

For immediate release

Italy to Loan Roman Sculptures to the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Long-term loan of objects from major 1st century AD Roman tomb discovery includes three life-size portrait busts and a marble funerary urn

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, June 7, 2010—The Indianapolis Museum of Art today announced that it will receive a long-term loan of several ancient sculptures from the Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome in January 2011. On loan for a renewable two-year period, the objects include three life-size portrait busts and a marble funerary urn from the Vigna Codini Columbarium II, a major Roman tomb discovered in 1847.

The loan of the Vigna Codini Tomb group is an example of new types of loans that the Italy-US Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2003, is intended to foster. While other major U.S. museums have recently had long-term loans from Italy, most have been in connection with the return of objects discovered to have been illegally exported. The IMA's presentation of *Sculpture from the Vigna Codini Tomb* will assemble the contents of this remarkable discovery and give unique insight into the original first-century AD presentation of major examples of Roman art from the Museo Nazionale Romano, Italy's leading museum dedicated to the ancient heritage of the city of Rome.

"We are pleased to collaborate with the Indianapolis Museum of Art to share these remarkable objects and their context with American museum goers," stated Stefano De Caro, Director of Antiquities for the Italian Ministry of Culture. "This important loan helps explain how works of art may also serve as testaments of the way that ancient Romans lived and sought to be remembered."

"American museums have few examples of ancient art which can be displayed with their complete context understood," added Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. "The Vigna Codini Tomb contents from the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods open a window to understanding that only long-term loans can provide, since the acquisition of archaeological material with inadequate ownership history is no longer acceptable."

The Vigna Codini Tomb is an intriguing site that provides great insight into Roman life. Discovered on the outskirts of Rome in 1847, the tomb was paid for by a corporation of freed slaves, who sold shares in 295 funerary niches intended to hold the ashes of the dead. Some of the niches were also designed to accommodate sculptural commissions that commemorate those buried within—the surviving three of which will be on view at the IMA. These portraits depict high-ranking servants in the employ of the first imperial family of Rome, to judge from the fact that they are among the few to merit sculpted commemorations in marble.

About the Indianapolis Museum of Art

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the Indianapolis Museum of Art is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The IMA offers visitors an expansive view of arts and culture through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Recognizing the inherent connections among art, design and nature, the IMA offers visitors experiences at the Museum, in 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, which will be one of the largest contemporary art parks in the United States when it opens in June 2010, and at Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA's grounds.

The IMA completed a \$74 million expansion project in May 2005. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and includes renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. In order to present major exhibitions of its own and to accommodate major traveling exhibitions, the expanded Museum was outfitted with new 10,000-plus-square-foot Clowes Special Exhibition Gallery on the Museum's first level. In November 2008, the IMA opened the renovated 600-seat Tobias Theater. Nicknamed, "The Toby," the theater is a venue for talks, performances and films.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

###

Media Contacts:

Katie Zarich / Emily Lytle
IMA
317-920-2650/317-923-1331 x 252
kzarich/ elytle@imamuseum.org

Ilana B. Simon / Molly Kurzius
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
720-746-9552 / 212-671-5163
isimon / mkurzius@resnicowschroeder.com