

## Museums Morph Digitally

### *The Met and Other Museums Adapt to the Digital Age*



*The digital museum – Léo Caillard*

For the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met), a turning point came in 2011. Down went the signs imploring visitors to stow<sup>1</sup> their cellphones. The Met revamped<sup>2</sup> its website, tailoring<sup>3</sup> it for viewing on smartphone screens. The museum was not only allowing visitors to use their mobile phones while browsing<sup>4</sup> the artworks, but encouraging it.

The digital experience was embraced and meant to enhance the physical experience of exploring the museum. The trend has only accelerated since, at the Met and across the museum world. At first glance, it might seem like a capitulation, giving in to the virtual enemy when museums are so essentially physical spaces. [...]

“You want the way people live their lives to happen in the museum,” said Carrie Rebora Barratt, the Met’s deputy director for collections and administration.

Museums are being redefined for a digital age. The transformation, museum officials say, promises to touch every aspect of what museums do, from how art and objects are presented and experienced to what is defined as art.

[...] As Paola Antonelli, [...] curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art, puts it, “We live not in the digital, not in the physical, but in the kind of minestrone<sup>5</sup> that our mind makes of the two.”

Museums, Ms. Antonelli insists, have an important role to play in helping people explore and understand the emerging hybrid culture. “It’s this strange moment of change,” she explained. “And digital space is increasingly another space we live in.”

*Adapted from <http://www.nytimes.com> , October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014*

<sup>1</sup> To stow = ranger

<sup>2</sup> To revamp = modifier

<sup>3</sup> To tailor = reconfigurer

<sup>4</sup> To browse = regarder

<sup>5</sup> Minestrone = soupe

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