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**\*Images Available Upon Request**

**Cincinnati Art Museum presents**  
***Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt***

**June 18 – September 11, 2016**

**This exhibition is organized by the Brooklyn Museum.**



**CINCINNATI** – Whether you prefer the Egyptian pyramids and the Great Sphinx or Grumpy Cat and Lil Bub – there is something for everyone at the Cincinnati Art Museum's summer exhibition, *Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt*, **June 18 – Sept. 11, 2016**.

Felines played an important role in ancient Egyptian imagery for thousands of years. From domesticated cats to mythic symbols of divinity, *Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt* explores the role of cats, lions, and other feline creatures in Egyptian mythology, kingship and everyday life through 80 representations of cats from the Brooklyn Museum's world-famous Egyptian collection. Majestic lions, cuddly companions, fierce hunters and sleepy sun-lovers are all on view.

The ancient Egyptians participated in the domestication of cats and enjoyed their companionship as pets. They also valued felines as protectors of their grain stores from vermin. Many of their gods possessed cats' physical features, expressive moodiness and sometimes-supernatural intelligence. These curious animals were a purr-fect match for the Egyptians, who transformed these worldly creatures into symbols ranging from the war-like to the benign.

Julie Aronson, Cincinnati Art Museum curator and a long-time cat shelter volunteer for Save the Animals Foundation (STAF), explains the allure of this show. "The monumental Great Sphinx of Giza, one of the masterpieces of the ancient world, relates to this exhibition. The early Egyptians venerated the dual nature of cats, who they admired on the one hand for their hunting abilities and fierceness and on the other for their protective and maternal instincts. We are fortunate to present such evocative works of art that reflect not only the tremendous artistry of the Egyptians but their love of the beauty, complexity and mystery of cats, both wild and domestic."

Gallery design includes cases imbedded in pyramids and a timeline and map of ancient Egypt. The exhibition features thematic sections devoted to representations of small and large cats, feline-headed goddesses associated with the sun, sphinxes and other male protective deities, amulets and objects of daily life in feline form and ornamentation. Interactive activities will make this an event for all to enjoy.

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So as not to deprive dog lovers, the exhibition also includes a small section on these faithful creatures who have been serving a protective role for their owners for centuries. The ancient Egyptians began keeping dogs as pets as early as 5,000 B.C.E. Canine gods appeared in Egyptian myth often serving as guardians of the dead.

*Divine Felines: Cats of Ancient Egypt* will be on view in the museum's Thomas R. Schiff Gallery (234). Admission is free and open to the public every day that the museum is open, Tuesday–Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Enquirer Media is the media sponsor.

Beyond *Divine Felines*, other cat representations are on view throughout the museum. Related works from the Cincinnati Art Museum's own Egyptian collection are on display in the newly renovated Antiquities galleries. Keepsakes for devoted cat lovers and the exhibition catalogue are available for visitors in the Museum Shop or online shop. In addition to the major exhibition, the museum will present three complementary special features:

## ***Modern Cat***

June 18–September 11, 2016

Stroll through *Modern Cat* for a look at 20 prints from the Cincinnati Art Museum's collection, dating from about 1890 to 1980. These cat-themed works range from the sleek Art Nouveau color lithograph by Théophile Steinlen to the whimsical abstraction of Joan Miró. Cats were especially attractive to mid-century Modernists such as Charley and Edie Harper and Inagaki Tomoo. The feline's quintessential character traits and exquisite form are distilled using a variety of printmaking techniques into compelling, colorful works of art. Free admission. On view next to *Divine Felines* in another Thomas R. Schiff Gallery (Gallery 235).

## ***Master Cats***

July 11–November 13, 2016

For centuries, printmakers have incorporated felines into their work. While often not the central focus of the art, cats are shown insinuating themselves into people's lives in works such as Albrecht Dürer's *Adam and Eve* and Rembrandt van Rijn's *Virgin and Child with a Cat and Snake*. A special selection of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japanese prints, on loan from the Joel and Bernice Weisman collection, will rotate throughout this special showing. Free admission. On view in Gallery 213.

## ***Elizabeth Nourse: Sketchbooks and Archive***

May 14–November 13, 2016

This new selection from the sketchbooks of Cincinnati favorite Elizabeth Nourse (1859–1938) features portrayals of cats and dogs. Although the artist is best known for her sensitive depictions of people, animals also appear throughout her sketchbooks. These drawings showcase Nourse's close observations of animal appearance and behavior, as well as the special bond between pets and children. On view in Gallery 213.

**#CAMFelines**

**#MuseumCats**

**#MuseumMonday**

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## Special Events/Programming

**Divine Felines Member Preview Day:** June 17, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Divine Felines Lecture:** Yekaterina Barbash, Associate Curator of Egyptian Art, Brooklyn Museum, June 18, 2 p.m.

**Creative Encounters:** Animal Portraits, June 19, 1–3 p.m.

**Art After Dark:** Cats and Cocktails, June 24, 5 p.m.–9 p.m.

**Internet Cat Video Festival:** Seasongood Pavilion, June 24, 9:15 p.m.

**Internet Cat Video Festival:** Cincinnati Art Museum Fath Auditorium, June 25, 11 a.m.

**ASL Tours for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired:** July 16, 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

**Summer Teacher Institute:** A Global Look at Art, July 19 – 21

**Fandom:** Cat Lovers, July 23, 2–3 p.m.

**Connect:** Egypt, July 23, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

**Summer Camp:** The Ancient World, July 25–29

**Connect:** Cat Craze, August 27, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

**Family First Saturday:** Feline Fun, September 3, 12–4 p.m.

**InDepth Gallery Talk:** *Divine Felines* with Margaret Sneeringer, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Cincinnati, August 13, 2 p.m.

Learn more about all of the events and programs at <http://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org/calendar>.

## **Other exhibitions on view at the Cincinnati Art Museum**

- *30 Americans*, now through August 28, 2016
- *Not in New York: Carl Solway and Cincinnati*, now through October 30, 2016

Image credit: *Cat's Head*, 30 B.C.E. to third century C.E..Bronze, gold, 2 3/8 x 1 3/4 x 1 13/16 in. (6 x 4.4 x 4.6 cm). Brooklyn Museum. Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 36.114.

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## **About the Cincinnati Art Museum**

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

General admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is always free. The museum is open Tuesday – Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. and is closed Monday.