

# The Art of Ancient GREEK Theater

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## **NEW BOOK EXPLORES ANCIENT GREEK THEATER THROUGH ITS DEPICTIONS IN THE VISUAL ARTS**

LOS ANGELES— *The Art of Ancient Greek Theater* (Getty Publications, \$50.00, hardcover) exposes the dynamic origins of the performing arts in the Western world as revealed through ancient Greek painting and sculpture.

Theatrical performance as we know it originated in the mid-sixth century B.C. with choral dances held in honor of Dionysos, the Greek god of wine and patron of the theater. The great tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, as well as the comedies of Aristophanes and Menander are preserved as some of the world's most renowned literature and have formed the basis for theater performance as it is still practiced. Beyond being popular in their day, these plays inspired an array of lively paintings and sculpture, and those works represent, in some cases, the only evidence we have of some of the plays from ancient Greece.

This beautifully illustrated book explores Greek theatrical performance and stagecraft from its inception, the craft of actors and chorus, depictions of tragedy and the satyr play, and ribald comedies from classical Athens to the social and domestic "sitcoms" of the Hellenistic Mediterranean. In this context, the many facets of theater arts come alive on pottery vases, sculpture, reliefs, and expressive masks. Taken together, the nine insightful essays and more than 130 illustrations in this volume reveal the Greek origins of theater and their multifaceted expression in the visual arts.

An exhibition of the same name is on view at the Getty Villa from August 26, 2010, through January 3, 2011.

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About the Editor

**Mary Louise Hart** is associate curator in the Department of Antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum and coauthor of *Understanding Greek Vases: A Guide to Terms, Styles, and Techniques* (Getty Publications, 2002).

Publication Information

***The Art of Ancient Greek Theater***

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J. Paul Getty Museum

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73 color and 67 duotone illustrations

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Kindly send two tearsheets of your review when published to Melissa Crowley, Getty Publications, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90049-1682.

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