found on the reverse of this sheet. Please note that some objects may be temporarily off view.

- A** Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Diana of the Tower*, conceived 1892/1893, cast 1899, **Gallery 1**
- B** Edgar Degas, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen – wax version*, 1879–1881, **Gallery 3**
- C** Maurice Sterne, *Sitting Figure*, 1932, **Gallery 6**
- D** Pietro Magni, *The Reading Girl (La Leggitrice)*, model 1856, carved 1861, **Gallery 8**
- E** Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Thérèse-Françoise Potain Roland, Wife of the Sculptor*, c. 1782/1783, **Gallery 9**
- F** Adriaen de Vries, *Empire Triumphant over Avarice*, 1610, **Gallery 10**
- G** Angelo de Rossi, *The Agony in the Garden*, c. 1700, **Gallery 10**
- H** Attributed to François Duquesnoy, *Christ Bound*, 1620s, **Gallery 10**
- I** Andrea del Verrocchio, *Putto Poised on a Globe*, probably 1480, **Gallery 15**
- J** Giovanni Paolo Negroli, *Helmet (burgonet) in the Form of a Dolphin Mask*, 1540/1545, **Gallery 19**
- K** French 13th Century, *Pyx in the Form of a Dove*, c. 1220/1230, **Gallery 18**
- L** South German 15th Century (Swabian or Franconian), *The Holy Kinship*, c. 1480/1490, **Gallery 17**



West Building, Ground Floor

Information →

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- A Augustus Saint-Gaudens**
Diana of the Tower,
conceived 1892/1893, cast 1899
Gallery 1
The strong outline of Saint-Gaudens' design for a weathervane for Madison Square Garden would have stood out atop New York City's then highest building. The sculptor's model (and mistress) posed as the Roman goddess of the hunt, whose strength and grace made her an appropriate symbol for a sports venue. Saint-Gaudens cast smaller versions—such as this one—of his popular sculpture to sell.
- B Edgar Degas**
Little Dancer Aged Fourteen—wax version, 1879–1881
Gallery 3
One of the many young, poor girls who danced for the Paris Opera, Marie van Goethem stands firmly in pose, head high, arms tautly stretched behind her. Degas captures her struggle for dignity within the marginal existence of a “ballet rat” in this wax sculpture, which he dressed in doll clothes. See other Degas dancers in this room and in gallery 4.
- C Maurice Sterne**
Sitting Figure, 1932
Gallery 6
A block of Greek island marble—reportedly found in the Tiber River in Rome—inspired Sterne to carve this calm, self-contained figure. Idealized in the manner of classical statuary, the work also reflects the artist's modern sensibility through its simplified forms and streamlined curves.
- D Pietro Magni**
The Reading Girl (La Leggitrice),
model 1856, carved 1861
Gallery 8
A tear on her cheek, the reader is moved by the book balanced on the back of the woven cane chair. The volume once bore a poem foretelling Italian freedom, represented by the medallion of Garibaldi around the figure's neck. Simple garments identify her as an ordinary girl rather than the classical heroine typical for exhibition sculpture at the time.
- E Philippe-Laurent Roland**
Thérèse-Françoise Potain Roland, Wife of the Sculptor, c. 1782/1783
Gallery 9
Because moist clay lends itself to subtle modeling before it is fired to become terracotta (baked clay), sculptors used it for finished works as well as preliminary models. Here Roland gave sensitive attention to his wife's features and heightened her grace by turning her face to the left and dipping her neckline on the right.
- F Adriaen de Vries**
Empire Triumphant over Avarice, 1610
Gallery 10
Here the figure of Avarice, a bag of spilled coins at her feet, is subdued by Empire. With allies unwilling to bankroll his military plans, Hapsburg emperor Rudolf II must have admired this symbolic bronze not only for its dynamic twisting figures, but also for the triumph it afforded him in art that was denied him in life.
- G Angelo de Rossi**
The Agony in the Garden, c. 1700
Gallery 10
Angels, their forms hammered from the back into high relief, attend the suffering Christ in the garden. In the background amid delicate low-relief palms and clouds, Judas betrays him to Roman soldiers. The workmanship of this copper relief achieves a refinement that was more typical of works in precious metals, such as gold or silver.
- H Attributed to François Duquesnoy**
Christ Bound, 1620s
Gallery 10
Downcast eyes and flinching body convey Christ's suffering before the Crucifixion. His precarious pose follows the curve of the single piece of elephant tusk from which this powerful ivory is carved. Delicate details—of fingernails, veins, undercut hands, vestiges of a crown of thorns, paper-thin loincloth, even minuscule teeth—are also quite astonishing.
- I Andrea del Verrocchio**
Putto Poised on a Globe, probably 1480
Gallery 15
With cheeks puffed out and hair blowing, Verrocchio's chubby infant balances on one foot in a pose that invites examination from multiple viewpoints. Modeled over a metal armature, the figure is fashioned of clay that was then allowed to dry, rather than fired in a kiln like terracotta. This work may have been a study for a bronze fountain figure.
- J Giovanni Paolo Negrolì**
Helmet (burgonet) in the Form of a Dolphin Mask, 1540/1545
Gallery 19
Such deluxe armor was intended for ceremonial use, but its manufacture from hammered steel in the best armor workshop in Italy lends it battle-ready authenticity. The surfaces are decorated with crisp foliage and fantastic hybrid creatures, probably meant to suggest the wearer's ferocious power. Rivet holes on the back right side would have held plumes.
- K French 13th Century**
Pyx in the Form of a Dove,
c. 1220/1230
Gallery 18
Suspended above a church altar and intended to hold consecrated bread for the mass, this pyx symbolized the dove of the Holy Spirit. Such vessels were made from only the most precious materials—gold, silver, or fine gilded and enameled pieces from Limoges, France, as in this version.
- L South German 15th Century (Swabian or Franconian)**
The Holy Kinship, c. 1480/1490
Gallery 17
Commentaries written in the Middle Ages gave Mary's mother, Anne, two other daughters from two later marriages. In this splendidly preserved altarpiece, those women flank Mary, Jesus, and Anne and are surrounded by all the husbands and exuberant children. Anne's pensive expression suggests that she alone understands Christ's future.