


At Museum for Rescued Art, Italy Displays Stolen Artifacts It Has Recovered

 smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/rome-museum-of-rescued-art-stolen-artifacts-180980277/



Cool Finds

The museum will showcase items before returning them to their original locations



Elizabeth Djinis - History Correspondent

June 21, 2022



Rome's new Museum of Rescued Art opens with some 100 objects on display. Photo by Roberto Serra - Iguana Press / Getty Images

Italy works hard to recover stolen artifacts. Now, a new museum will show off the country's success stories.

Opening this month in Rome, the Museum for Rescued Art will display artifacts that were stolen from across the country and smuggled into the United States, reports the *Guardian's* Angela Giuffrida. Roughly 100 Etruscan, Greek and Roman artifacts will be on display in the museum's first exhibit.

Some of these pieces include "carved Etruscan figurines" and "imposing painted jars," according to Frances D'Emilio of the *Associated Press* (AP). The objects date back to the eighth to fourth centuries B.C.E., and many come from what is now Cerveteri.

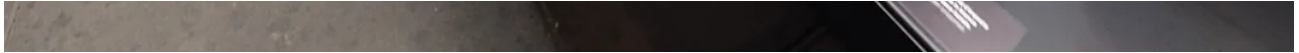
Per the AP, one of the artifacts on display is a red and white jar from the seventh century B.C.E., which stands more than 40 inches high. The jar's design evokes the blinding of *Polyphemus*, the one-eyed giant from Greek mythology depicted in Homer's *Odyssey*.

The Etruscans were "fascinated with Greek myth," says *Massimo Osanna*, director general of Italy's state museums, to the AP. "[They were] Etruscan heroes that identified with Greek heroes."

Another notable piece is a marble bust of Roman emperor Septimius Severus. The piece was stolen from an Italian museum in 1984, reports the *Guardian*. Almost four decades later, it was found in New York—just before going up for auction at Christie's.

According to the AP, the museum will change its exhibits every couple of months, eventually returning objects to their original locations. The items on display now will be shown through October 15.





Every few months the museum will swap out items on display, eventually returning them to their original locations. Photo by Roberto Serra - Iguana Press / Getty Images

“We thought it’s right to have the pieces return to the places where they were stolen from,” Italian Culture Minister [Dario Franceschini](#) tells the AP.

The museum allows Italy to showcase its successful recovery efforts, which are primarily led by the [Carabinieri Unit for the Protection of Cultural Heritage](#), founded in 1969. But despite these successes, [Teo Luzzi](#), the Carabinieri Commanding General, has his eye on one object in particular: At the museum’s opening last week, Luzzi said that he hopes Italy will one day recover the [Statue of a Victorious Youth](#), created around 300 to 100 B.C.E., per the AP.

The statue was found by an Italian fishing boat in the 1960s and purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1977. (Despite a [2018 court ruling](#) that the Getty must return the statue, the museum still holds it in its collection.)

“Protecting and enhancing these riches is both an institutional duty and a moral commitment,” Franceschini tells [Artnet](#)’s Amah-Rose Abrams. “We must take on this responsibility towards future generations so that, through these artifacts, they are able to preserve identity-related values and acknowledge a shared cultural history.”

You Might Also Like

- [Hundreds of Looted Ancient Artifacts Confiscated From the Black Market Are Now on Display in Naples](#)
April 17, 2025
- [Pompeii's Museum Reopens With Dazzling Display of Archaeological Treasures](#)
January 26, 2021
- [Italy Celebrates Return of Looted Artifacts Worth \\$20 Million](#)
January 26, 2023
- [Trove of 600 Looted Italian Artifacts Worth \\$65 Million Comes Home](#)
May 31, 2024
- [A Prominent Italian Dealer Has Been Charged With Trafficking Thousands of Looted Artifacts](#)
November 5, 2024



Elizabeth Djinis | | [Read More](#)

Elizabeth Djinis is a writer and journalist based in Rome, Italy. Her work has been published in the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Glamour* and *Teen Vogue*, among others.

Get the latest stories in your inbox every weekday.

Email Powered by Salesforce Marketing Cloud ([Privacy Notice](#) / [Terms & Conditions](#))