

N E W S R E L E A S E

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College of Wooster Art Museum Invites Visitors to Step Back in Time

"Ancient Ohio/Ancient Egypt" runs Aug. 30 through Oct. 16 in The College of Wooster Art Museum

WOOSTER, Ohio – Visitors to The College of Wooster Art Museum will experience a trip back in time as they view "Ancient Ohio/Ancient Egypt," Aug. 30 through Oct. 16 in Ebert Art Center (1220 Beall Ave.). The first exhibition of the 2005-2006 academic year promises a fascinating journey that brings to life two cultures that existed contemporaneously on different continents. Artifacts from the two cultures, on display in the Sussel Gallery and Burton D. Morgan Gallery, provide insight into the social systems, trade networks, and artistic developments of these ancient societies.

"What is most interesting about this exhibition are the parallels between the two societies, even though they had no contact whatsoever," said Stephen Lucey, assistant professor of art history at The College of Wooster and curator of the exhibitions. "Both had a tradition of monumental architecture, religious beliefs, and elaborate artistic forms."

"Ancient Ohio" showcases the indigenous Eastern Woodland cultures of the American Midwest during the period c. 1000 B.C.E. to C.E. 1000 through a variety of objects on loan from the Ohio Historical Society and the Wayne County Historical Society. Included in the exhibition are pendants, necklaces, rings, and bracelets, as well as tools and other artifacts. Also on display will be a variety of utilitarian objects, such as pottery or pipes that underwent a marked stylistic development in both form and decoration, as well as sculpture and tools made of clay, stone, metal, and various other media.

"The Woodland Period featured a number of cultural developments, most notably the emergence of sedentary lifestyles, complex societies, agricultural experiments, and sophisticated technological, artistic, and agricultural traditions," said Lucey. "The range of skills required suggests a technical sophistication. These high standards of craftsmanship were matched by high-quality materials, such as exotic stone and metal imported from

great distances. The stylistic similarities across media and object types suggests broad training in a number of areas, collaboration among artists, and an exchange of objects and ideas.”

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First Add – College of Wooster Art Museum Invites Visitors to Step Back in Time

“Ancient Egypt” spotlights The College of Wooster's Ptolemaic-era mummiform coffin from Akhmim, Egypt (c. 320-220 B.C.E.) along with information gleaned from last year's CT scan of the mummy at Wooster Community Hospital's HealthPoint. The coffin, recently cleaned, lies in an exquisite display case, and includes imagery depicting gods and goddesses associated with the funerary cult and sacred hieroglyphic text running along the coffin's lower legs. It also reveals the possible name of its occupant, “Ta-irty-bai” a female believed to be between 35 and 43 years of age at the time of her death. In addition, there will also be a forensic reconstruction of the mummy's face on display in the gallery and a variety of related funerary objects from the Late Period, such as amulets (small plaques or pendants) and traditional jewelry forms intended to aid the deceased in the afterlife.

“The Wooster mummy and her coffin are products of Ptolemaic Egyptian society, which consisted of a Greek-Macedonian aristocracy, Greek military pensioners, and a large indigenous Egyptian population,” said Lucey. “Despite foreign influences, a powerful priestly class assured the Egyptian religious and cultural traditions would remain strong until the very end of the period.”

“Ancient Ohio/Ancient Egypt” is free and open to the public. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. The opening reception will be Friday, Sept. 2 from 7-9 p.m., during which Lucey will present a gallery talk. There will also be a conversation in the gallery with Lucey on Thursday, Sept. 8, at noon. In addition, Bradley T. Lepper and Martha Potter Otto, curators of archaeology at the Ohio Historical Society, will give a lecture on Wednesday, Sept. 21, at 7 p.m., and Jonathan Elias, director of the Akhmim Mummy Studies Consortium, will deliver a lecture on Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7 p.m. The final related event will be a roundtable discussion in the gallery featuring Lucey along with three other Wooster faculty members – Nigel Brush (archaeology), Nick Kardulias (archaeology and anthropology), and Greg Wiles (geology) – on Thursday, Oct. 13, at 7 p.m.

Exhibitions and related events are supported, in part, by the Ohio Arts Council with state tax dollars “to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.” For more information, call 330-263-2388 or visit www.wooster.edu/Music-and-the-Arts/The-College-of-Wooster-Art-Museum.aspx.

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