Hair in the Classical World Brochure

Bellarmine Museum of Art

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Hair is timeless, eternal and universal—a human attribute common to every culture and historical era. Hair in antiquity was often tied to rites of passage and religious rituals of the day. Tales about hair figure in mythology and in sacred texts. And the particular way of wearing hair in the Mediterranean world, the way that hair was styled and sported could signify wealth, social rank, and divinity. Precisely because it is so resonant of cultural identity—then as now—hair provides an exceptionally rich vein of meaning, as this exhibition demonstrates.

This exhibition includes objects from places that were cultural crossroads in the ancient world, including the island of Cyprus, the city of Dura-Europos in Syria, and Syracuse in Sicily. Through the transmission of portable objects, these cultural exchanges influenced how hair was styled and decorated. Works in the exhibition also come from the Roman Empire, which at its height reached from Syria, and Syracuse in Sicily. Through the transmission of portable objects, these cross-cultural exchanges influenced how hair was styled and decorated. Works in the exhibition also come from the Roman Empire, which at its height reached from Syria, and Syracuse in Sicily. That ancient idea may have come full circle.

Hair in the Classical World

October 7 – December 18, 2015

This exhibition explores these myriad channels of meaning. By examining the treatment and depiction of hair in ancient Mediterranean art, the museum explores how hair styles and accessories were used to convey status or to reinforce the proper role of women in society. By examining the presentation of ancient art and the role of the artist as a social critic, the exhibition also asks how this ancient idea may have come full circle.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

The Caryatids (active ca. 505–480 BCE)

Terracotta

Greek, 440 BCE

Height 4 ¼ inches (10.8 cm)

Diameter 1 1/16 inches (28.7 mm)

Glass

Roman, from Asia Minor, 75–125 CE

Height 4 ¼ inches (10.8 cm)

Diameter 1 1/16 inches (23 mm)

Bronze

Roman, from Asia Minor, 75–125 CE

Height 4 inches (10.1 cm)

Diameter 1 1/16 inches (28.7 mm)

Marble

Roman, 29–27 BCE

Height 4 inches (10.1 cm)

Diameter 1 1/16 inches (23 mm)

Silver

Nero head, laureate

Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Ceres

Obverse: Caesareus AVG GERMANI

Reverse: CONCORDIAE DIVA AVG FAVSTINA

Obverse: Apollo head laureate to left

Reverse: Arethusa standing

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Nike flying, crowning charioteer

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Nike flying, crowning horses

Obverse: Apollo head laureate to left

Reverse: Pegasus to right, magistrate’s name

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Magistrate’s name

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Magistrate’s name

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Victuall

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Victuall

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Victuall

Obverse: Obverse: Octavian head to right

Reverse: Victuall

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