Statuette - Satyr and Satyress

Object: Statuette
Place of origin: Padua (made)
Date: 1510-1520 (made)
Artist/Maker: Riccio, Andrea Andrea Briosco (maker)
Materials and Techniques: Cast bronze
Credit Line: Presented by Art Fund
Museum number: A.8-1949
Gallery location: Medieval & Renaissance, Room 64, The Wolfson Gallery, case 22

Public access description
Riccio was probably the greatest sculptor of small bronzes in Renaissance Italy. He had close ties with the scholars of Padua University, who encouraged his interest in antiquity and owned many of his intimate figure groups. Here Riccio shows the lustful nature of the satyrs but also their tender relationship.

In this group Riccio challenges the notion of the Satyr as a wanton beast driven purely by carnal desires by creating a tender scene of intimacy between two creatures, albeit with an overt sexuality.

The Satyr and Satyress sit intertwined on a shallow integral base, their arms around each other's shoulders, her right leg resting over his left. The Satyr touches his partner's neck with his fingertips, his thumb resting on her chin, their lips pursed as if about to kiss.

The sexes are differentiated even in the detail: for example the male's eyebrows are marked with lines to indicate hair, while the female's are smooth. In contrast to her partner's goatlike legs, those of the Satyress, though hairy, are shapely like human's. Her hair is dressed elaborately, interwoven with ribbons and beads, and topped with a tiara decorated with shells; at the back it is tucked into swags, with ribbons that drape over the shoulders.

Descriptive line
Bronze statuette of a satyr and satyress made by Andrea Riccio (Briosco) in Padua, 1515-1520.

Physical description
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Dimensions
Height: 24 cm, Width: 16.5 cm, Depth: 17.9 cm, Weight: 5.36 kg

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Object history note
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Historical context note
Made in one base the group appears to be a direct cast, with a comparatively thin and even wall.

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O96343/satyr-and-satyress-statuette-riccio-andrea-andrea/