

HORSES

ART CONNECTIONS > Recommended for all ages

Saddle up and get ready to find three different horses in the Museum. Horses have been popular subjects in art for a very long time—some cave paintings of horses are 17,000 years old! Gallop to your first horse in **Gallery 172**.

Mounted ruler (so-called Horseman) (Gallery 172)

Look in the cases in the middle of the gallery. Can you find a statue of a man on horseback? The Benin Kingdom was a powerful territory in West Africa. In Benin, the *oba* (king) owned special things like horses and bronze statues.

- > Look closely at the horse. What details do you see? Does it look like a real horse? Why or why not?

Think of the size of a horse and a man in real life. Here, the man is as big as the horse! Horses in Benin were small, like ponies, but the man's size might also mean that he was very important. Another clue to his importance is his elaborate clothing and headdress.

- > What details, decorations, and embellishments do you see?

To learn even more about this object, check out the big touchscreen in the gallery!

Travel upstairs to Gallery 255.

Horse with Head Lowered by Edgar Degas (Gallery 255)

Find the tiny bronze horse sculpture by Edgar Degas. Degas used wax so that he could work on his sculptures, changing them again and again. Imagine creating a sculpture out of wax—like a soft candle! After Degas died, his family brought the wax sculptures to a foundry (metal shop) to be made in bronze like this one.

- > Look at the texture of the horse. What do you notice?

Degas painted and sculpted many horses and ballet dancers, focusing on their graceful movement.

- > Think about the way a horse moves. What do you think this horse will do next?

Imagine that you are Degas. In what position would you sculpt your horse? Running? Jumping?

*Head to
Gallery 251
to find your
next horse!*



Museum of Fine Arts Boston



ABOVE: HENRI REGNAULT, *AUTOMEDON WITH THE HORSES OF ACHILLES*, 1868. OIL ON CANVAS. MUSEUM PURCHASE WITH FUNDS DONATED BY CONTRIBUTION.
 FRONT: MOUNTED RULER (SO-CALLED HORSEMAN), 16TH CENTURY. COPPER ALLOY. ROBERT OWEN LEHMAN COLLECTION;
 EDGAR DEGAS, *HORSE WITH HEAD LOWERED*, MODELED BETWEEN 1881 AND 1890, CAST AFTER 1919. BRONZE. BEQUEST OF MARGARETT SARGENT MCKEAN.

Automedon with the Horses of Achilles by Henri Regnault (Gallery 251)

Now for the largest horses in the Museum! Meet Xanthos, the dark brown horse, and Balios. Imagine you were trying to hold on to these horses. What would you do to calm them down?

These horses had a special power—they could predict the future! They know that their owner, the Greek hero Achilles, is heading into battle and that he won't survive. They don't want him to go, so they are fighting against the chariot driver, Automedon.

- > What do you see that tells you they are scared?
- > What do you think they'll do next? Will Automedon be able to control them?

Think about all the horses you found today. What differences and similarities did you notice?

There are many other horses throughout the Museum! Be on the lookout as you walk through the galleries to see what you can find.



After your visit MAKE YOUR OWN

Create your own painted horse at home using your hand! Check in with your adult first. Then carefully cover the palm of your hand with paint and place it down on a sheet of paper, keeping all your fingers spread. Your thumb will be the horse's head and your four fingers are the legs. Wash off the paint from your hands and get to work on your horse. Use paint and markers to add other details—don't forget the tail! Create a whole stable of horses and think about the colors you'd like and details to add. Will they have saddles and riders? Will they be standing or running?



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