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Controversial New York antiquities collector's exhibition centre opens

Funded by Shelby White amidst controversy regarding the provenance of her personal collection

Jason Edward Kaufman

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New York

The Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, a division of New York University funded entirely by antiquities collector Shelby White, has opened in Manhattan. Ms White, who chairs the institute's board, pledged \$200m to the university through the Leon Levy Foundation, named after her late husband, the Wall Street financier. When plans for the centre were announced in 2006, archaeologists and scholars complained that the university should not take money from a collector who had amassed antiquities lacking known provenance. New York University accepted her offer even as she was facing restitution claims from Italy. She returned nine Greek and Etruscan objects in January. The inaugural exhibition (until 1 June) was first seen at the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC and includes 130 works

recently excavated at Vani, the capital of ancient Colchis in what is today the Republic of Georgia. The institute is open to the public free of charge.

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