



Vulcan Being Crowned by Bona Dea

Date

not dated

Primary Maker

Edouard Félicien Alexis Pépin

Medium

bronze

Description

This sculpture is thought to represent Vulcan, the Roman god of fire, smithy to the gods of Mt. Olympus, and maker of all crafts, being crowned with an honorific laurel wreath by Bona Dea (in Latin, "the Good Goddess"). Most closely associated with metal-working, Vulcan's forge was said to be located beneath Mt. Etna, the Sicilian volcano (vulcano in Italian), where he created beautiful things, such as thrones for the gods of Mt. Olympus, as well as useful things, like locks that never broke, and weapons and armor for gods and heroes. Married to Venus, goddess of beauty, Vulcan was also closely associated with, and was sometimes said to have been the husband of Bona Dea, whom the artist has depicted holding a cornucopia, one of

her attributes. Pépin's portrayal of Vulcan as a middle-aged man with unkempt hair and beard is a typical representation of the god. However, the artist has idealized the physique, thereby ennobling all craftsmen and their work. As befits the smithy to the gods, Vulcan is seated on an anvil, surrounded by his other identifying attributes, among them a blacksmith's hammer and tongs. The god Hephaestus was Vulcan's Greek counterpart.

Dimensions

Overall: 21 1/8 x 14 x 14 7/8 in. (53.7 x 35.6 x 37.8 cm)