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## **J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM ACQUIRES RARE FIRST-CENTURY CARVED GEM**



### **New Object Joins Other Recent Acquisitions, Which Include an 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Portrait, Two 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Drawings, and Two Vases From Antiquity**

**LOS ANGELES** - The J. Paul Getty Museum recently acquired at auction a rare first-century carved gem depicting a seated nude woman and standing nude man, likely the goddess Aphrodite and her lover, Adonis.

The gem—made of sard, a reddish-brown translucent quartz—is exquisitely engraved. The identity of the artist is uncertain, although the scholar Marie-Louis Vollenweider has suggested it is the work of Aulos, one of the finest engravers working in the circle of the imperial court of Emperor Augustus in the late first century B.C., who signed several other gems of related style. The beautiful gilt mount dates from the eighteenth century.

"The gem's superb quality, impressive size, and excellent condition will enhance our holdings of engraved gems, one of the strengths of the Museum's antiquities collection," said Timothy Potts, director of the Getty Museum. "It will go on view in the Villa's reinstated galleries alongside other engraved gems, including our amethyst Apollo attributed to the engraver Solon and the engraved gem of the head of Demosthenes signed by Apelles."

The gem has a long and interesting provenance. It first appeared in Paris in the seventeenth century in the well-known collection of Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774) and passed through several owners, including the Duke of Marlborough, Winston Churchill's ancestor, before being acquired from Kurt Walter Bachstitz, an art dealer in the Netherlands, for Hitler's proposed museum in Linz, Austria. The gem was recovered by the Allied military in 1945 and, following U.S. policy, restituted to the Netherlands. The Netherlands transferred it to the heirs of Bachstitz in 2016.

It joins several other significant recent Museum acquisitions: another Roman gem of the first century B.C. engraved with the image of *Herakles Carrying the Cretan Bull* signed by the artist Moschos; *Portrait of the Sculptor Roland* (1797), a painting by François-André Vincent (1746 - 1816); *A Shaded Avenue*, a drawing of about 1774 by French artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732 -1806); *A Regatta on the Grand Canal*, a drawing from about 1778 by Italian artist Francesco Guardi (1712 -1793); and two late Classical style black-glaze vases from Southern Italy.



***Gem engraved with Herakles Carrying the Cretan Bull (first century B.C.)***

Another important ancient gem has been acquired as a generous gift from Getty Villa Council members Jonathan Kagan and Ute Wartenberg Kagan. The jasper stone is finely engraved with the hero Herakles subduing the Cretan Bull, one his Twelve Labors. It is especially important for bearing the signature in Greek letters of the engraver, Moschos. The gem has been known since the nineteenth century and was previously in the English collections of Alfred Morrison, Charles Newton-Robinson, and Alexander Ionidies.



***Portrait of the Sculptor Roland (1797)***

*Portrait of the sculptor Roland, 1797*, by **François-André Vincent** (French, 1746 – 1816), is an extremely well-preserved portrait of the sculptor Philippe-Laurent Roland (1746-1816), Vincent's friend and academic colleague. Vincent was the most prominent rival of Jacques-Louis David and one of the greatest portraitists of the late eighteenth century. Painted in 1797 and exhibited in the 1798 Salon in Paris, the painting displays the cultivated sobriety, restraint, and simplicity that are hallmarks of French male portraiture in the Revolutionary era. Vincent conveys a congenial sense of warmth, sympathy and vitality toward the sitter, testifying to their close friendship and easy familiarity.

“Roland is so vividly present here, his hand, face, and head so powerfully modeled, that the viewer is instantly engaged by the painting, which at the same time could not be more exquisitely refined in its execution, in its limited but highly nuanced palette, and in the cool, atmospheric light that gently suffuses the scene,” says Potts. “French portraits from the 1790s very rarely come to market and this picture will make a commanding addition to our neoclassical galleries.”

The Getty is one of very few museum collections in the United States able to present a major portrait by Vincent, great examples of which can be seen in such European collections as the Louvre in Paris, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, or the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.



***A Shaded Avenue (about 1774)***

The Getty Museum has acquired one of Jean Honoré Fragonard's greatest surviving landscape drawings, a large wash composition depicting an allée of trees at the country home of one of his patrons, Bergeret de Grancourt. It was likely made following the artist's trip with Bergeret to Italy in 1773-74, when they stayed at Bergeret's estate on their return to Paris.

Created as a work of art in itself, the monumental drawing is one of Fragonard's most accomplished graphic conceptions. A plunging perspective focuses the composition on a small patch of brilliant sunlight at the end of a majestic avenue of large trees, the entire scene an essay on the abstract qualities of light and shadow. Exploiting all the possibilities of his liquid ink medium with its varying densities of wash, the artist plays with

the silhouetting and fragmentation of the leaves and branches as they seem to move in the breeze. The tree trunks form a natural arcade that dwarfs the figures who play a small role amid the grandeur of their setting.



***A Regatta on the Grand Canal (about 1778)***

The Getty has also acquired a large drawing by Francesco Guardi, a leading *vedutista*, or view painter, in eighteenth-century Venice. The pen and ink drawing represents the annual boat race (*regatta*) on the Grand Canal. The view is taken looking north-east from the Palazzo Foscari, a building prominently situated at a sharp bend in the canal, and from which can be seen the longest straight stretch of the waterway

towards the Rialto Bridge, just visible in the center. This represents one of the views most sought-after by Grand Tourists to eighteenth-century Venice, especially when the scene – as here – incorporated the activity of the regatta.

Guardi captures the spectacular beauty of Venice, with its dazzling light and fresh atmosphere, the character of its architecture, and the busy activity of the gondolas and spectators. The work reveals Guardi's mature style, in which figures are created with rapid squiggly lines and set within a clear conception of wide-open space. An painting with the same composition is in the collection of the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon.



### ***Two Black Glazed Ancient Vases***

The Museum has also received the generous gift of two Classical Greek vases, donated to the Getty by Constance Jordan of Altadena, California. The vases, both made in a South Italian workshop around 400 B.C., are covered in black glaze but otherwise undecorated. One is a kylix (drinking cup), and the other is an oinochoe (wine pitcher). Both objects are excellent examples of well-known types of ancient vessels and will be well-studied at the Getty Villa alongside other works in the collection.

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**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades.

**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, but will be open Tuesdays December 27, 2016, and January 3, 2017. Admission to the Getty Villa is always free. 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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