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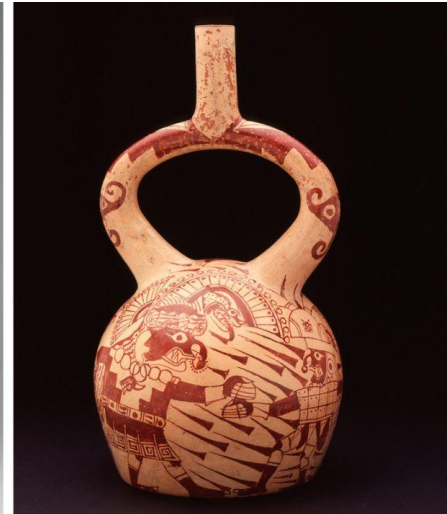
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Media Advisory: Michael C. Carlos Museum to Host *Picture Worlds: Greek, Maya, and Moche Pottery Exhibition*



From Left: *Mixing Bowl with Theseus and Poseidon*. Greek, made in Athens, 480–470 BCE. Terracotta, H: 48.5 cm (19 1/8 in.); W (including handles): 49 cm (19 5/16 in.). Attributed to the Harrow Painter. Found in a tomb in Ruvo, Italy. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard Art Museums / Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of David M. Robinson, 1960.339. *Cylinder Vessel with the Maize God and other Supernaturals*. Maya, probably made in El Zotz, Peten, Guatemala, 600–700 CE. Terracotta, H: 21.5 cm (8 7/16 in.); Diam: 15 cm (5 7/8 in.). Princeton University Art Museum, Gift of Stephanie H. Bernheim and Leonard H. Bernheim, Jr. in honor of Gillett G. Griffin, 2005-127. *Stirrup-Spout Vessel with Wrinkle Face Fighting Anthropomorphized Creatures*. Moche, made in northern Peru, 500–800 CE. Terracotta, H: 30.2 cm (11 7/8 in.); Diam: 16 cm (6 5/16 in.). Los Angeles, Fowler Museum at UCLA, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas, Jr., X86.3934

[Atlanta, Georgia, August 8, 2024] —The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University presents *Picture Worlds: Greek, Maya, and Moche Pottery*, an exhibition that brings together, for the first time, the narrative ceramics of three ancient cultures: the Greeks of the Mediterranean, the Maya of Mesoamerica, and the Moche of northern Peru. On view from September 14 through December 15, 2024, this exhibition offers a unique opportunity to explore how these distinct societies visualized the world through richly decorated terracotta vessels.

Organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and co-curated by David Saunders, associate curator of antiquities at the Getty Villa Museum, and Megan E. O’Neil, associate professor of art history at Emory University, the exhibition juxtaposes these diverse traditions to examine the ways in which pottery was used to convey stories of heroic adventures, divine encounters, and legendary events. The vessels on display—once central to rituals, feasts, and other social gatherings—serve as windows into the cultural and religious practices of these civilizations.

“This is an exhibition rooted in curiosity and collaboration, and I’m thrilled to see its new iteration at the Michael C. Carlos Museum,” says Saunders. “I could wax lyrical about so many of the Greek, Maya, and Moche vessels on display—for their potting, their painting, their extraordinarily rich narrative scenes—but perhaps what I’ve relished most of all are the conversations that their juxtaposition has fostered. During the exhibition’s run at the Getty Villa, it was enlightening to watch visitors engage closely with these painted vessels, to identify some of

the distinctive figures and themes, to handle the replicas, and to share their own insights into enduring human practices, such as storytelling and image-making. This is a project that is motivated by asking questions, and I'm really looking forward to the conversations in Atlanta."

The exhibition is organized into thematic sections that guide visitors through the cultural and narrative significance of these ancient ceramics. The first section, *Makers and Users*, explores the artisans who crafted these vessels and the individuals who used them, offering insights into the roles these objects played in social contexts. *Stories and Images* delves into their painted narratives of epic adventures and divine deeds. The exhibition concludes with *Handling Narrative*, which addresses the ways in which rotating or handling these vessels animated the painted narratives. At a specially designed table in this section, visitors can physically engage with replicas of three vessels and appreciate the importance of close looking, touching, and listening while handling them. Additionally, the Carlos Museum created an interactive space at the center of the exhibition that offers a wide variety of reading materials for all ages, from picture books and poetry to academic analyses, all of which explore themes related to the exhibition. The area includes discussion prompts to spark conversation and encourage visitors to connect with one another by sharing their own stories.

Megan O'Neil remarks, "The inspiration for this exhibition began with a conversation in 2018, and many people collaborated in its development. That spirit of conversation and collaboration echoes the original production of the painted vessels and their use in vibrant social contexts. I am especially thrilled that the exhibition is coming to our university museum, where we can continue to learn from the artists through their creations, and from descendant communities and all others who visit the exhibition. Over the years, I've come to dislike quiet museums. When I take my students to museums, I encourage them to ask questions, give opinions, and talk about what they see (or don't see!). In crafting the exhibition texts and interactive spaces, we wanted to encourage people to talk and share their thoughts inside the exhibition, both about the artworks and their own life experiences. These new social experiences honor the artists who made these extraordinary works."

Accompanying the exhibition is a richly illustrated publication, co-edited by curators David Saunders and Megan E. O'Neil, which delves into the histories and artistic achievements of these three remarkable civilizations, providing readers with deeper insights into the narratives and cultures that shaped these works.



Paula Nicho Cúmez, *Crusando Fronteras*. 2007. Oil on canvas, 24 x 32 inches
Helen Moran Collection. © Rita E. Moran.

Complementing the ceramics in *Picture Worlds* is a dedicated space within the exhibition showcasing oil paintings by five contemporary Maya artists from the highlands of Guatemala, near the regions where the Maya pottery in the exhibition originates. These paintings are part of a modern artistic tradition developed by Maya artists in the 1930s but are connected to the creation of painted pottery, wall murals, and books by Maya artists in earlier times. They too are "picture worlds," narrating stories about spirituality, ceremonies, ancestors, health, and government. The paintings address the histories and futures of their communities, reflecting on the armed conflict and genocide against Maya people in Guatemala from 1960 to 1996, and engage with contemporary issues such as immigration, human rights

abuses, Indigenous rights, and the celebration of Indigenous identity. The Tz'utujil and Kaqchikel Maya painters featured in the exhibition are among the more than eight million Maya people in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and

Honduras, as well as in diaspora communities around the world, including in Atlanta, who continue to speak one of approximately thirty-one Maya languages today.

Emory University Professor of English and Indigenous Studies, Emil' Keme shared his hopes for the exhibition stating, "My hope with the exhibition is that attendees make a connection between the past and the present and obtain an understanding of not only the significant contributions that each of these civilizations has made to the world but also that their descendants are still here. Many of them, like the Maya and Moche, have overcome incredible challenges to maintain their existence. Despite that, they continue producing art to tell stories about their ancestors, their present, and future."

The Michael C. Carlos Museum invites the public to engage with these extraordinary works and to explore the rich narratives they embody, deepening our understanding of the ancient world and its enduring legacies.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

Set in the heart of Emory's Atlanta campus, the Michael C. Carlos Museum is a dynamic, interdisciplinary center for the 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 the 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.

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