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JAMES
ROMANO
AND TRUDY
KAWAMI

CERAMICS SCHOLARS

“WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE, I VISITED THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART AND TOUCHED THE head of an Egyptian princess when the guards weren’t looking,” says James Romano, remembering how smooth and lifelike the statue felt. Despite that transgression, today he is the curator of the museum’s Egyptian, classical and ancient Middle Eastern art collection, one of the finest in the country. For his newest exhibit, *Wit & Wine*, Romano teamed up with Trudy Kawami of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation to bring together 46 artifacts from Iran, many of them ceramic. The most flamboyant pieces—some dating back to 4500 B.C.—seem modern, even surrealist, such as a jar with human legs and feet. “I don’t know another ancient culture with such a sense of wit,” says Kawami, who became fascinated by the people and art of Iran while studying there in the ’60s. She explains that vessels like the ibex (ABOVE) were probably used at political and social gatherings in pre-Islamic Iran, when wine drinking was still acceptable—and evidently quite popular (718-638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org). —Susan Choung



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