

CHASING APHRODITE CO-AUTHORS JASON FELCH AND RALPH FRAMMOLINO TO RECEIVE 2011 SAFE BEACON AWARD

New York, N.Y., (October 11, 2011)--SAFE/Saving Antiquities for Everyone, a New York City-based non-profit, will host a dinner honoring the recipients of the 2011 SAFE Beacon Award Jason Felch and Ralph Frammolino, co-authors of *Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum* (Houghton Mifflin, 2011) in recognition of their efforts to raise public awareness of the devastating effects of the illicit antiquities trade.

Felch and Frammolino will be honored at **Savore Ristorante** in SoHo on **Friday, October 28, 2011** at 6:30pm. Guests will enjoy a three-course meal and will receive a signed copy of the book. Tickets can be purchased for \$120 each at <http://www.savingantiquities.org/beacon.php>.

As investigative reporters at the LA Times, Felch and Frammolino revealed the role the J. Paul Getty Museum and other American museums played in the illicit antiquities trade. Their work was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting in 2006. Their book *Chasing Aphrodite*, published in May 2010, builds on that body of work, exposing the roots of the Getty scandal with a fly-on-the-wall account based on frank interviews and thousands of leaked internal documents. Felch and Frammolino continue to promote the preservation of cultural heritage through their blog *Chasing Aphrodite*. While Felch continues to work as an investigative reporter at the LA Times, Frammolino is now a media consultant in South Asia.

As Frammolino noted in a New York Post article, the Metropolitan Museum only escaped being the epicenter of the scandal through "timing, luck and a grudging act of cultural contrition"--when the museum agreed to return its 5th Century BC Euphronios krater after more than 30 years of denials that it had been looted. While the Getty was ground-zero for the unprecedented scandal, it also involved several other prominent American museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In all, the Getty, the Met, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Cleveland Museum of Fine Arts and Princeton University Museum returned more than 100 suspect pieces worth nearly a billion dollars to Italy and Greece between 2005 and 2011. Meanwhile, two New York dealers and Shelby White, a prominent Manhattan collector and Met patron, agreed to repatriate hundreds more pieces of unknown provenance worth millions of dollars.

A thrilling account of back-room dealings at a world-renowned museum, *Chasing Aphrodite* has received accolades for raising awareness about the illicit antiquities trade. Said Andrea Schulz, editor in chief of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: "Felch and Frammolino, in their compulsively readable account of the Getty scandal, never moralize about the effects of the illegal trading they discovered, but let their meticulously sourced and novelistically detailed story speak for itself. They not only helped change the culture at the Getty but have written a book that captures that turning point when the art world's attitudes toward cultural heritage changed forever."

According to Cindy Ho, president and founder of SAFE, "The SAFE Beacon Award is reserved for those who are committed to the preservation and rescue of the world's cultural heritage. Jason Felch and Ralph Frammolino are completely and selflessly in line with that mission."

About SAFE

SAFE/Saving Antiquities for Everyone, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, creates educational programs and media campaigns to raise public awareness regarding the importance of preserving cultural heritage worldwide. SAFE is a coalition of professionals in communications, media, and advertising working alongside experts in the academic, legal and law enforcement communities. SAFE has no political affiliations.

To find out more about the 2011 Beacon Awards, the Beacon Award Winners, or SAFE, visit <http://www.savingantiquities.org/event.php?eventID=257>

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