

# SHOW GUIDE

 **MCC  
THEATER**

special musical event

# WALK ON THROUGH: CONFESSIONS OF A MUSEUM NOVICE

written & performed by **GAVIN CREEL**  
directed by **LINDA GOODRICH**



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## ACTIVITY

Create a list of things (people, places, works of art, music, movies, etc) that inspire you.

### OVERVIEW

**WALK ON THROUGH: CONFESSIONS OF A MUSEUM NOVICE** is a new musical written and performed by Gavin Creel, initially commissioned by The Met. This show is a personal exploration of the relationship between art, artists, and audience. Creel delves into his own insecurities, musings, and reflections on his journey as an artist as he brings us along on his first visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. This musical probes what art does for the creator versus the consumer, where inspiration comes from, what is considered art, and who is considered to be an artist.

When Creel was approached with this commission he was faced with a major obstacle, he had never stepped foot into The Met. As someone who had made his career in the performing arts, he decided to live in that truth and document the experience of his first visit. As many people do, Creel quickly realized the immense vastness of the museum. Rather than being overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of collections and mediums awaiting exploration, the Met became a playground of inspiration, inspiring the creation of 17 brand-new songs that would become the score for WALK ON THROUGH.

**GAVIN CREEL** is a Tony Award winner for his performance as “Cornelius Hackl” in HELLO, DOLLY! starring Bette Midler. Most recently toured the country in the Grammy-winning revival of INTO THE WOODS, Creel made his Broadway debut in THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE, for which he received his first Tony nomination. He then went on to star in the Broadway productions of LA CAGE AUX FOLLES, HAIR (Tony Award nomination), THE BOOK OF MORMON, SHE LOVES ME, WAITRESS, and INTO THE WOODS. Gavin received an Olivier Award for his portrayal of “Elder Price” in the London production of THE BOOK OF MORMON and also appeared on the West End in MARY POPPINS, HAIR, and WAITRESS. On television, Creel has performed a PBS solo concert special with “Stars on Stage,” appeared in the premiere episodes of Ryan Murphy’s anthology series “American Horror Stories” and starred alongside Julie Andrews in “Eloise at the Plaza” and “Eloise at Christmastime.” As a songwriter, Gavin has released three original albums: GoodTimeNation, Quiet, and Get Out and is workshopping material for a new musical theatre piece that will debut in early 2024 at his alma mater, The University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance. Creel was the recipient of a Hermitage Artist Retreat Writing Fellowship, a featured composer at The O’Neill National Musical Theatre Conference, and a co-founder of Broadway Impact, the first and only grassroots organization to mobilize the nationwide theater community in support of marriage equality.

## ACTIVITY

Think about a place that you visited for the first time and what your sense of belonging was. Write a short poem/story or draw a sketch inspired by it.

### TIMELINE

## NOV 2023

World Premiere Off-Broadway Production slated for MCC Theater’s Susan & Ronald Frankel Theater.

## DEC 2022

Industry showcase introduces WALK ON THROUGH to leading producers, investors, and influencers at Signature Center Theatre

## JUL 2022

Residency and developmental workshop takes place at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT

## JAN 2022

Gavin receives a writing fellowship at Hermitage Artist Retreat in Englewood, FL

## OCT 2021

Premiere concert presentation debuts at The Met Museum

## JUL 2021

A writing retreat takes place at the innovative Two Bridge space in Irvington, NY

## JAN 2019

Gavin receives a commission from The Met Museum’s MetLiveArts Department

## ABOUT THE MET

The Met contains 1.5 million works of art, covering almost every tangible medium imaginable ranging from artifacts to portraiture, to photography. But what happens to art that isn't able to be captured in a museum? Musical theater performance, or any live, performance-based art, is ephemeral and only exists in the moment of creation. As Creel makes his way through the galleries, he grapples with the relationship between impact and permanence.

Art gets created through various processes, some personal and some transactional. Much of European classical art was made to either document history and religion or was paid for by royal and wealthy patrons. Patronage is "support, encouragement, privilege, or financial aid that an organization or individual bestows on another." Throughout the majority of history, "art" was a trade/skill used to communicate to the masses and to unify culture. In our modern context, the definition of art has taken on a philosophical and individual meaning of personal expression that has become more difficult to define. This is where the question arises: Is something made exclusively for transactional purposes still considered art?

## COMMISSIONING PROGRAM AND LIVE ARTS

### COMMISSION

In this context, an artist commission is when a producer or institution gives an artist some combination of funding, time, space, and resources to develop new work.

"The Met's Department of Live Arts commissions and presents new works of performance: music, movement, sound, and related hybrids. This singular body of work furthers The Met's commitment to living artists, deepens connections between audiences and works of art, and introduces untested modes of performance."

### THE PROCESS

- A MetLiveArts curator will cultivate a relationship with a performance-based artist
- The pairing will meet and develop a concept for a commission
- The Met will fund the initial development of the project with a culminating presentation at the museum
- In the case of WALK ON THROUGH, this production has since grown past the commission to have a life of its own

## SELECTED ARTWORKS

information provided by The Met's online catalog

### **JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES BY LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER (DIED 1553)**

"The Jewish heroine Judith presents the severed head of the Assyrian general who besieged her city, having seduced and then beheaded him with his own sword."

### **ROMAN AND GREEK SCULPTURE**

Wealthy Romans during the peak of the Roman Empire were fascinated with the education and culture that the Greek Empire was able to achieve. Roman artists were commissioned to re-create many famous Greek statues. Some Roman statues we have today are distinctly Roman in aesthetic (realistic, rougher, more masculine), while others are exact replicas of the Greek (more idealized, softer, more beautiful).

*Marble Statue of a Youthful Hercules, AD 69-96*

*Marble Statue of Herakles Seated on a Rock, 1st or 2nd century AD*

*Marble Torso of a Seated Man, 1st or 2nd century*

*Marble Head of an Athlete ca. AD 138-192*

*Marble Portrait of the Emperor Antonius Pius ca. AD 138-161*

*Marble Head of Herakles, 1st century AD*



## ACTIVITY

Discuss what is considered art. Should anything be able to be called art? Does something have to have a viewer to be art?

## ACTIVITY

Share in groups about a time when you viewed a work of art (movie, TV show, visual art, theater) that impacted you in some way, or, made you want to create/partake in the medium.



### **SALVATOR MUNDI BY ALBRECHT DÜRER**

This depiction of the Religious figure Jesus has visible and detailed sketching where you can see the drawing under the layers of paint around the hands and face. Dürer was a large figure in the German Renaissance.

### **AUTUMN RHYTHM NUMBER 30 BY JACKSON POLLOCK (DIED 1956)**

A large mural painting using the “drop” technique Pollock popularized. “This work’s title suggests not only the month in which he painted it (October), but also an alignment with nature’s constant flux.”

### **SMALL VSEVOLOD MIKHAILOVICH GARSHIN BY ILIA EFIMOVICH REPIN (DIED 1930)**

Repin created a series of portraits of his contemporary artists. This painting is of Garshin, an acclaimed writer who shared his concern for contemporary political and social problems.

### **THE STORM BY PIERRE-AUGUSTE COT (DIED 1883)**

The source of inspiration for this painting is largely debated. Theories range from the French novel Paul and Virginie by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre to Daphnis and Chloe by the ancient Greek writer Longus.

From portraits, and marble, to splatterings of paint, inspiration can take any shape. Art Historian and author of *How Art Can Change Your Life*, Susie Hodge claims that simply taking the time to really see art will change how it’s perceived. She suggests that keeping an open and simple approach will allow for natural reactions to bubble up. “It can just be fun. It can just be something that tickles my senses and grabs me.” She believes that however art makes you feel is correct. Embracing the whole experience of the work, including your reaction to it, is part of the process. Like Creel in this show, starting from a place of truth provides room for discovery, which can lead to creation, which leads to inspiring others.

