

Celia Romani

Art 230: Catalog Entry for Lauren Heath

November 2, 2015

Title: Painted plaster reproduction of a Minoan Marine-style terracotta vase from Egypt

Artist(s) or Creator(s): Halvor Bagge

Date: 1925-26

Time Period: Minoan Reproduction

Theme (title of exhibition):

Format Type: Pottery

Media: Painted Plaster

Dimensions:

Description:

Marine style, as shown in this piece, is a common style of Minoan pottery. It is characterized by detailed and naturalistic depictions of marine life,¹ in this piece coral, sponges, and seaweed. Minoan culture was centered on the island of Crete and therefore depictions of the sea and assorted creatures and plants found within it would have been a way of depicting the world around them. In this piece, the style is more direct and literal with little to no variation from observational depictions. Later pieces done in Marine style, such as the famous Octopus flask, show a more stylized method of depicting marine life with aspects of the creatures or plants becoming designs inspired by their real life shapes. Hints of this can be seen on the neck and handle of the vase where fluid lines are shown to continue the theme of plant life.

With regards to this particular piece, the style is emphasized by the anthropomorphic shape of the vase. The way in which the curves of the body of the vase and the handle mirror the curves of the marine life. This creates a harmony between the content and form of the piece² as well as furthers the naturalistic and descriptive quality of the work by creating a true sense of being underwater with the forms moving with the currents. The piece presents as fluid and cohesive.

¹ Mark Cartwright. "Minoan Pottery." Ancient History Encyclopedia. May 30, 2012. Accessed November 1, 2015.

² Dr. Sarah Archino. "Minoan Art." Lecture, Art 230 - Ancient Art I, Greenville, October, 2015.

This particular piece is a reproduction, created by Scandinavian artist Halvor Bagge, of a Minoan vase found in Egypt in 1893.³ The reproduction is made from painted plaster whereas the original would have been terracotta.⁴ The original is owned by the Borély Museum in Marseilles while the reproduction is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The advantage of having a reproduction is that it allows easier access for the general public to see the work, without having to travel out of the country or around the world. It also allows the museum to present a more complete and comprehensive collection of art from the period without needing to buy or borrow the original piece. This does bring up questions though of whether or not the same experience can be gained from seeing a reproduction of a piece compared to the original. It is worth traveling to see the reproduction when you could simply view an image of the original from your computer screen at home? The line between forgeries and reproductions can also be blurred here as many artists have created reproductions of original pieces and sold them for their own personal profit.⁵ Overall though, if presented as a reproduction the addition to a collection can be both beneficial to the museum and to the viewer as a way of gaining a larger perspective on the culture or time period as a whole.

³ Sean Hemingway. "Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age." Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age. May 17, 2011. Accessed November 1, 2015.

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⁵ Sean Hemingway. "Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age." Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age. May 17, 2011. Accessed November 1, 2015.

Bibliography

Archino, Sarah, Dr. "Minoan Art." Lecture, Art 230 - Ancient Art I, Greenville, October, 2015.

Cartwright, Mark. "Minoan Pottery." Ancient History Encyclopedia. May 30, 2012. Accessed November 1, 2015. <http://www.ancient.eu/article/391/>.

Hemingway, Sean. "Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age." Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age. May 17, 2011. Accessed November 1, 2015.