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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE FROM VIENNA ON VIEW AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Title: Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Kunsthistorisches
Museum, Vienna

WASHINGTON -- The finest collection of 16th century bronze sculpture ever to leave Europe will go on view at the National Gallery of Art, East Building Mezzanine, Aug. 17 through Nov. 30, 1986. Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna brings together objects from one of Europe's most renowned museums. The exhibition will highlight a medium in which major masters of Western sculpture have worked for centuries.

J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art, said: "The 75 sculptures in this exhibition are from one of the greatest collections of Renaissance bronzes in the world. While the exhibition does present objects of rare beauty, their subject matter and collecting history also provide fascinating glimpses into European culture during the transition from medieval to modern society."

Most of the works in this exhibition were originally produced in Italy and were collected by members of the royal houses of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire over a period of more than 400 years. In some cases, objects can actually be traced back to their 16th century Italian owners.

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These small, durable sculptures were created partly to emulate the ancient bronzes which were being found in increasing numbers in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries. Available to anyone who could afford them, they were favored by well-educated collectors, whether they were members of the nobility, merchants, clerics or humanist scholars.

Inkwells and Ancient Heroes

Primarily secular and domestic in nature, the bronzes were particularly popular for display in the home. Some were utilitarian objects, such as inkwells, lamps or containers for blotting sand, but most were valued simply as fine artistic renditions of ancient heroes, myths and aspects of nature, to admire and display to one's cultivated guests. Possession of these objects demonstrated their owners' literary culture and sense of connection to the world of classical antiquity.

A sculptor of particular interest is Bertoldo di Giovanni, who modeled and signed the Bellerophon and Pegasus (his colleague Adriano Fiorentino cast it, as the inscription also indicates). An assistant to the great 15th century Florentine master Donatello, Bertoldo in his later years was a close friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, known as il Magnifico. According to a somewhat controversial tradition, Bertoldo was Michelangelo's teacher in sculpture.

Bronze Satyrs

One of the most frequent subjects for small bronzes was the satyr. These mythical creatures, half-man and half-goat, were represented as beings driven by sensual impulses, symbolizing the vital, generative force of nature. They were particularly popular as art objects in the city of Padua, a northeast Italian university town which was then a major center of bronze production. The Paduan sculptor Andrea Briosco, known as Riccio, was one of the leading bronze makers of the Renaissance and one of the most intensely individual artists represented in the show. The highly expressive character of his work is most evident in the Seated Satyr Drinking, a vibrant, impressionistic treatment of the popular satyr theme. The earliest known Renaissance bronze satyr statuette, a signed work by Adriano Fiorentine (known active until 1499), is also in the exhibition.

As the seat of one of the oldest universities in the world, Padua was also a center for scientific study of the natural world. The large number of casts of animals made from life which emerged from this period, including the Crab and Toad in the exhibition, are thought to have been produced in the city's many small workshops. Such sculptures probably adorned desks and shelves in the studies of scholars, as admired curiosities which occasionally served utilitarian purposes.

Renaissance Thought and Ancient Sculpture

The Renaissance artist who signed himself Moderno is responsible for two magnificent gilded silver reliefs in the exhibition, The Flagellation of Christ and Madonna and Child with Saints. Among the relatively few religious works in the show, they reflect a striving to harmonize classical and Christian philosophy in a way characteristic of Renaissance thought.

Just as Moderno modeled the Christ of his Flagellation relief on the famous Hellenistic marble sculpture of the Laocoon, excavated in Rome in 1506, so also Pier Jacopo Alari-Buonacolsi, known as Antico, frequently based his exquisitely finished bronzes on well-known works of ancient sculpture. His classically proportioned, idealized figures were often enhanced by gilding and silvering (as on the Venus Felix in the exhibition) and in some instances, as with the wrestling Hercules and Antaeus, are attempts to reconstruct an ancient work he had seen only in a fragmentary state.

Among later 16th century bronzes are some particularly moving Venetian works such as Alessandro Vittoria's Winter. Here a gaunt, aged man stands bundled in fur-trimmed robes, a striking contrast to the many youthful, heroic nudes in the exhibition. Another Venetian work is Niccolo Roccatagliata's Adam and Eve, which, while sketchy in its modeling of the figures, nevertheless presents a strongly expressive portrayal of the subjects' despair.

Works Inspired by Michelangelo

Giambologna (Giovanni da Bologna) was a brilliant Flemish sculptor who settled in Florence where he served the Medici court from c.1561 until his death in 1608. His beautifully finished bronzes, with their elegant, refined figures -- which were highly prized throughout Europe -- reflect the influence of Michelangelo and his Florentine followers. The exhibition features three bronzes by Giambologna, including the signed, gilded Venus Urania and the Flying Mercury, one of the artist's most popular inventions. A larger version of the Mercury, executed by a later artist, is familiar to the American public as the centerpiece of the fountain in the rotunda at the National Gallery of Art.

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A 17th Century Venus

A work which contrasts sharply with Giambologna's deliberately attenuated, spiraling figure is the Netherlandish Venus (c.1640), one of the later works in the exhibition. Relaxed in pose, fuller in proportions and warmer in expression, she embodies the more natural ideal of beauty that developed in the 17th century after the rarified style of Giambologna's era.

The catalogue for the show, written by Manfred Leithe-Jasper, head of the sculpture and decorative arts departments at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, is a particularly attractive and valuable work. For people unfamiliar with Renaissance bronzes it contains a general introduction explaining the technical processes involved in producing the sculpture and discusses many of the ancient myths and legends represented by the works in the exhibition. For historians and specialists it includes provenances, bibliography and scholarly discussions of the most recent opinions on controversial problems.

The exhibition is being organized by Donald McClelland, Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), with Douglas Lewis and Alison Luchs, curator and assistant curator of sculpture at the National Gallery of Art (McClelland and Lewis have also contributed introductory essays to the catalogue). It is supported in Washington, D.C. by a generous contribution from Republic National Bank of New York and Banco Safra, S.A., Brazil.

After leaving the National Gallery, the exhibition will be on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Dec. 18, 1986 - Feb. 18, 1987; and the Art Institute of Chicago, March 15 - June 6, 1987.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Color transparencies and black & white photographs are available. Call Ellen Stanley, (202) 842-6360.

National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

RENAISSANCE MASTER BRONZES FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA

The exhibition will consist of seventy five bronzes selected by Dr. Manfred Leithe-Jasper, head of the department of sculpture and decorative arts, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Dr. C. Douglas Lewis, curator of sculpture, National Gallery of Art and Donald R. McClelland, international exhibition coordinator, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

The following Master bronzes constitute the exhibition:

1. Antonio di Pietro Averlino called Filarete (c. 1400-1469)
Odysseus and Irus
Height: 27.5cm; Width: 16.4cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 6127
2. Bertoldo di Giovanni and Adriano Fiorentino (ca. 1420-1491)
Bellerophon Taming Pegasus
Height: 32.5cm; Base: 24.9 x 10.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5596
3. Adriano Fiorentino
Standing Satyr
Height: 41.4cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5851
4. North Italian (Padua or Mantua), ca. 1470-80
The Entombment of Christ
Height: 24.4cm without the acroterion, which is 3cm high; Width:
44.9cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 6059
5. Tuscan, Francesco di Giorio?, last quarter of the fifteenth
century
Virgin and Child with Three Angels
Height: 34.2cm; Width: 21.9cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9118
6. Florentine, last quarter of the fifteenth century
Putto Mictans
Height: 44.2cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9988

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7. North Italian, ca. 1500
Jupiter
Height: 35cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5769
8. Pier Jacopo Alari-Bonacolsi, called Antico (before 1460-1528)
Venus Felix
Height without base 29.8cm; Height of base 2.4cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5726
9. Pier Jacopo Alari-Bonacolsi, called Antico
Hercules and Antaeus
Height without base 39.4cm; Height of base 3.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5767
10. Pier Jacopo Alari-Bonacolsi, called Antico
Hercules and the Ceryneian Hind
Diameter 32.7cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5993
11. North Italian (circle of Antico), ca. 1500
Standing Hercules
Height 33.4cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 10130
12. North Italian, ca. 1500
Venus (the Venus of Cardinal Granvella)
Height: 18.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 7343
13. North Italian, beginning of the sixteenth century
Seated Female Panther
Height: 29.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 7339
14. North Italian (probably Padua), ca. 1500
Ambling Horse
Height: 18.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5703
15. North Italian (probably Padua), ca. 1500
Bull
Height 12.2cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5704

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16. North Italian (probably Padua), beginning of the sixteenth century
Crab
Width: 18.6cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5927
17. North Italian (Padua?), beginning of the sixteenth century
Toad
Height: 8.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5938
18. North Italian (Padua or Venice), first half of the sixteenth century
Armored Horseman
Height: 14.7cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 10010
19. North Italian (probably Padua or Venice), beginning of the sixteenth century
Seated Bacchante with Wreath
Height: 15.7cm
Inv. no. Pl. 5529
20. Andrea Briosco, called Riccio (1470-1532)
Seated Satyr
Height: 21.7cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5539
21. Andrea Briosco, called Riccio
Boy with a Goose.
Height: 19.6cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5518
22. North Italian (Padua), first half of the sixteenth century
Marsyas
Height: 12.3cm
Inv. no. Pl. 5628
23. North Italian, beginning of the sixteenth century
Warrior
Height: 28.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5656
24. North Italian (Padua?), second quarter of the sixteenth century
Pieta with Angels
Height 21.3 cm; Width: 13.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 8895

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25. Moderno
Flagellation of Christ
Height: 13.8cm; Width: 10.2cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 1105
26. Moderno
Madonna and Child with Saints
Height: 13.9cm; Width: 10.2cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 1107
27. North Italian (Padua), beginning of the sixteenth century,
probably from a model by Giovanni Maria Mosca (active 1507-73)
Artemis
Height: 21.8cm; Width 11.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9019
28. Antonio Lombardo (?)
Head of a Girl
Height: 17.3 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9098
29. Venetian, first half of the sixteenth century, close to Simone
Blanco
Head of a Child
Height: 15.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5597
30. Attributed to Simone Bianco
Head of a Man
Height: 17.4 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5615
31. North Italian, mid sixteenth century
Bust of Alexander the Great
Height: 32.7cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5603
32. Northern Italy or Nuremberg?, first third of the sixteenth century
Stout Man
Height: 17.3cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5528.
33. North Italian, end of the fifteenth century
Venus
Height: 23.1cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5600

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34. North Italian, Padua or Venice, c. 1525
Dead Christ with an Angel
Height: 8.7cm; Width: 8.5 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 7733
35. Italian?, second half of the sixteenth century
Negro Venus
Height including base: 32.5cm; Height of base: 1.9cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5533
36. Florentine, mid sixteenth century
Hercules or Cain
Height: 30.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5658
37. Florentine, mid sixteenth century: Niccolo Tribolo ?
Satyr Lamp
Height: 15.6 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5917
38. North Italian, second quarter of the sixteenth century
Pegasus
Height: 6.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5731
39. North Italian, first half of the sixteenth century
Crouching Gladiator I
Height: 17.3cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5583
40. Adriaen de Vries (c. 1545-1626)
Crouching Gladiator II
Height: 18.9cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5819
41. Milanese (?), end of the sixteenth century
Barbarian on Horseback
Height: 30.2cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5768
42. Attributed to Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570)
Jupiter
Height: 43cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5655

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43. Tiziano Minio (1511/12-1552)
Neptune in His Chariot
Height of Neptune alone: 30.1cm, with chariot: 34.5cm.
Inv. nos. Pl. 5748 (Neptune) and 5911 (chariot)
44. Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1608)
Allegory of Winter, or A Philosopher
Height: 33.2cm including the integrally cast base.
Inv. no. Pl. 5664
45. Venetian (?), Tiziano Aspetti (?) (ca. 1559-1606)
Venus Marina
Height: 55.5cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5885
46. Attributed to Nicolo Roccatagliata, documented between 1593-1636
Adam and Eve
Height: 23.2cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5530
47. Nicolo Roccatagliata, documented between 1593-1636
Putto with Drum and Flute
Height: 28.2cm including the integrally cast base-plate.
Inv. no. Pl. E. 7579
48. Nicolo Roccatagliata, documented between 1593-1636
Putto Playing the Flute
Height: 28.6cm including the integrally cast base-plate.
Inv. no. Pl. E. 7578
49. Johann Gregor van der Schardt ca. 1530, last mentioned in 1581
Mercury
Height: 53cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5900
50. Giambologna (1529-1608)
Venus Urania
Height: 38.8 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5893
51. Giambologna (1529-1608)
Flying Mercury
Height: 62.7cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5898

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52. Antonio Susini after Giambologna, active from c. 1580, died 1624
The Centaur Nessus Abducting Deianira
Height: 42.4cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5847
53. Giambologna (1529-1608)
Allegory of Prince Francesco de' Medici
Height: 30.7cm; Width: 45.6cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5814
54. Adriaen de Vries (ca. 1545-1626)
Christ at the Column
Height: 86.5cm; to the top of Christ's head: 64.7.
Inv. no. Pl. 8908
55. Antonio Susini (?) after Giambologna, active from c. 1580, died
1624
Pacing Lion
Height without base: 13.5cm. Base: Height: 1.2cm; Length:
15.2cm; Width: 7.3cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5876
56. After Giambologna
Triton
Height: 44.8cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9115
57. Florentine (?), first half of the seventeenth century
Crane
Height: 28.9cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5840
58. Antonio Susini (?) after Giambologna, active from c. 1580, died
1624
Lion Attacking a Bull
Height: 20.1cm; Width: 26.6cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5837
59. Close to Adriaen de Vries (ca. 1545-1626)
Putto Riding on a Dolphin
Height: 11.4cm; Length: 17.4 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9117
60. Attributed to Pietro Francavilla (1548-1615)
Chronos-Saturn
Height: 24.1cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5888.

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61. French (?), second half of the 16th century
Greyhound
Height, including socle: 18cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9992
62. Italian, second half of the sixteenth century
Elephant
Height: 12.6 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5721
63. North Italian, sixteenth century
Standing Putto
Height: 21.2 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5882
64. Italian Milanese (?), second half of the 16th century
Pacing Horse
Height: 31.9 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5772
65. Florentine (?), mid-seventeenth century
Archduke Leopold Wilhelm on Horseback
Height: 38.7 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 6002
- 66a. Attributed to Caspar Gras, ca. 1585-1674
The Emperor Ferdinand III on Horseback
Height: 36.2 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 6020
- 66b. Attributed to Caspar Gras, ca. 1585-1674
Spare Head, probably of the archduke Ferdinand Charles or
Sigismund Francis
Height: 6.9 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 6753
67. Caspar Gras (?), ca. 1585-1674
Mercury and Psyche
Height: 38.6 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5859
68. Florentine, end of the sixteenth century
Bird (warbler)
Height: 5.9 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5756

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69. Attributed to Caspar Gras, ca. 1585-1674
Nereid
Height: 10.2 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5669
70. Florentine (?), second half of the 16th century
Triton with a Fish
Height: 14.6 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 9122
71. Attributed to Hubert Gerhard, ca. 1550-1622/23
Two Horses Playing
Height: 38.2 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 6005
72. Hubert Gerhard, ca. 1550-1622/23
Mars, Venus and Cupid
Height: 41.4 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5848
73. South German (?), beginning of the seventeenth century
River God
Height: 24 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5890.
74. South German or Venetian; end of the 17th century, after a South
German prototype perhaps by Georg Petel
St. Jerome
Height 25.9 cm. to the top of the cross; 24.6 cm to the saint's
head.
Inv. no. Pl. E. 7561
75. Netherlandish, circa 1640 (perhaps Jerome Dugueshoy 1602-1654)
Venus or Amphitrite
Height: 49.2 cm.
Inv. no. Pl. 5850