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## Title of Object

Judith with the Head of Holofernes

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## Photo of Object (optional)



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## Object Information

**Artist:** Ignazio Collino

**Culture:** Italian

**Date of Object:** 1750

**Country:** Italy

**Accession Number:** 63.55

**File Created:** 10/24/2016

**Material/Medium:** Terracotta

**Author of File:** Kathleen Steiger

**Department:** Decorative Arts, Textiles, and  
Sculpture

**Reviewer of File:** Kara ZumBahlen

**Last Updated/Reviewed:** 7/11/2017

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## Tour Topics

Betrayal, Love\_Honor\_and\_Betrayal, Group 5, Highlights 1600-1850, Women, Judaism, Hebrew, Stories/Storytelling, Bible story, Jewish Heroine, sculpture, power, strength, leaders, spirituality, conflict/war, Baroque influence, Neoclassical influence

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## Questions and Activities (list 3 to 4 sample questions here):

- 1) Take a moment to examine this statue from all sides. What surprises you? Be sure to take note of any textures and small details you see.
- 2) What do you think happened in the story just before the action presented here? Were you surprised to hear that this is based on a story in the Hebrew Scripture?
- 3) After hearing the story, what scene would you paint or draw or sculpt?

4) Have you ever proudly brought home a trophy or a medal? How did you feel about it? How do you think Judith felt after she rescued her community from certain death?

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### **Key Points (Form: subject matter, medium and techniques of manufacture, style, etc.)**

1) The Story of Judith is found in the Hebrew Scripture which tells the story of this Jewish widow from the besieged town of Bethulia. As the Assyrian army laid waste to Judea and the town, Holofernes' troops cut off their water supply. After 34 days of the siege, thirst and hunger had the whole people clamoring for the chief men of the town to sue for peace. But the leader asked them to hold out five days more (Judith 7:23).

Judith was a beautiful, young and pious widow of the town who summoned the leaders and told them that she and her maid would make their way to meet with Holofernes. He lusted after her. There, dressed in her finest clothing and jewels, she fed him, prayed, and after 3 days of feasting when Holofernes, besotted with her beauty and "wine-sodden", collapsed on his bed, she took his scimitar and cut off his head. Then she and her maid hid his body under his bed and put the head in a sack and went back to Bethulia and said "This is the head of Holofernes. The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman!" The town was saved and the Assyrians routed. (New Jerusalem Bible – Book of Judith)

2) The subject of Judith was very common in early modern European Art. A strong tradition developed of depicting the heroine as the embodiment of chastity, humility and on the obverse, temptation. She came to represent the power, or lack thereof, of women. Numerous artists depicted her including Lucas Cranach the Elder who depicted the Jewish heroine in over a dozen representations across media. (2013 catalog from Art Institute of Chicago – Violence and Virtue)

3) Sculptors of this period often made many models before executing a proposed work. Generally the cheapness and malleability of terracotta encouraged sculptors to alter composition details from one model to another as their work progressed. (Earth and Fire)

4) Terracotta was almost always used by sculptors for models, but the intimacy and immediacy that could be achieved with this soft material also made it a popular medium for finished sculptures. (Earth and Fire)

5) From Earth and Fire: After the model is complete and approved "one might assume that the terracotta's purpose comes to an end, and exits the scene. But this is not always the case. At this point clay finds new life on the road to its triumphant vindication. Its role as model now over, the clay sculpture can enjoy a second function as decor for interiors, such as salons or galleries." They were sometimes painted with a bronze-colored patina. Or they could be painted white and partially gilded.

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### **Key Points (Context: use, history, cultural information, artist bio, etc.)**

1) Artist Bio (Wikipedia)

a. Collino was born in Turin. Up to the age of 14, he worked under his father, Damè, from whom he learned wood carving. Along with his brother, Filippo Collino (1737–1801), Ignazio worked in a restrained formal style, intermediate between Baroque and Neoclassicism. He went to apprentice with

the bronze sculptor François Ladotte and in drawing with Claudio Francesco Beaumont in 1744. With Ladotte, he completed a Saint Sebastian. (From the label, Judith with the Head of Holofernes is the earliest known work of his own invention; it was praised and admired, leading to further lucrative commissions in his career.)

b. A royal subsidy provided by Carlo Emanuele III of Savoy in 1750 enabled him to go to Rome. He was there in 1754 at work with fellow-Lombard Giovanni Battista Maini, who was a trainee of Camillo Rusconi. In Rome, he copied many antique originals, including busts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, of Faustina, and of a Vestal.

c. In 1755 he completed in Carrara Marble, the sculptural group of Papirus and his mother, then a Niobe. He completed the four statues, Justice, Strength, Beneficence and Charity. He was appointed in 1760 as a member of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. In 1763, he was appointed sculptor of the king after sending four bas-reliefs sent to the court of Turin.

d. In 1767, they relocated back to Turin to run the school of sculpture. He provided much sculpture for royal tombs of the House of Savoy at the Basilica of Superga, including the Monument for Carlo Emanuele III (1773).

2) Note – This work was previously identified as one by Francesco Ladatte - Collino trained under him. The article from Apollo, March 1983 stated the following:

a. “An examination of the Judith holding the Head of Holofernes in Minneapolis, reveals a contrasting case in which an artist’s careful reconsideration of his first thoughts on a projected composition resulted in the creation of two finished but entirely different presentation models for the same sculpture.” (Judith Standing on the head of Holofernes).

b. “A year earlier, Ladatte had exhibited another version of Judith at the salon, this time holding the head of Holofernes rather than resting on it. This is almost certainly the terracotta figure now in Minneapolis.”

c. “Imparting a convincing heavenward gaze to a figure holding a dismembered head in one hand is not easy.”

d. Terracotta was almost always used by sculptors for models, but the intimacy and immediacy that could be achieved with this soft material also made it a popular medium for finished sculpture.”

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### Current Mia Label Information (optional)

As told in the Bible, the Jewish heroine Judith slew the Assyrian general Holofernes, who had laid siege to her city. Pretending to desert her people, Judith attracted the attention of Holofernes, who invited her into his tent. When he passed out drunk, she beheaded him. Here, Judith is shown in a solemn and heroic pose, her upturned head a sign of the divine inspiration that enabled her to save her people.

Ignazio Collino left his home in northern Italy for Rome, to study the art of classical antiquity, which he copied in drawings and small terra-cotta sculptures. This statue is Collino’s earliest known work of his own invention. It drew great admiration and praise and laid the foundation for his later fame.

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## Sources of Information and/or Prop Ideas (photos/videos)

Prop: Terracotta sample from Guide Lounge Prop Box, Copy of Violence and Virtue catalog to show other art of this subject

*Violence and Virtue, Artemisia Gentileschi's Judith Slaying Holofernes* by Eva Staussman- Pflanzner – Catalog from the Art Institute of Chicago exhibit October 17, 2013, to January 9, 2014.

*Earth and Fire, Italian Terracotta Sculptures from Donatello to Canova*, Edited by Bruce Boucher with the collaboration of Peta Motture, Anthony Radcliff, Paola D'Agostino, and Carlo Milano – Yale University Press, 2001

Book of Judith from the Jerusalem Bible

Article – French and Italian Sculpture 1600 – 1900 by Michael Conforti, *Apollo Magazine*, March 1983 (Docent Lounge file under Francesco Ladatte (prior attribution) pp 75-77