

**News Release
Public Information
Department**

“Wit & Wine: A New Look at Ancient Iranian Ceramics from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation” on view at the Brooklyn Museum of Art
September 7–December 30, 2001

April 2001

Media Preview September 6, 2001, 10 a.m.

Wit & Wine: A New Look at Ancient Iranian Ceramics from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, on view at the Brooklyn Museum of Art September 7–December 30, 2001 is the first major exhibition of ancient Iranian ceramics in over a decade. The exhibition features forty-five extraordinary pieces that illustrate the 5,000-year ceramic tradition that flourished in ancient, pre-Islamic, Iran until 100 B.C.E.

The beautiful, technically sophisticated, and often amusing ceramics of ancient Iran demonstrate a rich yet little known tradition comparable to pre-Columbian, Chinese, and Greek achievements, establishing ancient Iranian pottery as one of the great ceramic traditions.

The jugs, jars, beakers, and spouted and shaped vessels in the exhibition were used for holding, pouring, and drinking liquids, especially wine. *Wit & Wine* explores how ancient Iranian potters made and decorated these vessels with high quality craftsmanship and design, often with a unique sense of humor. Many pieces are shaped like animals or are painted with animal motifs. Interpretations of wild and domesticated animals show elegant deer, powerful rams and amusing goats. Some pieces were created to serve specific functions such as cosmetic containers, some vessels were made to look like metal, and others are purely sculptural forms.

Included in the exhibition are an extraordinary ceramic head and neck of a bull, a vessel in the form of a seated camel, a rhyton (drinking horn) with a goat head

Wit & Wine

page 2

handle, a vessel with a deer's head spout, a vessel in the form of a stag, a spouted vessel in the shape of a bull, and a delightful vessel with two feet. Also on view will be a beaker painted with goats, a jug with four rams' heads, a vessel in the form of a mysterious aquatic animal, a small rectangular bottle on a two-headed horse and a bull-shaped vessel with wheels.

Curators of the exhibition are Dr. Trudy S. Kawami, Director of Research for the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation, and Dr. James F. Romano, Curator of Egyptian, Classical and Ancient Middle Eastern Art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

The exhibition is organized by the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation of New York. Arthur M. Sackler, M.D. (1913–1987), a research psychiatrist, medical publisher, connoisseur, and collector of art, established the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation in 1965 to make his extensive art collections accessible to the public. The Foundation collection has more than 900 works of art including Chinese ritual bronzes and ceramics, Buddhist stone sculpture, and the renowned Chu Silk Manuscript, the oldest existing Chinese written document.

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www.brooklynart.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution \$6; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$3. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits can be arranged through the Education Division, ext. 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Museum Caf  open until 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Museum Libraries and Archives are open by appointment. Museum shops are open 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; till 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.