

Antiquities Overview

At the entrance to the Museum are some examples of the Greco-Roman antiquities which are part of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art collection. The sky lit court is named in honor of Wright S. Ludington's father, Charles H. Ludington.

Greco-Roman antiquities were part of the original installation of Ludington Court in 1941 when a Greek fourth century BCE funerary loutrophoros, a vase-shaped grave ornament, was placed at its center for the Museum's opening in 1941. Today the Lansdowne Hermes, which was originally placed on display in 1985, stands at its center.

A regular succession of gifts from Mr. Ludington also significantly expanded the collection of smaller Greek pieces. In 1955, the Museum received a group of ceramic vessels decorated with painted red and black figures which includes most major forms and styles. The formal gift in 1981, after a long-term loan, of a selection of ancient bronzes traces their evolution from the Geometric Period through the full flowering of figurative representation of fourth and fifth centuries BCE, and culminates in a small bronze Dancing Girl of approximately 200 BCE. Throughout the 1970s, Ludington gifts continued to enhance this collection, while also expanding the Museum's holdings of ancient art into the earlier period of Egyptian relief carving and sculpture.

Several other donors have created an extensive collection of ancient glass which includes most major types of vessels produced by the ancient Mediterranean cultures beginning as early as the sixth century BCE with examples of both luxury items and utilitarian forms. The collection traces the growing technology and sophistication of ancient craftspeople, from early core-wound processes to later examples of enameled and wheel-cut decoration. This sequence is paralleled in a large group of Greek ceramic and bronze objects given by Mr. and Mrs. Earnest C. Watson and ancient Near Eastern material donated by Mr. and Mrs. Lee O. Wolcott which includes works from numerous early cultures such as Amlash and Luristan.

- adapted from SBMA Catalog "Selected Works" 1991, p.16