

"Antiquity." The term has undeniable connotations: it suggests something beautiful, something rare, something valuable. Occasionally one is given the special pleasure of encountering a given object that is in every way exceptional – one to which all the connotations of beauty, rarity, and value clearly apply. Objects of this sort are not merely the traces of ancient civilizations, they are more monuments telling us what civilization is, to what it can attain, the extent to which the mind of man can express itself with grace and imagination.

Almost always one's contact with these exceptional antiquities occurs in the great public museums of the world. One usually sees these objects behind the requisite plate glass or roped off from access, and one admires but only from afar. These are not objects to be touched or held.

The first time I walked into the Barakat Gallery in Beverly Hills, I immediately knew that there was nothing commonplace about any of the antiquities on display. The Barakat's have had the time, the opportunity and – most importantly – the ambition to bring together the finest pieces from the ancient Near East (and elsewhere) available in the world today. The Barakat Collection represents a concentration of antiquities rivaling the great museum collections of the world. It is a collection as rare and special as the antiquities of which it is composed.

To put it simply and as succinctly as possible: these antiquities are the best you find outside a museum – the most beautiful, the most rare, the most precious – everything that an antiquity should be.

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Archaeological Research Collection