



**ARTS 481:
Small Classical Bronzes in the Picker Art Gallery:
Looting, Faking and Collecting Antiquities in the Post-Colonial World**

Wednesdays, 1:20-4:00 pm, 201 Little

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Office hours:
Tues, 3:00 – 4:30, Thurs, 3:00 – 3:45
and by appointment

This seminar will explore a collection of classical bronzes currently housed in the Picker Art Gallery but still belonging to a prominent New York antiquities dealer. There are two defining features of these objects: they are very beautiful, and they lack provenance (that is, any information about where they were found and/or the history of their ownership before they were purchased by the dealer).

Archaeologists, who study ancient works as cultural artifacts, would probably tell us that these bronzes, with their complete lack of contextual information, are essentially worthless as historical documents; and that any highly marketable antiquity without a known archaeological findspot might well be a forgery. Many art historians, on the other hand, have argued that the well-trained eye can always spot a forgery, and that most of what we want to know about ancient artworks can be gleaned by carefully studying the object itself (a historical method known as connoisseurship). This divide between art historians and archaeologists has recently deepened (and received much media attention) in the wake of a number of high-profile cases involving antiquities believed to have been stolen from their original countries through illegal excavation (looting). These include the prosecution of a prominent curator at the Getty Museum and the repatriation back to Italy of one of the most famous vases in the Metropolitan Museum, not to mention the ongoing controversy surrounding the Elgin Marbles.

This course will examine the epistemological and ethical problems inherent in the study and collecting of unprovenanced antiquities through the case study of the Picker bronzes. Each student will carry out independent research on two objects to determine just how much can be said about them as historical objects (what do they represent? are they similar to other ancient objects? when might they have been made? how? for what possible purpose?). For their final papers, students will analyze the thorny situation in which the Picker now finds itself with regard to these pieces: what should be done with them? Should they be returned to the dealer? Should they be displayed? If so, how? To what end? In addition to broad issues of cultural property and repatriation, we will examine in particular the complicated relationships between museums, academia and the art market.

Grade distribution:

Participation: 15%

5-minute presentation (9/17): 10%

20-minute presentation (10/29): 20%

30-minute presentation (12/3): 25%

20-25 page paper (due 12/10): 30%

Schedule of Classes

1) Sept. 3: The Royal Athena Bronzes (meet in gallery!)

- www.royalathena.com : thoroughly explore this website.
- Arielle Kozloff, "The Antiquities Market: When, What, Where, Who, Why ... and How Much?" in Kate Fitz Gibbon, ed., *Who Owns the Past? Cultural Policy, Cultural Property, and the Law* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2005), 183-89. (handout)
- Morag M. Kersel, "From the Ground to the Buyer. A Market Analysis of the Trade in Illegal Antiquities," in Neil Brodie, Morag M. Kersel, Christina Luke, and Kathryn Walker Tubb, eds., *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and the Antiquities Trade* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 188-205. (handout)

2) Sept. 10: Small Bronzes in the Ancient Mediterranean; Library Resources

- Beryl Barr-Sharrar, "The Private Use of Small Bronze Sculpture" in Carol Mattusch, ed., *The Fire of Hephaistos. Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 1996), 104-21.
- David Mitten, "Introduction" in Arielle Kozloff and David Mitten, *The Gods Delight. The Human Figure in Classical Bronze* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1988), 1-25.
- Joan R. Mertens, "The human figure in classical bronze-working : some perspectives," in *Small bronze sculpture from the ancient world : papers delivered at a symposium organized by the ... the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu: Getty Museum, 1989). (on course reserve)
- Look through the *Gods Delight* and *Fire of Hephaistos* exhibition catalogues, and find the objects that are most similar to yours. Use them as a starting point for your research. NB: make xeroxes of the relevant entries in the *Fire of Hephaistos*, as this book does not belong to Colgate and will be returned on 9/18.

3) Sept. 17: History from Objects

- Grace Glueck, "Clashing Views Reshape Art History," *New York Times*, December 20, 1987. (online)
- David Ebitz, "Connoisseurship as Practice," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 9, No. 18 (1988), pp. 207-212 (JSTOR)
- Gary Schwartz, "Connoisseurship: The Penalty of Ahistoricism," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 9, No. 18 (1988), pp. 201-206 (JSTOR)
- Chris Caple, "Investigating Objects: Theories and Approaches," "Objects as social indicators," and "Objects as record," in id, *Objects. Reluctant Witnesses to the Past* (Routledge: Milton Park, 2006), 1-43, 44-62, and 205-21.
- Choose one of the following monuments and do enough reading on it to be able to present it to the class for five minutes, placing particular emphasis on how its archaeological findspot (or lack thereof) informs our understanding (or lack thereof) of the work: Palaikastro kouros; Sagalassos Hadrian; Vergina ivory head of Philip; Vix krater; Lefkandi centaur; Motya Charioteer; Mask of Agamemnon; Sevso Treasure.

4) Sept. 24: Post-Colonial and Archaeological Critiques of Collecting

- Tayeb Moulefera, "Algeria"; Ekpo Eyo, "Nigeria,"; P.H.D.H. de Silva, "Sri Lanka," Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, "A plea for the return of an irreplaceable cultural heritage to those who created it," *Museum* 31 (1979). (on Blackboard)
- Greenfield, "Some British Cases" in id, *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 113-56. (on Blackboard and course reserves)

- Neil Brodie, Jenny Doole and Peter Watson, *Stealing History. The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material* (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2000), 8-29, 43-59 (online)
- Roger Atwood, "Guardians of the Dead," in Karen Vitelli and Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, *Archaeological Ethics* (2nd ed.) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2006), 34-41.

5) Oct. 1: The Historian's Critique of Collecting: Cycladica

- Christopher Chippendale and David Gill, "Material and Intellectual Consequences of Esteem for Cycladic Figures," *American Journal of Archaeology* 97 (1993) 601-59. (JSTOR)

6) Oct. 8: The Debate today

- Shelby White, "A Collector's Odyssey," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 7 (1998): 170-176.
- David Gill and Christopher Chippendale, "The Illicit Antiquities Scandal: What It Has Done to Classical Archaeology Collections [review of Peter Watson and Cecilia Todeschini, *The Medici Conspiracy: The Illicit Journey of Looted Antiquities from Italy's Tomb Raiders to the World's Greatest Museums*, New York, 2006], *American Journal of Archaeology* 111 (2007), 571-74.
- "Museums," Special section of the New York Times, March 29, 2006 (Holland Cotter, "Who Owns Art?"; Interview: Is it all Loot?, and Barry Meier, "Antiquities and Politics Intersect in a Lawsuit"). PLEASE READ THIS IN HARD COPY, IN THE LIBRARY, ON RESERVE, AND NOT ON THE INTERNET.
- Hugh Eakin and Randy Kennedy, "Doubts on Donors' Collection Cloud Met Antiquities Project," *New York Times*, December 10, 2005, A1.
- Rebecca Mead, "Den of Antiquity," *The New Yorker*, April 9, 2007, 54ff.
- Kate Taylor, "Shelby White in Center Court and the Met," *New York Sun*, May 1, 2007.

7) Oct. 15: meet in the gallery to have one more look at your objects

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17: TRIP TO NYC

visit the new Greek and Roman Galleries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ariadne Gallery and the home of antiquities-collector Roy Lenox

8) Oct. 22: Visit to the studio of bronze sculptor, John von Bergen

- Arthur Beale, "Scientific approaches to the question of authenticity," in *Small bronze sculpture from the ancient world : papers delivered at a symposium organized by the ... the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu: Getty Museum, 1989).
- Beryl Barr-Sharrar, "How important is provenance? Archeological and stylistic questions in the attribution of ancient bronzes," in *Small bronze sculpture from the ancient world : papers delivered at a symposium organized by the ... the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu: Getty Museum, 1989).
- Pieter Meyers, "The use of scientific techniques in provenance studies of ancient bronzes," in *Small bronze sculpture from the ancient world : papers delivered at a symposium organized by the ... the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu: Getty Museum, 1989).
- George Ortiz, "Connoisseurship and antiquity," in *Small bronze sculpture from the ancient world : papers delivered at a symposium organized by the ... the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu: Getty Museum, 1989).

9) Oct. 29: Presentations on Objects; meet in gallery!

10) Nov. 5: Elgin Marbles

- Jeanette Greenfield, "The Elgin Marbles Debate," in id, *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007) (on course reserves).
- Ian Jenkins, 'Athens Rising Near the Pole': London, Athens and the Idea of Freedom," in Celine Fox, ed., *London – World City 1800-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 143-53.
- Yannis Hamilakis, "Stories from Exile: Fragments from the Cultural Biography of the Parthenon (or 'Elgin') Marbles," *World Archaeology* 31 (1999), 303-20.

- Richard A. McNeil, "Archaeology and the destruction of the later Athenian acropolis," *Antiquity* 65 (1991), 49-63.
- William St. Clair, "Imperial Appropriations of the Parthenon," in John Henry Merryman, ed., *Imperialism, Art and Restitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65-97.

11) Nov. 12: The "Universal" Museum

- Neil MacGregor, "The Whole World in our Hands," *The Guardian*, July 24, 2004 (online).
- M. O'Neill, "Enlightenment museums: universal or merely global?" *Museum and Society* 2.3 (November, 2004), 192-202 (online).
- James Cuno, "View from the Universal Museum," in John Henry Merryman, ed., *Imperialism, Art and Restitution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 15-36.
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Whose Culture is it, anyway?" in id, *Cosmopolitanism. Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006) 115-37.
- Geoffrey Lewis, "The 'Universal Museum': A Case of Special Pleading?" in Barbara T. Hoffman, *Art and Cultural Heritage. Law, Policy and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 379-81.

12) Nov. 19: University Museums, Scholars and the Art Market

- Colin Renfrew, *The Cycladic spirit : masterpieces from the Nicholas P. Goulandris collection* (New York: Abrams, 1991)
- R. Elia, "A seductive and troubling work [review of Colin Renfrew, *The Cycladic Spirit*]," in K.D. Vitelli (ed.), *Archaeological Ethics* (1st edn), 54-62.
- Hugh Eakin, "Must Looted Relics Be Ignored?" *New York Times*, May 2, 2006 (online).
- John Dofman, "Getting their Hands Dirty? Archaeologists and the Looting Trade," *Lingua Franca* 8.4, 1988, 28-36.
- James Cuno, "Assets? Well, Yes—of a Kind. Collections in College and University Art Museums and Galleries," Harvard University Art Museum Profession Training, Occasional Paper, Fall, 1992: <http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/professional/occpapers1.html>
- Kimerly Rorschach, "Scylla or Charybdis: Antiquities Collecting by University Art Museums," in Robin F. Rhodes, *The Acquisition and Exhibition of Classical Antiquities. Professional, Legal and Ethical Perspectives* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 65-73.
- Robin Pogrebin and Randy Kennedy, "\$200 Million Gift Prompts Debate Over Antiquities," *The New York Times*, April 1, 2006, A3.

13) Dec. 3: Presentations

14) Dec. 10: Presentations