With the implementation in 2007 of The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s internal digital asset management system, the Image Library became responsible for tens of thousands of existing digital images documenting the Museum building, its collections, exhibitions, activities, and events. The Image Library had by this time begun to actively evaluate and select related analog assets for digital preservation. The associated tasks of organizing, cataloguing, and providing access to this growing digital archive inspired the development of the Image Library’s Visual History Project.

As part of the Visual History Project, the Image Library initiated collaborations with ARTstor and the Visual Resources Collections, Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, to digitize and catalogue a selection of unique 35mm slides from the Library’s collection. The resulting images and metadata from these collaborations, along with additional direct digital photography produced by the Museum’s Photo Studio, will be made available through ARTstor’s Digital Library to over 1,300 educational institutions in 42 countries and growing. IFA/NYU will receive a portion of the images for the university’s image database. The Image Library also plans to make images from the Visual History Project more widely available on the Museum’s new website in a section devoted to a visual history of the institution.

**COLLECTIONS**

**The Museum Visual History Collection**

*Museum Views* documents the changing interior and exterior spaces of the main building on Fifth Avenue and The Cloisters in Fort Tryon Park. Some of the highlights of this collection are 350 historic images of the Arms & Armor Department and The Cloisters, which were selected in preparation for their upcoming one-hundredth anniversary in 2012 and seventy-fifth anniversary in 2013, respectively. Additional highlights include photographs of the Junior Museum, the Robert Lehman Collection, and the Islamic Galleries.

*Special Exhibition Gallery Views* showcases exciting walk-throughs of popular and important exhibitions from 1970–2004, from each curatorial department.

**The William Keighley Collection**

Following a lucrative career as a film director, William Keighley (1889–1984) worked as a photographer and amateur art and architectural historian, documenting art and architecture in Western Europe, the Near East, and New York. From 1958 to 1983, Keighley donated approximately 75,000 original slides to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. These unique 35mm Kodachrome slides, organized by Keighley into sets and accompanied by his original lecture scripts, were used by Keighley, as well as museum curators and educators, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art for public lectures. In his gift Keighley encouraged the continued educational use of the collection. Selections from five sets, described here, were among those selected to be digitized and catalogued.

**Pilgrimage Roads to Santiago de Compostela** documents the routes traveled by medieval pilgrims to the Romanesque cathedral in northwest Spain. The set was photographed around 1960 and includes unique examples of medieval architecture, architectural details, and sculpture.

**Parisian Houses**, photographed in 1975, features architecture and architectural details of private mansions constructed in and around Paris during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These images include details of interiors, gilded wall panels, ceiling paintings, and important collections of decorative arts.

**Architecture in Austria** and **Architecture in Spain** document the architectural heritage of each country with a specific focus on religious and royal buildings in major cities and regions.

In 1967–1968, Keighley was given the opportunity to photograph the collections and gallery spaces of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, including The Cloisters. Many of the galleries have since changed and these visual records serve to document the Museum’s growing collection and how it was displayed more than forty years ago.
COLLABORATIONS

Image Library
Develop digital image cataloguing guidelines and train cataloguers
Assess and select 35mm slides to be digitized
Clean, bind or rebind, and relabel selected 35mm slides
Create inventory of selected 35mm slides
Create unique digital image file name structure
Deliver 35mm slides and inventory lists to ARTstor
Receive and review digital images created by ARTstor
Create organizational arrangement for digital images in DAM
Ingest digital images into DAM
Deliver digital images to IFA for cataloguing
(Keighley Collection only)
Review cataloguing from IFA (Keighley Collection only)
Enter IFA cataloguing into digital images in DAM
(Keighley Collection only)
Catalogue digital images in DAM (Museum Visual History Collection only)
Catalogue rights metadata for all digital images in DAM
Prepare and deliver existing digital images and metadata to ARTstor
Publicize new digital image collection internally

ARTstor
Digitize 35mm slides as JPGs and TIFs, in raw and post-produced formats
Publish digital images and corresponding metadata to the ARTstor Digital Library
Publicize new digital image collection
Submit reports to Image Library on collection usage

IFA/NYU Graduate Students (Keighley only)
Assign original cataloguing of digital images to graduate students within their specialty
Catalogue digital images according to Image Library cataloguing guidelines and contracted schedule

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to:

ARTstor (www.artstor.org)

Visual Resources Collections, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/research/vis_resources/index.htm)

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William Keighley Slide Collection. Photograph © William Keighley - Copy Photograph © The Metropolitan Museum of Art


Back cover: Fifth Avenue Façade. Photographed in 1906. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art