

Saving Antiquities for Everyone

Date : July 13, 2007

SAFE is a not-for-profit awareness raising and lobbying organization based in the US, which aims to draw attention to the systematic pillaging and looting of archaeological sites worldwide, linking up to the work of British archaeologists such as Colin Renfrew working at the Macdonald Institute at Cambridge University.

<http://www.savingantiquities.org/>

They encourage student participation through poster sessions and internships, run public programs and have an excellent website. Those in New York should try to attend Oscar Muscarella's subversive tours of the Metropolitan Museum's Greek, Roman and Ancient Near East Galleries. Founded by a group of private individuals in the wake of the looting of the Baghdad Museum, SAFE exemplifies the ways in which concerned individuals can try to make a difference. Of course, targeting concerned scholars is only part of the task - we need to reeducate collectors as to the implications of the trade in antiquities.

The recent re-opening of the [newly renovated Greek and Roman galleries at the Met](#) shows just how much Antiquities are still used to boost the reputation of wealthy collectors into immortality. Recent scandals, such as the arrest of Getty Curator Marion True and dealer Robert Hecht and the negotiation by Italian authorities with the Metropolitan Museum to return the famous Euphronios Krater feel as though they exist in a different world to these galleries (even though the krater is still just in the next room, with a small label acknowledging that it is on long term loan from the Republic of Italy)...