# Ancient Pompeii: Children’s Graffiti Depicts Violent Gladiator Battles



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Recent archaeological excavations at Pompeii, the famous ancient Roman city destroyed by Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, have unveiled charcoal sketches made by children as young as five. These primitive drawings, found on the walls of a courtyard in Insula dei Casti Amanti, depict gladiators fighting each other and wild animals, reflecting scenes typical of Pompeii's amphitheatre where violent spectacles took place.

Gabriel Zuchtriegel, director of the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, notes that the style of the drawings suggests they were created by young children who likely witnessed these brutal events firsthand. The drawings, found close to the floor and lacking complex detail, show figures with arms and legs stemming directly from their heads, a common characteristic of children's artwork even today.

Additionally, other sketches in the area include the outlines of children's hands, figures playing with a ball, and a boxing scene. The discovery was made in a residential area known as the "Island of Chaste Lovers," near Pompeii's well-preserved amphitheatre.

Alongside these drawings, archaeologists have also uncovered two skeletons of an elderly couple likely seeking shelter during the volcanic eruption. The findings shed light on the exposure of youth in ancient Pompeii to significant violence and further enrich our understanding of life in this ancient city.