

The New Criterion

Features

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A conversation with Philippe de Montebello

by [Hilton Kramer](#)

The director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art talks with TNC

Editor's note: This summer, Hilton Kramer, accompanied by The New Criterion's Executive Editor, David Yezzi, interviewed the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philippe de Montebello, in his office overlooking Central Park in Manhattan.

THE NEW CRITERION: You are coming up on your thirtieth anniversary as director of the Metropolitan Museum. Clearly, the museum world has changed dramatically during your tenure. What would you say is the most pronounced difference between when you began and now?

PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO: Well, I was appointed in May of 1977, and I would have to say it's a different world, to the point that, knowing everything I know, were I offered the job again I'm not sure I would take it. Let me look at it on two levels: the degree to which it has bec ...

Hilton Kramer is the editor and publisher of *The New Criterion*, which he founded with the late Samuel Lipman in 1982.

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