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**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, TO DEBUT MICHAEL C. RUETTIGERS GALLERY FOR ANCIENT COINS—
ONLY GALLERY DEDICATED TO COINS AT A MAJOR U.S. ART MUSEUM**

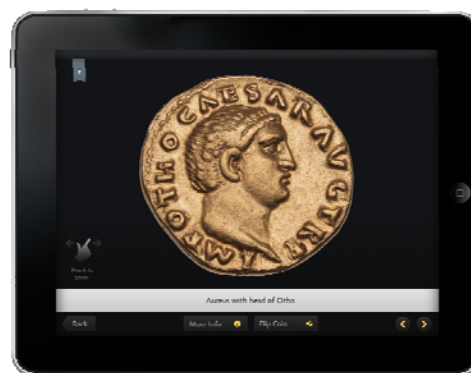


Aureus with the bust of Aelius Verus, Roman, gold, AD 137

BOSTON, MA (September 20, 2012)—Five hundred ancient Greek and Roman coins from the world-renowned collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), will be showcased in the new Michael C. Ruetters Gallery for Ancient Coins, to debut on September 25. It is the only gallery dedicated to coinage in a major US art museum and is unique for its emphasis on ancient coins as works of art—masterpieces on a miniature scale. The gallery will also illustrate how coins are both a form of cultural expression—reflecting the customs, beliefs, and ideals of those who produced and used them—and primary documents of ancient history. It is named in recognition of Michael C.

Ruetters, whose generosity has made possible the creation of this spectacular new gallery. In addition, Mr. Ruetters has given 14 rare and important Roman gold coins to the MFA, including *Aureus with the bust of Aelius Verus* (AD 137).

To enhance visitors' appreciation of these works, moveable magnifying lenses facilitate closer examination of the coins on view in several cases. In addition, by using iPads affixed to five cases running down the center of the gallery, visitors will be able to explore in-depth 274 Greek and Roman coins using the new MFA Coins application developed by the MFA. It allows users to view both sides of each coin, to zoom in, and learn more about the significance of these objects. The app includes highlights of the coin collection, information about Greek and Roman coins, and a timeline of ancient coins. The iPad app will be available for free download from Apple's App Store, or by clicking on a link to the App Store on the new page for the Michael C. Ruetters Gallery for Ancient Coins on the Museum's website <http://www.mfa.org/ancient-coins-gallery>. Also in the gallery will be a touchscreen where visitors can create their own coins—choosing symbols, motto, and metal—and learn the elements of a coin by designing one.



Coins from the MFA's collection can be viewed using the newly created app, MFA Coins.

“We are especially pleased to be able to share with our visitors many of the greatest treasures from the MFA’s coin collection in a beautiful new gallery, where they can explore the depth of our holdings and also use interactives to enhance the experience,” said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the MFA. “It is the latest in a series of niche galleries at the Museum highlighting special aspects of our collection, ranging from ship models to jewelry to period rooms. We appreciate the generosity of Michael Ruetters in making this newest addition possible.”

The gallery, located on Level 2 of the George D. and Margo Behrakis Wing, will present a representative selection of Greek and Roman coins, ranging in date from the mid-7th century BC to the early 5th century AD. These include Greek coins of various denominations, such as the *dracma*, the base unit of measurement; the *tetradrachm*, worth four *drachmas*; and the *dekadrachm*, worth 10 *drachmas*; as well as Roman gold (*aureus*) and silver (*denarius*) coins. The visitor experience will begin with a display of 10 highlights of the MFA collection, followed by surveys of Greek coinage from around the Mediterranean and beyond, and Roman coins from the Republican and Imperial periods. Thematically arranged cases examine ancient coins as both economic instruments and as works of art, and explore how mythological subjects and portraits are represented on coins.

These ancient coins, shown thematically and chronologically, will be drawn from the Museum’s extensive numismatic collection, which comprises more than 19,000 coins, medals, medallions, paper currency, and tokens ranging from the 7th century BC to the mid 20th century. The exhibition will showcase several of the MFA’s most important examples of Greek and Roman works, many prized through the centuries as objects of wealth and status. The world-renowned *Dekadrachm of Syracuse with head of the nymph Arethusa* (about 465 BC) is the most famous Greek coin in the Museum’s collection, while the *Tetradrachm of Amphipolis with head of Apollo* (390–370 BC) is one of the most sculptural. Both coins rank among the most artistically refined and sophisticated coins ever made. Other coins illuminate the political and cultural history of the ancient world. The *Denarius with head of M. Junius Brutus* (43–42 BC)—a coin issued by Brutus in the aftermath of the assassination of Julius Caesar—offers a powerful connection with a momentous event. The *8-aureus medallion with bust of Claudius II Gothicus* (AD 268–270), the largest gold coin in the Museum’s collection, offers a message of stability during an extended period of turmoil in the Roman Empire.

Also on view in the gallery will be works of art illustrating how coin engravers engaged in a dynamic exchange with other ancient craftsmen, including sculptors, vase-painters, and metalworkers, sharing much of the same visual vocabulary and employing similar artistic conventions. “How coins relate to classical works in other media will be explored through thoughtful juxtapositions of coins with sculpture, ceramics, metalware, gems, and other objects,” said Richard A. Grossmann, Consulting Curator for Numismatics. “This is an endeavor that is only possible within the setting of an encyclopedic museum with Greek and Roman holdings as deep and diverse as the MFA’s.”

Additionally, the display incorporates a variety of post-antique works—from a selection of European and American coins and medals to a pair of Renaissance illustrated books—which will show the enduring influence of ancient coins on Western art and culture.

MICHAEL C. RUETTIGERS

Michael C. Ruetters is a member of the Museum's Board of Overseers, Communications Committee, and Vice-Chair of the Art of the Ancient World Visiting Committee. He and his wife Maureen became Museum members in 1986 and Great Benefactors in 2010 by virtue of their generous gift to fund the gallery. Mr. Ruetters is senior advisor to the board and management of EMC Corporation. He joined EMC Corporation in 1988 and served as its chief executive officer from 1992 until January 2001, before becoming executive chairman and then chairman until 2005. Mr. Ruetters is a passionate collector of Roman gold coins, drawn to the way these objects embody the past. He enjoys the excitement of examining a coin up close and feeling a connection with the people who made and used it and with their history and culture. Mr. Ruetters made his first donation of coins to the MFA in 2008. These gifts and the great strength of the MFA's renowned ancient coin collection inspired the creation of a gallery that would allow the MFA to make accessible to its visitors many of these treasures and share with them the excitement of coins as a portal to the past.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MFA COIN COLLECTION

The MFA has collected coins since shortly after its founding in the late 19th century. Coins from around the globe and throughout history are represented, but the core of the Museum's numismatic holdings consists of about 7,500 Greek and Roman coins, ranging in date from the 7th century BC to the 7th century AD. All ancient Greek, Roman, and Roman Provincial coins in the collection are accessible through the Museum's website www.mfa.org/collections. Numerous other coins and medals from other cultures and eras can also be viewed on the website.

The Museum owes its strength in this area to the efforts of several notable collectors: Edward Perry Warren, who from the end of the 19th century through first two decades of the 20th century purchased large numbers of coins on the European market on the Museum's behalf and also donated numerous coins; Theodora Wilbour (one of the premier female collectors of ancient coins), who gave many important pieces from her collection in the 1930s and upon her death bequeathed the Theodora Wilbour Fund in memory of Zoë Wilbour, which funds numismatic acquisitions to this day; Cornelius Vermeule, who, in addition to steering the collection in his role as longtime curator of Classical Art at the MFA, also donated several hundred coins; and most recently, Michael Ruetters, who has given a number of highly important Roman gold coins in recent years and has also endowed the MFA's Michael C. Ruetters Gallery for Ancient Coins. This new gallery will be the focal point for numismatics at the MFA, but smaller groupings of ancient coins will continue to be integrated into other galleries at the Museum; post-antique coins and medals currently are on display in several of the MFA's European galleries and throughout the Art of the Americas Wing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND PRESS IMAGES

High-resolution images featuring works on view in the Ruetters Gallery are downloadable in the Press Room image library at <http://www.mfa.org/news>. For more information about the MFA, please visit www.mfa.org. Join the conversation about the MFA on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/mfaboston> and Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/mfaboston>, and watch MFA-related videos at <http://www.youtube.com/mfaboston>.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum's collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments. Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.; and Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. Admission (which includes one repeat visit within 10 days) is \$25 for adults and \$23 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and youths age 17 and younger on weekdays after 3 p.m., weekends, and Boston Public Schools holidays; otherwise \$10. Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$25). MFA Members are always admitted for free. The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For more information, visit www.mfa.org or call 617.267.9300. The MFA is located on the Avenue of the Arts at 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.

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