

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

### Athena Painter

(Greek, Attic, active c. 500–475 BC)

Lekythos, 525–500 BC

Terracotta, 12 x 4 1/8"

Gift of Robert Brookings and Charles Parsons, 1904

### C Painter

(Greek, Attic, active c. 575–555 BC)

Siana Cup, 560–550 BC

Terracotta, 5 3/8 x 12 5/8"

Gift of Robert Brookings and Charles Parsons, 1904

### Nicolò della Casa

(French, 1472–1553)

### After Baccio Bandinelli

(Italian, 1488–1560)

*Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici in Armor*, 1544

Engraving, 16 3/4 x 11 3/4"

University purchase, Art Acquisition Fund, 2000

### Diosphos Painter

(Greek, Attic, active c. 500–475 BC)

Lekythos, 500–490 BC

Terracotta, 7 1/2 x 2 1/8"

Gift of Robert Brookings and Charles Parsons, 1904

### School of Orazio Fontana

(Italian, 1510–1571)

*How Cadmus Killed the Serpent*, c. 1540

Maiolica, 1 7/8 x 10 5/8"

University purchase, Elizabeth Northrup McMillan Fund, 1967

### Anne-Louis Girodet de Roucy-Trioson

(French, 1767–1824)

*The Meeting of Aeneas with Anchises in the Elysian Fields*, 1820

Pierre noire and ink wash heightened with white on vellum, 11 x 14 13/16"

University purchase, Plant Replacement Fund, 1962

### Hendrick Goltzius

(Dutch, 1558–1617)

*The Great Hercules*, 1589

Engraving, 22 1/2 x 16 1/4"

University purchase with funds from Mrs. Mahlon B. Wallace Jr., by exchange, 2004

### Harriet Hosmer

(American, 1830–1908)

*Daphne*, 1854

Marble, 26 1/2 x 19 1/2 x 13 1/2"

Gift of Wayman Crow Sr., 1880

### Long-Nose Painter

(Greek, Attic)

Neck Amphora, 540–525 BC

Terracotta, 20 1/8 x 10 3/4"

Gift of Robert Brookings and Charles Parsons, 1904

### André Racz

(American, b. Romania, 1916–1994)

*Perseus Beheading Medusa, VIII*, 1945

Engraving with aquatint, 7 / 25, 26 1/8 x 18 1/4"

University purchase, Kende Sale Fund, 1946

### Marcantonio Raimondi

(Italian, c. 1480–c. 1530)

### After Raphael

(Italian, 1483–1520)

*Judgment of Paris*, c. 1517–20

Engraving, 11 3/8 x 16 15/16"

Gift of J. Lionberger Davis, 1966

### Marcantonio Raimondi

(Italian, c. 1480–c. 1530)

### After Jacopo Ripanda

(Italian, active 1500–1516)

*Triumph of Titus*, c. 1520

Engraving, 13 1/8 x 17 1/2"

Gift of Mrs. John S. Lehmann, 1966

### Claude Regnier

(French, active 1840–1866)

*After George Caleb Bingham* (American, 1811–1879)

*Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap*, 1852

Lithograph, 18 7/8 x 23 3/4"

Gift of the Boone-Curry descendants in Oregon, 1995

### Rembrandt van Rijn

(Dutch, 1606–1669)

*The Good Samaritan*, 1633

Etching and engraving, 9 3/4 x 8 1/16"

Gift of Dr. Malvern B. Clopton, 1930

### Lorenzo Tiepolo

(Italian, 1736–1772)

### After Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

(Italian, 1696–1770)

*St. Thecla Praying for the End of the Plague in the City of Este*, c. 1760

Etching, 29 5/8 x 20 3/4"

Gift of Dr. Malvern B. Clopton, 1938

### Andy Warhol

(American, 1928–1987)

*Muhammad Ali*, 1978

Screen print, 40 x 30"

Extra, out of the edition. Designated for research and educational purposes only.

Gift of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., 2014

### Unknown

(American, 19th century)

*Bust of George Washington*, n.d.

Limestone, 18 x 8 1/2 x 6 5/8"

University acquisition

### Unknown

(Italian, 16th century)

*Mausoleum of Hadrian, from Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae (Mirror of Roman Magnificence)*, 1583

Engraving, 21 1/2 x 15 15/16"

Gift of the Art and Archaeology

Department, Washington University, 1980

## ALSO ON VIEW

### Books

From Washington University Libraries, Department of Special Collections

*Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, with Annotations and Variant Readings*, 1535

2 books, 10 5/8 x 15 x 1 1/4" (open) each

Published by Johann Herwagen, Basel, in Greek and Latin

*The Whole Works of Homer, Prince of Poets, in His Iliads and Odysseys*, 1616

Book, 11 1/4 x 16 x 2 3/8" (open)

Printed by Richard Field for Nathaniel Butter, London

Translated by George Chapman

### Comic Books

From Washington University Libraries, Douglas B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library

*Wonder Woman*, "Of Gods and Men," no. 329, February 1986

Comic book, 10 1/4 x 6 1/2"

Published by DC Comics, New York

Cover illustration by Jose-Luis Garcia Lopez (Spanish, b. 1948)

Written by Gerry Conway (American, b. 1952)

*GI Joe: A Real American Hero*, "Launch Base," no. 54, December 1986

Comic book, 10 1/4 x 6 1/2"

Published by Marvel Comics, New York

Cover illustration by Mike Zeck (American, b. 1949)

Written by Larry Hama (American, b. 1949)

*Helen of Troy*, March 1956

Comic book, 10 1/4 x 7 1/4"

Published by Dell Publishing, New York

Written by Paul S. Newman (American 1924–1999)

*Jackie Robinson: Baseball Hero*, no. 1, 1949

Comic book, 10 1/4 x 7"

Published by Fawcett Publications, Greenwich, CT

Written by Charles Dexter (American)

*Coins*

Greek and Roman coins, dating from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD, from the John Max Wulfling Collection, Washington University in St. Louis

## TEACHING GALLERY

## Spring 2017

# (RE)PRESENTING HEROES, DEFINING VIRTUE

“Virtue...is a state of character concerned with choice.”

– Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II

“[The] lives of the heroes become playgrounds of the imagination, richly inviting terrains for ideological projection and mythical speculation.”

– Geoffrey Cubitt and Allen Warren, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, 2000

Described as a beautiful and pure maiden dressed in a modest flowing white robe, the goddess Arete in ancient Greek culture personified virtue, excellence, goodness, and valor. It is no surprise then that the only direct encounter with Arete that survives in ancient Greek texts is with Heracles (Hercules for the Romans), the classical hero par excellence. Arete and her antithesis Cacia, or vice, approach the youthful Heracles on the road one afternoon. Cacia, scantily clothed and with restless eyes, offers Heracles the easy life, abundant with pleasures and free of wars and worry (recorded in Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2.1.21). In contrast, boasting the company of gods and good men, Arete offers Heracles glory and a name remembered for eternity in song as a reward for a life of diligent labors, excellence, goodness, and restraint.

Although it is well known that Heracles chose the virtuous path, achieving ultimate glory in immortality granted by the gods of Mount Olympus, Aristotle provided a starkly simple vision of moral and ethical decision-making that is a basic condition of human existence. Heracles's reward of immortality and glory in song after death also highlights the inextricable link between excellence in character and virtuous action. It is from these two complementary and interconnected concepts that virtue theory in the Western tradition is derived, and on which representations of virtue anchored by great and influential people such as those in this exhibition are based: one concept emphasizing character rather than achievement, and the other concept focused on action and results.

This Teaching Gallery exhibition—on view February 10 to March 19, 2017—is curated by Susan Ludi Blevins, postdoctoral teaching fellow in the Department of Art History & Archaeology in Arts & Sciences, in conjunction with the courses “From Hercules to Harry Potter: Picturing Heroes in Ancient Greece, Rome, and Beyond” and “Roman Archaeology,” both offered in spring 2017.

Societal celebration of virtuous people, mythical or real, raises them above others in public esteem and endows them with fame, honor, and symbolic significance. Like the mythical Nemean Lion vanquished by Heracles and the monstrous Medusa outwitted by Perseus, heroic stories are continually evolving, with multivalent and often contested meanings. They provide exemplars for emulation in character and action, teach about socially acceptable roles, offer a focus for communal identity, and present narratives with universal themes. Perhaps above all, construction of the superhuman allows humanity to transcend the confines of everyday life and envision extraordinary possibility. Visual images not only construct cultural conceptions of the hero, they also succinctly transmit heroic narratives, extending both written and oral communications to a wider audience.

This exhibition explores the role of visual culture in establishing and sustaining the heroic status of individuals through which societies define and articulate their values. While there are many heroic archetypes, the objects in this exhibition are loosely organized into four types: paragon, founder, savior, and divinity. In addition, with objects ranging from the sixth century BC in Greece to the late twentieth century in the United States, this exhibition encourages viewers to examine the survival and transformation of conceptions of the hero over time.

### Paragon

Attic black-figure vessels such as the Siana cup (560–550 BC) by the **C Painter** and a lekythos (500–490 BC) by the **Diosphos Painter** depict heroic men engaging in timeless battles and striving for *arete*, or virtue. On opposite sides of the Siana cup two nude, muscular warriors, each wearing a plume-adorned Corinthian helmet, raise their *hoplon* shields and *doru* (leaf-shaped spears) as they clash in combat, recalling the epic battle between Hector and Achilles recounted by **Homer** in the *Iliad*.

Such legendary feats of Homeric heroes remained accessible to audiences over the years through various editions of the *Iliad*, including the three on view here: two published in 1535, in Greek and Latin, and the first complete English translation of the *Iliad*, published in 1616. The translation was once owned by the English Romantic poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge who presented the volume to Sara Hutchinson, the sister-in-law of poet William Wordsworth.

**Hendrick Goltzius** forcefully conveys the superhuman status and courage of Heracles in his engraving *The Great Hercules* (1589), which features a virtuoso rendering of bulging muscles and overt

masculinity juxtaposed with struggles against Antaeus and Nessus depicted in the background. Also from the sixteenth century, the *Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici in Armor* by **Nicolò della Casa** directly engages with the ancient Roman imperial iconography of military virtue and with Herculean conceptions of strength and courage to convey the image of Cosimo I as absolute ruler of Florence. Close examination of the portrait reveals not only the imperial eagle on the breastplate but also images from the labors of Heracles, including Heracles’s lion pelt, which embellishes the military standard, and the slaughter of the Lernaean Hydra adorning the leg armor.

Another example of an important paragon is the nymph Daphne, an exemplar of female virginity. Daphne begged her father the river god to save her from the amorous advances of the smitten Apollo. **Harriet Hosmer’s** *Daphne* of 1854 suggests the nymph’s transformation into a laurel tree through the leaves encircling the exquisite marble bust. With its restrained beauty and elegance the bust hints at Daphne’s purity and modesty, an appropriate female model for a mid-nineteenth-century audience of neoclassical sculpture accustomed to idealized figures of heroic subjects.

A much different version of a heroine appears in the character of the comic book superhero **Wonder Woman**. Its creator, William Moulton Marston (1893–1947), sought to provide young women with a strong, capable, and independent image of themselves in the character of Diana Prince (Wonder Woman). The origins of the character were based in an all-female society reminiscent of the ancient Greek race of Amazon women. First appearing in 1942 and continuing for over forty years, the comic book series featuring Wonder Woman resonated especially with leaders of the women’s liberation movement who chose the popular female heroine to adorn the cover of the premier issue of *Ms.* magazine in 1972.

Paragons of excellence from twentieth-century American history include Jackie Robinson, the first African American major league baseball player who was also a pioneer for racial equality. One issue of the **Baseball Heroes** comic book series from 1949 highlights Robinson’s dignity in the face of abuses that he endured on and off the field, as well as his seemingly supernatural gifts of speed, power, and agility. Another figure, Muhammad Ali, is depicted by **Andy Warhol** in a screen print from 1978, based on a Polaroid of this athlete, activist, and hero of black liberation that was taken when Warhol visited him at his training camp, Fighter’s Heaven. The presentation of Muhammad Ali with a prominent fist and an intense gaze convey the passionate, provocative, and confrontational persona of this iconic figure.

### Founder

The **unknown** artist of the small limestone bust of George Washington, like other artists in the nineteenth century, may have believed in physiognomic theory, the reflection of a person’s character in their appearance. Contemporary commentators on George Washington’s portraits observed in the face of the “father of his country” a good, upright man, of simple manners, sincere, and firm—virtues that affirmed the values on which the United States was founded.

The paintings of George Caleb Bingham recounting episodes from the life of Daniel Boone, such as *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap* (1851–52), are spectacular examples in a nineteenth-century American context of the imaginative recasting of a historical person to establish his mythic status in the legend of the expansion and foundation of the western United States. So popular were Bingham’s paintings in the United States and in Europe that printmakers such as **Claude Regnier** produced hand-colored lithograph reproductions for broad circulation and to meet the desires of avid collectors. Drawing on varied visual traditions ranging from the idealized, classical Greek Polykleitan form, to the Christian iconography of Moses leading the chosen people and the Virgin Mary riding into Bethlehem, the composition conveys the courage and self-possession of a man assured in his mission of American manifest destiny. Similarly the woman on horseback exudes a civilized and heroic presence within surrounding hostile terrain.

### Savior

Images of Heracles in ancient Greece highlighted the legendary deeds that proved his strength, courage, and valor. On a lekythos (525–500 BC) by the **Athena Painter** Heracles raises his bow and arrow, pulling the string taught in the dramatic moment before slaying the Nemean Lion, a beast with golden fur that terrorized the Greek town of Nemea by luring maidens into his lair and killing the warriors who tried to save them.

Many heroes of classical mythology embody multiple archetypes, such as Cadmus, a savior as well as the founder and first king of Thebes. In a maiolica plate from the **School of Orazio Fontana** circa 1540, the artist presents Cadmus as a man of courage and action leading his men to slay the fierce, serpent-like dragon, from whose teeth later sprang the warrior race that populated the city of Thebes. Classical heroes also provided a means for later artists to process and comment on contemporary events. The image of the victorious Greek hero Perseus displaying the gnarled and severed head of Medusa, as depicted in a series of engravings by **André Racz** in 1945, may be an

allegory of the end of World War II with the Allied forces conclusively vanquishing the Axis powers.

In Christian tradition saints function like heroic figures by intervening in everyday life and extraordinary circumstances to provide aid and comfort. The etching by **Lorenzo Tiepolo** from circa 1760 depicts the story of St. Thecla, an icon of virginity who was martyred in the second century for preaching the word of God, rescuing the people of Este, Italy, who called upon the saint to save them from plague.

### Divinity

Associating an individual with the divine, whether by elevating them to the status of a god or goddess or by attributing divine aspects to them, was yet another mode of constructing and acknowledging superhuman qualities. As the first deified historical person in the Western tradition, the charismatic Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) earned his divine status by ruthlessly and relentlessly expanding the Macedonian empire to the largest extent of any empire in the ancient world. Alexander’s successors, such as Lysimachos, played on his power and popularity by issuing a tetradrachm depicting the deified Alexander with the prominent horns of Zeus Ammon.

Likewise in imperial Rome there was no greater honor to an emperor than posthumous deification granted by the Roman Senate, in part as a reward for deeds and benefactions by the emperor during life. An Augustan denarius depicts an eight-rayed comet claimed to be the life force of Julius Caesar (100–44 BC), the deceased ruler and adoptive father of Augustus (63 BC–14 AD), ascending to the heavens as seen by witnesses at Caesar’s funeral. In a similar tradition, upon Augustus’s death and apotheosis a monumental Temple of Divine Augustus was erected in the religious and political heart of Rome to honor him as founder of the Roman Empire and “father of his country,” and his successor Caligula (12–41 AD) memorialized the temple on a denarius issued in conjunction with the temple dedication. Even monuments that provided a place of burial and a backdrop for funerary processions, such as the Mausoleum of Hadrian depicted here in a sixteenth-century engraving, could attest to the superhuman status of rulers through their sheer size and monumentality.

### Susan Ludi Blevins

Postdoctoral Fellow

Department of Art History & Archaeology

Arts & Sciences

Washington University in St. Louis