

The Herculaneum Women

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE LARGE AND SMALL HERCULANEUM WOMEN COME TO THE UNITED STATES FROM DRESDEN FOR THE FIRST TIME



Unknown
Large Herculaneum Woman
Roman, Herculaneum, A.D. 40-65
Marble
Object: H: 198 cm (78 in.)
Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen. Dresden, Germany.
VEX.2007.1.1
Hm 326



Unknown
Small Herculaneum Woman
Roman, Herculaneum, 30-1 B.C.
Marble
Object: H: 181 cm (71 1/4 in.)
Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen. Dresden, Germany.
VEX.2007.1.12
Hm 327

**Two Iconic Statues from the Ancient Roman City of Herculaneum
Make their American Debut at the Getty Villa**

The Herculaneum Women and the Origins of Archaeology
The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa,
July 12 – November 5, 2007

The Herculaneum Women
The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa,
November 8, 2007 – October 13, 2008

LOS ANGELES—Traveling abroad for the first time since World War II, the Large and Small Herculaneum Women—two of the most celebrated ancient Roman sculptures—will be on view at the Getty Villa from July 12, 2007 through October 13, 2008 thanks to a rare, extended loan from the Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany.

The statues were found in 1711 in Herculaneum, the ancient Roman town on the Bay of Naples which, together with nearby Pompeii, was destroyed by the A.D. 79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius. They have been centerpieces of the Dresden antiquities galleries since 1736.

On view from July 12 through November 5, 2007, ***The Herculaneum Women and the Origins of Archaeology*** is a collaborative exhibition between the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, and the Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden,

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focusing on the modern history of the statues including their discovery, archaeological context, and role in the development of archaeology as a scientific discipline. The sculptures are presented with more than a dozen items from the Getty Research Institute collections, including sketchbooks, prints, and rare books of the 16th through 19th centuries, that illustrate the rediscovery of the ancient town of Herculaneum.

Following this exhibition, the *Herculaneum Women* will be installed in the permanent Women and Children in Antiquity gallery at the Getty Villa from November 8, 2007 through October 13, 2008. There they will be shown with similar sculptures of women from the Getty Museum's permanent collection.

The visit of these famous female statues is the latest manifestation of the longstanding partnership between the Getty and the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and the first to take place at the Getty Villa.

"As a result of our collaboration and friendship with the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, we are afforded the rare opportunity to present these two iconic works of art to an American audience," said Michael Brand, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Referring to the statues' origins, he added, "The history of these statues closely links them to the Getty Villa, which is modeled after the ancient Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum, and thus ultimately owes its existence to the discovery of these two statues."

Martin Roth, director general of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, said, "We are delighted to have the two Herculaneum Women from our collection on display at the new Getty Villa for the next year. In this most appropriate setting these important statues will be the focus of a special exhibition for the first time in the almost 300 years since their discovery."

As the first significant finds from Herculaneum, the Dresden statues heralded the beginning of the archaeological exploration of the ancient Vesuvian cities. More than two decades after the chance find of the statues, excavations at Herculaneum resumed in 1738 and 10 years later at Pompeii. Over time the initial practice of random mining for ancient treasures was replaced by more systematic methods. The unprecedented challenges of excavating complex urban sites led to the development of archaeology as a new scientific discipline.

The Large and Small Herculaneum Women (dating respectively from A.D. 40-60 and B.C. 30-1) are thought to have been originally displayed on the stage facade of Herculaneum's

Roman theater. Roman in origin, the women are modeled after earlier Greek sculptures made during the late fourth century B.C. The same two body types were extremely popular choices for portrait statues of women throughout the Roman Imperial period and the Mediterranean world. Among the more than 300 full-scale ancient copies known today, the two Herculaneum statues from the collection of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden are the most renowned and personify the Large and Small Herculaneum Woman types. With their idealized figures, pose, and drapery style, these images were intended to provide role models of feminine virtues such as *decorum* (decency), *modestia* (modesty), and *pulchritudo* (beauty, elegance). Portrait statues of private women, in particular, would combine the idealized bodies with individual faces in order to convey those virtues.

Their distinctive hairstyle is called the melon coiffure—which came into vogue in the second half of the fourth century B.C., when the Greek models of the statues were created. While their date is generally accepted, the identity of the women is still debated. Goddesses, muses, priestesses, poets, or other distinguished female citizens are among the interpretations that have been proposed by scholars and archaeologists, but a satisfactory conclusion has yet to be reached as to who these women were and why they remained so popular throughout the ancient world for nearly six centuries.

Following the exhibition, the statues will be displayed for an extended period of time in the Villa's permanent collection gallery Women and Children in Antiquity with sculptures that are related to the Herculaneum Women. First among them is the prized portrait of the Roman empress *Faustina the Elder* in the Large Herculaneum Woman type (A.D. 140-160). Two fragmentary statues of non-imperial females combine the body and drapery of the Small Herculaneum Woman type with individual portraits and the distinctive hairstyles of their periods (c. A.D. 100-130). Also on view will be the *Head of a Young Woman from a Grave Monument* (c. 320 B.C.), an original Greek sculpture featuring the so-called melon coiffure that is found on the Herculaneum Women from Dresden.

The exhibition is co-curated by Jens Daehner, assistant curator of antiquities for the J. Paul Getty Museum, and Claire Lyons, collections curator for the Getty Research Institute. A companion book containing new research on the Herculaneum Women by Dresden and Getty curators will be published by Getty Publications (available in fall 2007).

RELATED EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

All events are free, unless otherwise noted. Tickets are required. For tickets and information, please call 310-440-7300 or visit www.getty.edu. All events are at the Getty Villa in Malibu.

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LECTURES

The Theater of Herculaneum and the Origins of Archaeology

Discovery of the buried theater at Herculaneum played a pivotal role in the history of archaeology. The structure's well-preserved remains resulted in spectacular sculptural finds. Christopher Parslow, professor of classical studies at Wesleyan University, surveys early excavations at the site.

Sunday, July 29, 3:00 p.m., Auditorium

Copiez la femme: Replicated Bodies and Individuality in Roman Portraiture

In Roman sculpture, highly individualized heads were often combined with bodies copied from a limited repertoire of statue types, such as those of the Herculaneum Women. Annetta Alexandridis, professor of classical art and archaeology at Cornell University, considers how this ancient practice influences our interpretation of Roman portraits.

Thursday, January 10, 2008, 8:00 p.m., Auditorium

CURATORS' GALLERY TALKS

Learn more about the exhibition *The Herculaneum Women and the Origins of Archaeology* from Getty curators during a 45-minute talk. Space is limited. Please sign up at the Tour Meeting Place outside the Museum Entrance 15 minutes before the talk.

Claire Lyons, collections curator, the Getty Research Institute.
Friday, August 3, 3:00 p.m.

Peter Bonfitto, curatorial assistant, the Getty Research Institute.
Fridays, August 31 and September 28, 3:00 p.m.

Jens Daehner, assistant curator of antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum.
Fridays, September 14 and October 26, 3:00 p.m.

POINT-OF-VIEW TALKS

Los Angeles artist Alexander Mihaylovich discusses his recent work with images of the Herculaneum Women.

Thursday and Saturday, February 14 and 16, 2008, 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Museum galleries

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Publications are available in the Getty Museum Store, by calling 800-223-3431 or 310-440-7059, or online at www.getty.edu/bookstore.

The Herculaneum Women: History, Context, Identities, edited by Jens Daehner, texts by Jens Daehner, Kordelia Knoll, Christiane Vorster, and Moritz Woelk
Presenting the comprehensive story and a detailed analysis of these famous statues, the book examines their discovery, archeological context, and modern history, as well as the ongoing debate over interpretation. Available in fall 2007.
(Getty Publications, Hardcover, \$50)

Antiquity Recovered: The Legacy of Pompeii and Herculaneum, edited by Victoria C. Gardner Coates and Jon L. Seydl
The volume traces how perceptions of the past have changed over the course of three centuries of excavations in the Vesuvian cities. Essays range from a reassessment of the library of the Villa dei Papiri to the symbolic appearance of the ancient world in such films as Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy* and Godard's *Contempt*.
(Getty Publications, Hardcover, \$60)

VISIT GETTY.EDU

Explore highlights of the exhibition and the Museum's collection on our Web site.

Note to editors: Images and Object List available upon request.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that features 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 Malibu.

Visiting the Getty Villa

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