



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

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The Michael C. Carlos Museum presents *Making an Impression: The Art and Craft of Ancient Engraved Gemstones*



[Atlanta, Georgia, July 18, 2022]— *Making an Impression: The Art and Craft of Ancient Engraved Gemstones* is the first exhibition of ancient gems in the southeastern United States and will open on August 27, 2022.

Organized by the museum's curator of Greek and Roman art, Dr. Ruth Allen, *Making an Impression* draws from the museum's collection of Greek and Roman gems, many of which have never been displayed publicly, and are supplemented and contextualized by key loans that explore the material, iconography, and function of engraved gemstones in classical antiquity. Carved from semi-precious stones with miniature images of various subjects including gods, emperors, animals, and characters from myth, engraved gems in the Greek and Roman worlds were used as signets, amulets, and personal ornaments, typically mounted in rings. They were admired (and problematized) as luxury

artworks, treasured as antiques and heirlooms, and worn as statements of status, wealth, sophistication, and learning.

Exploring the material, production, and various functions of these small but significant ancient artworks, *Making an Impression* draws attention to the people who interacted with them—from the enslaved miners who quarried the stones, to

the engravers who carved them, to the individuals who wore them, and the viewers impressed by their luster. It argues that, whether used as sealstone, amulet, or personal ornament, engraved gems were intimately involved in the making, marking, and safeguarding of personal identity, and that despite their small size and seeming frivolity, engraved gems provide large windows onto different aspects of the classical world, from cross-Mediterranean trade and the expansion of empire, to administrative practice, to the expression of gender, status and wealth and the pursuit of luxury, to encounters with the divine, and ideas about magic and medicine.

Images from top to bottom:

Intaglio Gem Depicting Isis-Aphrodite. Roman. late 2nd-mid 3rd Century CE. Crystalline quartz var. amethyst. Gift of the Estate of Michael J. Shubin. 2008.031.108. Photo by Bruce M. White, 2021

Intaglio Depicting a Bust of Galene. Roman. 1st Century BCE - 1st Century CE. Microcrystalline quartz, var. cornelian. Gift of the Estate of Michael J. Shubin. 2008.031.032. Photo by Bruce M. White, 2021.

Intaglio Depicting a Satyr Hunting Game Birds. Roman. 1st Century CE. Chrome-chalcedony. Gift of the Estate of Michael J. Shubin. 2012.32.24. Photo by Bruce M. White, 2021.



Intaglio Depicting Hermaphroditos. Greek. 2nd Century BCE. Garnet. Gift of John and Pat Laszlo. 2017.53.5. Photo by Bruce M. White, 2018.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

Set in the heart of Emory's campus, the Michael C. Carlos Museum, is a dynamic, interdisciplinary center for study of art and culture, with collections from Africa; ancient Egypt; Nubia, and the Near East; ancient Greece and Rome; the Indigenous Americas; and South Asia; as well as American and European Works on Paper.

Through our permanent collection galleries, engaging special exhibitions, and innovative programs for audiences of all ages, the Carlos Museum connects the past with present and the campus with the community.

Curators and faculty develop original exhibitions, engage in interdisciplinary research and teaching, and host touring exhibitions that complement our collections and support the teaching mission of the university. The museum's conservators collaborate with staff, faculty, and students to conduct research and manage preventive care on the museum's varied collections. Museum educators reach across the museum, campus, and city to develop opportunities to engage the intellect and the imagination of university students and faculty, preK-12 students and teachers, and the larger Atlanta community.

The Michael C. Carlos Museum is open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday: noon – 5 p.m. For more information, visit carlos.emory.edu/visit, call 404.727.4282, or follow @CarlosMuseum on social media.

carlos.emory.edu
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