

Art Institute of Chicago

An Exhibition of Classical Art

Source: *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1907-1951)*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Jan., 1927), pp. 9-10

Published by: [Art Institute of Chicago](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4103399>

Accessed: 01-03-2016 20:33 UTC

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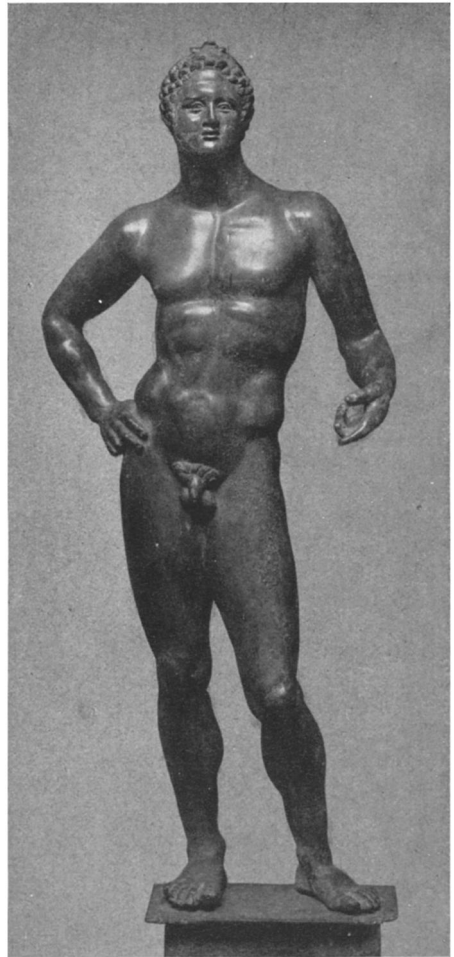
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work in hand. The lean jaw, the high forehead, the springing shock of hair seem to symbolize the intellect, the essence of the leader rather than to attempt any reconstruction of the features of the old Croatian.

AN EXHIBITION OF CLASSICAL ART

IT IS very seldom that the Art Institute or any other museum is able to offer an exhibition of the art of Greece or Rome, that is, of first class examples, because for some time there have been stringent laws against the export of such works from Greece and Italy, and one has to wait until, for one cause or another, private collections come on the market or something is excavated in unrestricted territory. A few years ago twenty or thirty examples of merit might come upon the market each year, but now it is very seldom that more than six or seven appear. There were, of course, as many crimes perpetrated in the name of art in ancient times as today, so only a very small proportion of the finds are worthy of the collection of a museum which attempts to maintain high standards.

The exhibition which is now in Gallery 257 contains a comparatively small number of objects, but each one of them is of the highest quality, and not only different periods, but the art of both Greece and Rome are represented. The earliest examples are from the fourth century B.C., the latest, a portrait bust of a Roman general, excavated within the last few months, is of the second century A.D. The most striking example, illustrated, is a full-length bronze figure, probably the portrait of a Greek ruler in Asia Minor in the character of Heracles. It is thought to represent Seleucus IV, who reigned from 187 to 176 B.C. over Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and nearer Iran. It is a question just how accurate as portraits such representations were, but doubtless the sculptor was a good enough courtier to realize that a certain amount of idealization would not be amiss. This statue, about one-third life size, is of the same type as the great bronze figure of a nude man



GREEK BRONZE, ASIA MINOR, II CENTURY B.C.

leaning on a staff in the Museo Nazionale in Rome. The type is very similar, but the lively, alert pose of the figure in our exhibition is perhaps more attractive. The bronze was doubtless gilded originally, but all traces of the gold have disappeared and a wonderful olive green patina has replaced it. In the liveliness of conception of the pose, the masterly execution, and the charming color, this bronze is easily among the first of its class, and it is a type that is not represented in any American collection.

The other illustration shows one of a pair of marble reliefs which were recovered

recently by divers from the wreck of an ancient ship in the harbor of Salamis. Some fragments of oyster shells still cling to the marble, which, discolored of course, by its long immersion, has nevertheless a very pleasant tone.

Perhaps the most unusual piece is a marble portrait head of a priest of Helios from Alexandria. Like all portrait heads of the time, it was colored, and considerable traces of the color remain. We are so accustomed to thinking of marble sculpture as white, that we do not realize what a blaze of color many Greek statues must have been. It is quite probable that we should not like them as well, in their original state, as we do now when their colors are softened and subdued, or even eliminated by time. There is nothing garish about the coloring of this head, but it gives an excellent idea of what its original condition must have been.

A dancing satyr in bronze of the third century B.C. is small but of great charm when seen from any position. There are a terra cotta head, a terra cotta relief, and several delicately carved models such as were used as copies for workmen in the studios of Egyptian sculptors.

A marble head of Alexander, third century B.C., shows in how masterly a fashion the sculptors of the period allowed the light to play softly over surfaces as delicately modeled as living flesh.

It is hoped that the public and the friends and members of the Institute will take advantage of the opportunity to see this truly remarkable exhibition. Any of the pieces shown would be most welcome additions to the classical collections of the Art Institute, and many of them are of the highest importance.



GREEK METOPE, II CENTURY B.C. STYLE OF V. CENTURY

THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

SOME interesting improvements were made in the Children's Museum before the installation of the Christmas exhibition. A large latticed screen behind the fountain provides a pleasing background for the delightful Janet Scudder group and divides the rather large gallery into two smaller ones. The first room will be devoted entirely to the temporary exhibitions, changing every few weeks, while in the second will be shown the process cases and some of the objects of the permanent collection of the Children's Museum. In the Christmas exhibition of work done by the children in the Saturday morning classes of the Art Institute School are all sorts of productions suitable for the season. There is a Christmas tree with its trimmings and toys, all cut from paper by the juvenile class, aged eight to eleven years. These children have also modeled a Nativity group in clay, which is designed, painted, and arranged in accordance with their own ideas. The older classes exhibit Christmas cards and compositions and posters in water color, pen and ink, and pencil, with some wood cuts and etchings. The high school students in applied design have made a very interesting Santa Claus group with dolls of various nations dressed in costumes designed by members of the class.

In the Children's Museum, the Curator, Miss Mackenzie, is giving a series of illustrated talks for children on Saturday mornings at 9:20 o'clock. The hour is early in

order that children who attend classes in the Art Institute School at 10:00 o'clock may enjoy these half-hour talks as well. These lectures are repeated on Sunday afternoons at 3:00