

Memphis

Brooks

Memphis Brooks
Museum of Art

News Release

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Ancient civilizations come to life in newly renovated gallery at Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Clarence Day Collection funds study of artwork and renovation of new gallery

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 24, 2018 – Visitors to Memphis Brooks Museum of Art will now be able to experience life and art from ancient civilizations in a gallery newly renovated through the generosity of the Clarence Day Foundation.

A dish for serving seafood, a bronze warrior's belt, or a woman's gilded hand mirror—all of which were made over fifteen hundred years ago—provide a window into life in the ancient world. Most of the works on display in the new Ancient Art Gallery were made for daily use by ordinary people, and offer surprising parallels to our own world today.

More than 5,000 years ago an extraordinary range of civilizations began to emerge around the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East, including the worlds of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. These cultures laid the foundations for current civilization through their literature, laws, philosophies, sciences, religious beliefs, and art.



South Italian, *Fish Plate*, ca. 330-300 B.C.E., Ceramic,
Clarence Day Foundation Collection LI.90.1

Noted philanthropist and connoisseur Clarence Day (1927-2009) collected most of the objects in the gallery. Day purchased his first piece of ancient art in the 1970s, and continued to acquire fine works of art until his death. Though his collection was never large, it was remarkable for its quality and breadth. In 1960 he founded the Clarence Day Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of social service, leadership initiatives, arts education, and youth programs in Memphis and the Mid-South.



Roman, *Box Mirror, with Scene of Venus Victrix*, 2nd century C.E., Bronze, gilt and repoussé, Clarence Day Foundation Collection LL.90.15

In 1991, Mr. Day—through the foundation he established—loaned the Brooks a selection of ancient art objects for display. Upon his death, the collection was put on permanent loan to the museum. In 2017 the Day Foundation generously funded the study and reinstallation of these objects in the elegantly renovated gallery.

The newly installed exhibition exquisitely presents these superb works while providing a safe environment in state-of-the-art cases that control humidity levels. New research and information generated during the process is now available on the museum's online eMuseum system. Through the generosity of the Day Foundation, daily life in the ancient world is made readily available to museum visitors.

Background:

Founded in 1916 and located at 1934 Poplar Ave. in historic Overton Park, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art is home to Tennessee's oldest and largest major collection of world art. More than 10,000 works make up the Brooks Museum's permanent collection, including works from ancient Greece, Rome, and the Americas; Renaissance masterpieces from Italy; English portraiture; American painting and decorative arts; contemporary art; and a survey of African art. The Brooks Museum enriches the lives of our diverse community through the museum's expanding collection, varied exhibitions, and dynamic programs that reflect the art of world cultures from antiquity to the present. For more information about the Brooks and all other exhibitions and programs, call 901.544.6200 or visit www.brooksmuseum.org.

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