

# Art Institute of Chicago

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Portrait Bust of a Woman

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## Portrait Bust of a Woman

Roman, Antonine Period (A.D. 138–92)

Marble; h. 62 cm (24 <sup>14</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

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RESTRICTED GIFTS OF THE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY IN  
HONOR OF IAN WARDROPPER, THE CLASSICAL ART  
SOCIETY, MR. AND MRS. ISAK V. GERSON, JAMES AND  
BONNIE PRITCHARD AND MRS. HUGO SONNENSCHN; MR. AND MRS. KENNETH BRO FUND; KATHERINE K.  
ADLER, MR. AND MRS. WALTER ALEXANDER IN HONOR  
OF IAN WARDROPPER, DAVID EARLE III, WILLIAM A. AND  
REND A H. LEDERER FAMILY, CHESTER D. TRIPP AND  
JANE B. TRIPP ENDOWMENTS, 2002.11



**P**ortraiture is one of Rome's most enduring visual legacies. The practice had its origins in funerary rituals, during which waxen masks of the deceased were made to serve as an ancestral record. Eventually, these fragile relics were supplanted by sculpted portraits in the more permanent medium of stone. This example, for instance, was carved from a single block of white marble that has developed a creamy patina over time. Based on its style and on comparison to other sculptures and imperial portraits on coinage, this bust can be dated to the middle of the second century, which was a period of relative peace and prosperity throughout the Roman Empire. By this time portraits often included the shoulders and truncated torso, a tradition that has lasted into the present.

The subject's identity is unknown, but clearly she belonged to a family with the financial resources to commission a sculptor of exceptional talent. Her diadem is similar to crowns worn by priests and priestesses of the imperial cult, which honored emperors and empresses who had been deified after their deaths. Portraits of such personalities are mostly found in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and it is possible that the subject once lived there.'

Fashion-conscious Romans from across the empire emulated court styles, and the sitter is no exception. She wears a coiffure made stylish by Faustina the Elder, the matronly wife of emperor Antoninus Pius (r. A.D. 138–61): thick locks of wavy hair frame her face, and a braid coiled into a bun sits on the crown of her head. Her opulent diadem evokes an original that would have been fashioned of gold, set with precious stones, and fastened by means of a thick cord. The sitter is dressed in a diaphanous, gap-sleeved tunic, its neckline so thinly carved that light passes through the marble. Her mantle, with its deep folds suggesting plush wool, is draped low in the front, revealing the gentle swell of her right breast, an unusual feature of Roman busts of this period.

This portrait was most likely displayed in the foyer of a private home, alongside the sculpted images of other family members, both living and dead. Alternatively, it might have been installed in a public gathering place, which would have been lavishly adorned with statues of gods, heroes, and important historical figures such as members of the ruling family, the imperial cult, or civic benefactors.

KAREN MANCHESTER





*Untitled*, pp. 40–41.

1. Quoted in Margarita Tupitsyn, “Between Fotopis and Factography,” in Houk Friedman (Gallery), *El Lissitzky: Experiments in Photography*, exh. cat. (New York, 1991), p. 5.
2. See Margarita Tupitsyn, “Back to Moscow,” in Margarita Tupitsyn, with contributions by Matthew Drutt and Ulrich Pohlmann, *El Lissitzky: Beyond the “Abstract Cabinet”: Photography, Design, Collaboration*, exh. cat. (New Haven, 1999), p. 26.

*Untitled*, pp. 44–45.

1. El Mochuelo Gallery, *Photographs: Harry Callahan*, exh. cat. (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1964), n.p.

*Composites: Philadelphia*, pp. 48–49.

1. Ray Metzker, “Portfolio,” *Aperture* 13, 2 (1967), p. 78.

*Ronald Fischer, Beekeeper, Davis, California*, pp. 50–51.

1. Richard Avedon, *In the American West* (New York, 1985), n.p.
2. John Ashbery, “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” in idem, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (New York, 1976), p. 70.

*Statue of Osiris*, pp. 52–53.

1. This statue was published previously in New York, Christie, Manson, and Woods, *Antiquities*, sale cat. (June 5, 1998, lot no. 61).
2. Translated by Emily Teeter, Curator of Egyptian and Nubian Antiquities, The Oriental Institute, The University of Chicago, in correspondence with Mary Greuel, April 23, 2003; files of the Ancient Art Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago.

*Portrait Bust of a Woman*, pp. 54–55.

1. See correspondence of Sept. 2003 from Klaus Fittschen, Professor Emeritus, Göttingen University, to Louise Holland, Classical Art Society of The Art Institute of Chicago; files of the Ancient Art Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago.

*Cup in the Form of a Rearing Horse and Rider*, pp. 56–57.

1. The figure of the rearing horse alone is now in the Hohenlohe Museum in Neuenstein, Germany. For an illustration, see London, Christie, Manson, and Woods, *Important Silver including Three Magnificent Renaissance Silver-gilt Works of Art from the Collection of Fritz and Eugen Gutmann*, sale cat. (June 11, 2003, lot no. 163).
2. See, for example, studies by Leonardo da Vinci for an equestrian monument to Francesco Sforza; Carmen C. Bambach, ed., *Leonardo da Vinci, Master Draftsman*, exh. cat. (New York, 2003), cat. no. 53.
3. For a discussion of bronze and silver examples, see Hans R. Weihrauch, “Italienische Bronzen als Vorbilder deutscher Goldschmiedekunst,” in *Studien zur Geschichte der europäischen Plastik* (Munich, 1965), p. 273.

*Head of Medusa*, pp. 62–63.

1. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, “On the Imitation of the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks,” in David Irwin, ed., *Winckelmann: Writings on Art* (London, 1972), p. 61.
2. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (London, 1996), vol. 1, p. 629.
3. For a reproduction of Caravaggio’s *Medusa* (1598/99; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), see Helen Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life* (New York, 1999), pl. 14. For Rubens’s *Head of Medusa* (1717/18; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), see Rudolf Oldenbourg, ed., *P. P. Rubens: Des Meisters Gemälde in 538 Abbildungen* (Stuttgart, 1921), p. 80.
4. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey (1786–1788)*, trans. W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (San Francisco, 1982), pp. 140, 489.

*“Diana” Diadem*, pp. 66–67.

1. Quoted in Shirley Bury, *Jewellery 1789–1910: The International Era* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, 1991), vol. 2, p. 635.

2. Wilson established his workshop in the basement of Vicarage Gate, the London building from which he ran his architectural practice. He partnered for a short time with the enameler Alexander Fisher, and became skilled in this technique himself. He joined the Art Workers’ Guild in 1892, and taught metalworking at London’s Central School of Arts and Crafts from 1896, as well as at the Royal College of Art beginning around 1901. He also published a manual of the metalworker’s craft, *Silverwork and Jewellery* (London, 1903). For details concerning Wilson’s life and work, see Charlotte Gere and Geoffrey C. Munn, *Pre-Raphaelite to Arts and Crafts Jewellery* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, 1996).

*Wine Jug and Cover*, pp. 68–69.

1. The Art Institute’s wine jug was made by Dell for his nephew’s baptism on February 2, 1922, according to a letter from his niece cited in London, Sotheby and Company, *Bauhaus and Other Important 20th Century Avant-garde Design*, sale cat. (Nov. 1, 1996, lot no. 71).
2. For an illustration of this example, now in the Bauhaus Archive, Berlin, see Klaus Weber, *Die Metallwerkstatt am Bauhaus*, exh. cat. (Berlin, 1992), cat. no. 140.

*“Architettura” Trumeau*, pp. 70–71.

1. The full range of Fornasetti’s output is surveyed in Patrick Mauriès, *Fornasetti: Designer of Dreams*, exh. cat. (London, 1991).
2. For an illustration of the Victoria and Albert prototype, see Mauriès (note 1), p. 100.

*Earthly Paradise*, pp. 72–73.

1. Diary note for Feb. 1, 1934, in Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., and Dallas Museum of Art, *Bonnard: The Late Paintings*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 69.
2. For an in-depth study of this painting and the importance of *décoration* for the Nabi artists, see Gloria Groom, *Beyond the Easel: Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis, and Roussel, 1890–1930*, exh. cat. (Chicago/New Haven, 2001), esp. pp. 186–91.

*Still Life*, pp. 80–81.

1. Quoted in Siri Hustvedt, “Not Just Bottles,” *Modern Painters* 11, 4 (winter 1998), p. 21.

*Sequel*, pp. 84–85.

1. In 1966 art critic Lucy Lippard organized “Eccentric Abstraction,” an important group exhibition at Fischbach Gallery in New York, which included artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, and Bruce Nauman. Lippard coined the term “eccentric abstraction” to describe these artists’ sculptural forms in her article “Eccentric Abstraction,” *Art International* 10, 9 (Nov. 1966), pp. 28–40.
2. Eva Hesse, from an undated notebook, c. 1967; quoted in Naomi Spector, “A Selection from Notebooks of Eva Hesse,” in Nicholas Serota, ed., *Eva Hesse: Sculpture*, exh. cat. (London, 1979), n.p.

*thaw*, pp. 92–93.

1. Quoted in Daniel Birnbaum, Amanda Sharp, and Jörg Heiser, *Doug Aitken* (London, 2001), pp. 21, 24.