



Cameo Appearances (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

James David Draper

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The engraving of hardstones is a time-honored practice that goes back several millennia. The Greeks refined the art, and they introduced in about the fifth century b.c. what we now call cameos: precious and semiprecious stones carved in projected relief. As fanciful curiosities and as miraculous unions of art and nature, cameos have been prized and collected since ancient times. This book presents a selection of more than one hundred magnificently carved gems from the unparalleled collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The text traces the origins of cameos in classical antiquity, their rare occurrences in the Middle Ages, their efflorescence from the 16th to the 19th century, and their spread to the New World.

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