

Bust of Antinous

This activity has been designed as a starting point for looking, talking and doing together. The **Look** and **Think** activities should take 5 -10 minutes.

The **Do** activities might take longer depending on the task and how creative you are feeling!

Have fun and don't forget to share your creations using #FitzVirtual #LookThinkDo.



Look

This bust along with other [treasures in our collection](#) were found at Emperor Hadrian's [villa near Rome](#).

Hadrian was a powerful ruler between 117-138 AD, but this story of Antinous and Hadrian reveals a gentler side to Hadrian's personality.

Think

Watch [this video](#) to find out why Antinous was so important, and all the ways he was remembered.

What would you do to show someone was important to you?

Do

This sculpture shows Antinous disguised as Dionysus, the Greek god of wine.

He is wearing a wreath around his head made of Ivy leaves and grapes.

Follow our video instructions to [make your own wreath](#) to wear with pride.

© The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Bust of Antinous

c. 130-138 AD

Marble

Height 41 cm

GR.100.1937

This bust of Antinous features in our in-gallery LGBTQ+ [Bridging Binaries tours](#). This Look Think Do celebrates [Cambridge Pride](#).



Bust of Antinous

The Emperor Hadrian, who ruled the Roman Empire between 117 - 138 AD, loved Antinous, a man from Bithynia (modern-day Turkey). When Antinous sadly died in Egypt in 130 AD under mysterious circumstances, Hadrian wanted to celebrate their love and announced that Antinous was to become a god. This was highly unusual as it was the custom only to make emperors and their family members into gods after they had died.

Hadrian didn't stop there: he named a city in Egypt after Antinous and had his face put onto coins. Sculptures of Antinous were put up across the Roman Empire, so many in fact that more sculptures have been found of him by archaeologists than any other person from the Ancient World, except for Emperor Hadrian and Emperor Augustus. Sculptures of Antinous tend to celebrate his youth and his beauty like this one.

Antinous is often shown as one of the Greek or Roman gods, just like in this sculpture, where he is represented as the Greek god Dionysus (or Bacchus for the Romans). You can identify him as Dionysus the god of wine, theatre and parties as he is wearing a wreath around his head made of Ivy and grapes.

This sculpture was discovered in the 1700s in the ruins of Hadrian's villa in Tivoli, just north of Rome, in Italy. More than twenty images of Antinous have been discovered in Hadrian's home, suggesting this was probably a sanctuary for the worship of Antinous and other gods, showing Hadrian's devotion to his beloved Antinous.

The love between Hadrian and Antinous reminds us that throughout history there are lots of different kinds of love stories, including love stories between two men. In the past, museums were less likely to tell these stories, but now we think they are important to share to make sure everyone feels welcome in the museum.

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