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Hair in the Classical World Press Release

Bellarmino Museum of Art

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New exhibition, “Hair in the Classical World” at Fairfield University Bellarmine Museum of Art, October 7 – December 18, 2015.

FAIRFIELD, Conn. (September 15, 2015) – Fairfield University’s Bellarmine Museum of Art presents its new exhibition, *Hair in the Classical World*, on view from Wednesday, October 7, 2015, through Friday, December 18, 2015. An opening reception, free and open to the public, will take place at the Bellarmine Museum of Art on Tuesday, October 6, from 6 to 8 p.m.

From antiquity to the present day, hair has seldom been worn in its natural state. Whether cut, shorn, curled, straightened, braided, beaded, worn in an upsweep or down to the knees, adorned with pins, combs, bows, garlands, extensions, and other accoutrements, hair has the power to reflect societal norms. In ancient cultures, not only did hairstyles and their depictions signal wealth and social status, or divine and mythological iconography; they were also tied to rites of passage and religious rituals.

As the first exhibition of its kind in the United States, *Hair in the Classical World* will take you on a cultural journey through ancient Greece, Cyprus, and Rome, and will examine the role of hair in each through three thematic lenses: Arrangement and Adornment; Rituals and Rites of Passage; and Divine and Royal Iconography. Presenting some 33 objects dating from the Bronze Age to late Antiquity (1500 BCE – 600 CE), the exhibition illustrates ways in which hair and hairstyles served as important signifiers in Classical Antiquity. The sculptures, coins, and hair styling tools on view in the exhibition have been lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, and the American Numismatic Society.

Dr. Katherine Schwab and Dr. Marice Rose, art history professors in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Fairfield University, teamed up to co-curate this groundbreaking exhibition, which proceeded from Dr. Schwab’s earlier research and the 2009 *Caryatid Hairstyling Project*. This project—and its internationally screened short film—demonstrated that the complex hairstyles worn by the six ancient marble Caryatids who support the south porch of the Erechtheion (430 BCE) on the Athenian Acropolis, were able to be replicated on contemporary young women, and are therefore historically authentic. Also pertinent is Professor Rose’s research on

adornment-related imagery, including hairstyling, in the late Roman Empire, which has been published and presented at national and international conferences

Generous support for the exhibition has been provided by Carmen Rita Wong '93, Delamar Southport, Georgette and Charles Mallory, and the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a rich array of public programs has been planned. Both the exhibition and the related programs (lectures, a symposium, workshops for students and families) take a thought-provoking, novel approach to the study of ancient Mediterranean cultures, highlighting the critical role that hair played in identity and its formation, and how a culture's ideals shape human appearance, while simultaneously making important connections to identity today.

Free exhibition programming scheduled in conjunction with this exhibition include a gallery talk by Dr. Rose and Dr. Schwab, on Wednesday, October 14, at 3 p.m., and two interdisciplinary panels on the science and culture of hair featuring Fairfield University faculty from the departments of Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, and the School of Nursing among others. The panel on "History and the Culture of Hair" will be on Tuesday, October 20, at 5 p.m. in the Bellarmine Museum classroom. The panel on "Science and the Health of Hair" will be on Wednesday, October 28, at 4 p.m. in the Diffley Board Room, in Bellarmine Hall.

On Saturday, November 14, the Bellarmine Museum of Art will offer a Family Day exploring daily life in Ancient Greece. This event will feature drop-in craft activities—make a shield, a Greek vase or a scary Medusa mask; learn how to braid your hair like an Ancient Greek goddess; try on a Chiton or a Peplos; hear tales from antiquity in the museum—and a child-friendly tour of the galleries. Family Days are designed for children ages 4-12, and are free and open to the public. Due to the popularity of this event, two sessions will be offered (1-2:30 p.m. and 2:30-4 p.m.). Please pre-register at <http://bellarminewag.eventbrite.com/> as space is limited. The Bellarmine Museum will be open to the public from 1-4 p.m. that day.

Family Days are made possible by a grant from the Maximilian E. and Marion O. Hoffman Foundation.

A scholarly symposium on the topic of Hair in the Classical World will take place on Friday, November 6, from 12:30-4:30 p.m. in the Diffley Board Room of Bellarmine Hall. Speakers include Dr. David Konstan from New York University, author of the recent critically acclaimed book *Beauty: The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea*, and Janet Stephens, Baltimore-based hairdresser and amateur forensic archaeologist whose work reproducing ancient hairstyles has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal* and *nbcnews.com*. Topics include: Hair and Coming of Age Rituals in the Aegean Bronze Age, Reflections on Mirrors and Hair Dressing, Male and Female Crazy Hair on Greek Vases, the Visual Language of Ancient Roman Hairstyles, Statuesque Hair in the Roman Empire, and Hair in Classical Literature. This

symposium is free and open to the public. Please pre-register at <http://bellarminewag.eventbrite.com/> as space is limited.

Admission to the Bellarmine Museum of Art is always free. Hours are Monday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the University is in session (also open select Saturdays; see website for details). The Bellarmine Museum of Art is located in Bellarmine Hall on the campus of Fairfield University, 1073 North Benson Road, in Fairfield, Connecticut.

We are grateful to TownVibe, publisher of Fairfield Magazine, for being the exclusive media sponsor of the Bellarmine Museum's 2015-16 season.

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Fairfield University is a Jesuit University, rooted in one of the world's oldest intellectual and spiritual traditions. More than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students from 36 states, 47 foreign countries, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are enrolled in the University's five schools. In the spirit of rigorous and sympathetic inquiry into all dimensions of human experience, Fairfield welcomes students from diverse backgrounds to share ideas and engage in open conversations. The University is located in the heart of a region where the future takes shape, on a stunning campus on the Connecticut coast just an hour from New York City.