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## GETTY MUSEUM ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF A FIRST-CENTURY THEATER MASKS RELIEF



*Relief with Theater Masks, first century AD. Roman. Marble. 24 x 31 cm (9 ½ x 12 ¼ inches).*

LOS ANGELES – The J. Paul Getty Museum announced today the acquisition of a two-sided first-century AD Roman marble relief depicting theater masks.

"We are delighted to be able to add this important Roman relief showing theatrical masks and a satyr's head to the Museum's collection," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "It is an excellent example of the type of decor found in first-century AD Pompeian luxury villas on which the Getty Villa is based. It will significantly enhance the newly reinstalled second floor gallery that is dedicated to 'The Roman Villa.'"

The rectangular two-sided relief is carved on one side with two theater masks, one representing a bearded man accompanied by a scepter, and the other a youthful male with a lyre. On the reverse, a mask sculpted in low relief depicts a balding satyr before a thyrsus and basket, which are symbols of Bacchus. These types of relief sculptures stood on pillars and decorated the courtyards and gardens of Italian luxury villas. Although the artist is not known, well-established Roman workshops in Italy produced these highly accomplished and decorative pieces. Only a few examples of this type of decorative relief are on display in museums in the United States, including the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The sculpture is first documented before 1921 in the private collection of John Postle Heseltine (1843-1929), who was a noted collector of old master drawings and a trustee of the National Gallery in London. In 1924, it was sold at auction in London to Parisian dealers Bacri frères. In 1942 it was sold to Henry de Montherlant, a noted novelist, playwright, and essayist, and member of the *Académie française*. The Getty acquired it at auction from the descendants of Henry de Montherlant. The work has never been on public view or published.

The acquisition will go on display at the Getty Villa, which is undergoing a reinstatement to be completed in April 2018.

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**The Getty Foundation** fulfills the philanthropic mission of the Getty Trust by supporting individuals and institutions committed to advancing the greater understanding and preservation of the visual arts in Los Angeles and throughout the world. Through strategic grant initiatives, the Foundation strengthens art history as a global discipline, promotes the interdisciplinary practice of conservation, increases access to museum and archival collections, and develops current and future leaders in the visual arts. It carries out its work in collaboration with the other Getty Programs to ensure that they individually and collectively achieve maximum effect. Additional information is available at [www.getty.edu/foundation](http://www.getty.edu/foundation).

**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

**Visiting the Getty Villa:** The Getty Villa is open Wednesday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed Tuesday and most major holidays. Admission to the Getty Villa is always free, but a ticket is required for admission. Tickets can be ordered in advance, or on the day of your visit, at [www.getty.edu/visit](http://www.getty.edu/visit) or at (310) 440-7300. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 3 p.m. Groups of 15 or more must make reservations by phone. For more information, call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish); (310) 440-7305 (TTY line for the deaf or hearing impaired). The Getty Villa is at 17985 Pacific Coast Highway, Pacific Palisades, California. Same-day parking at both Museum locations (Getty Center and Getty Villa) is available for \$15 through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program.

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