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North Carolina State University Basketball Player Lends an Arm to Ancient Statue

3-D scanning of Wyatt Walker's arm to be used as model for new addition to the North Carolina Museum of Art's Statue of Bacchus

Raleigh, N.C.—The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) worked with North Carolina State University men's basketball player Wyatt Walker to re-create the arm of an ancient statue as part of its [Bacchus Conservation Project](#). The 6-foot-9-inch player's arm was 3-D scanned by Heather Pendrak of Pendragon 3D, with Walker holding grapes above his head in the manner depicted in a 19th-century drawing of the statue, to help artist Larry Heyda of Lawrence Heyda Studios create the new statue arm.

The new arm is crucial to the project, and its proportions must be carefully replicated to create a limb that looks natural and fits with the rest of the sculpture. Considering that the *Statue of Bacchus* measures 6 feet 8 inches, Heyda proposed that the model be a basketball player, who would have both height and well-defined muscles.



"It was a privilege to be chosen to help with this project," said Walker, a graduate student forward on the NCSU team. "When the artists talked me through the history of the statue and all the work they've done to restore it, I was honored to be able to offer my arm for 3-D scanning to help them complete their work."

The Bacchus Conservation Project is a multidisciplinary and multiphase endeavor, says Dr. Caroline Rocheleau, curator of ancient art and director of the project. "We

have worked and consulted with scholars, scientists, engineers, and artists, but we never thought we'd end up working with a basketball player!"

Academic interest in the statue began in the 1960s when classical scholars realized the sculpture was a patchwork comprising a rare 2nd-century Roman torso, a head from a different ancient sculpture, and limbs, hair locks, berries, and leaves that were added later. A derestoration was begun 30 years ago with the removal of the head, but the treatment did not extend to the rest of the sculpture. The Bacchus Conservation Project was established in 2013 to study the sculpture and complete the derestoration.

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Recent research and materials analysis, however, have led the Bacchus project team to reconsider the plan. The team's scientific, conservation, and curatorial data showed that Bacchus contains more fragments from ancient quarries than previously thought and that displaying each fragment separately did not make curatorial sense. Together, though, these ancient fragments create a wonderful statue of the Roman god of wine, probably assembled in the late 16th or early 17th century. The team did not want to lose this fascinating and important aspect of the sculpture's history. The discoveries have made the composite sculpture more interesting as a whole, even with that rare 2nd-century Roman torso embedded in it.

In addition to creating a new arm for the statue, the new conservation treatment will return the statue to its 1960s appearance, reattaching the head to the body.

As the final phase of the project, the Museum will publish a catalogue and host an exhibition featuring the restored statue, with digital experiences to engage the public in the conservation project. Behind-the-scenes interactive programs will explore how the scientific method is used to solve real-world art challenges.

More information on Bacchus and the progress to date is at ncartmuseum.org/bacchus.



Image captions:

North Carolina State University basketball player Wyatt Walker models with a bunch of grapes at the team's Dail Basketball Center practice facility in Raleigh while NCMA conservator Corey Riley, artist Larry Heyda, engineer Andrew Terrell, and NCMA Curator of Ancient Art Caroline Rocheleau help place his arm to fit the *Statue of Bacchus*.

The sculpture in its current headless state, missing its right arm. Roman, *Statue of Bacchus*, 2nd century, marble, gift of Dr. and Mrs. John D. Humber

Project Information:

The Bacchus Conservation Project is made possible by Bank of America and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (MA-30-16-0264-16). Additional support provided by Steve and Frosene Zeis and Don Davis and Peggy Wilks.

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building, home to the permanent collection, in 2010. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Valerie Hillings, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Roy Cooper, governor, and an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Susi Hamilton, secretary.