

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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EXHIBITION OF EARLY GREEK ART AT NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - An exhibition of 67 Greek works of art from the 10th to the 5th centuries B.C. will open at the National Gallery of Art on January 31, 1988. Highlighting the subject of the human figure in early Greek art, the exhibition will feature important objects that have never been seen in the United States, and some works that will be on display for the first time ever outside Greece. Her Excellency Melina Mercouri, Minister of Culture of Greece, will inaugurate the exhibition at the National Gallery. She was in Washington last October to announce plans for the exhibition.

In discussing "The Human Figure in Early Greek Art" with J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, Minister Mercouri said: "It gives us great pleasure to share an important chapter of the cultural legacy of Greece with audiences in the United States. The fact that some of the objects will be leaving our homeland for the first time demonstrates our commitment to fostering understanding between our cultures."

The exhibition includes marble sculptures, bronzes, painted pottery, and terracotta figures from the geometric period (9th and 8th

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centuries B.C.), the orientalizing period (7th century B.C.), the archaic period (6th century B.C.) and the early classical period (5th century B.C.) of Greek art -- a critical, evolutionary span during which Greek artists learned to represent the human figure in a naturalistic way. The first representations of mankind in early Greek art are silhouetted stick figures illustrating scenes of mythology or stories told in the Homeric poems the Iliad and the Odyssey. Later objects bear witness to the increasing ability of Greek artists to depict naturalistic movement and lifelike proportions of the human body. This accomplishment set the stage for the achievements of the high classical style expressed most completely in the sculpture of the Parthenon.

Mr. Brown noted: "This exhibition provides an opportunity to observe the treatment of the human figure during a critical formative period in world art. The trends illustrated by the objects led to the flowering of Greek classicism, which has functioned as the basis for the Western aesthetic of art throughout history. We are delighted by the generosity of the Greek people in making these works of art available to be seen in the United States."

The oldest object is a painted clay centaur, a creature that is half man, half horse, made in the late 10th century B.C. in the town of Lefkandi (north of Athens). It is widely considered the most accomplished artistic creation of the Greek Dark Ages, the period after the decline of Mycenaean culture. The bronzes include an unusual statuette of a running girl athlete. Painted vases in the exhibition feature a range of human depictions from schematic stick figures to naturalistic youths skillfully rendered in black-figure and red-figure styles. One famous example made by the potter Gorgos is a drinking cup, which carries a beautifully executed red-figure drawing of a kneeling youth holding a hare.

While present in many forms throughout the exhibition, the emphasis on the perfection of youth is perhaps best illustrated by the inclusion of several marble kouroi, statues of idealized young men standing upright, and korai, statues of young women, from the Acropolis. Commissioned to mark the graves of deceased youths or to pay homage to Greek gods or goddesses, this 6th and 5th century B.C. statuary progressed from early experiments in representing the human form to a mastery of the ability to make the figures look lifelike.

The exhibition, which has been organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Greek Ministry of Culture, has been selected from the permanent collections of four museums in Athens and many regional Greek museums. It is supported in part by The Paradina Inc. Trust and Joannou & Paraskevaides (Overseas) Ltd., and by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The official airline carrier for the exhibition is Olympic Airways.

After its Washington showing (January 31 to June 12, 1988), The Human Figure in Early Greek Art will travel to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri (July 16 to October 2, 1988), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (November 13 1988 to January 15, 1989), The Art Institute of Chicago (February 18 to May 7, 1989) and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (June 7 to September 3, 1989).

A fully illustrated color catalogue will accompany the exhibition, featuring essays by well-known American, British and Greek scholars on bronzes, vase painting, terracottas, stone sculpture, and the history of the period under consideration.

National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

THE HUMAN FIGURE IN EARLY GREEK ART

CHECKLIST

- * = color transparency available
- ° = black & white photograph available

credit line for all objects: The Greek Ministry of Culture

*°1 Terracotta Statuette of a Centaur, end of the tenth century B.C.
Found in Lefkandi, Euboea, in 1969, height 36, length of the body 26 (14 1/8, 10 1/4), Eretria, Archaeological Museum, 8620

*2 Protogeometric Skyphos, Attic, end of the eleventh century B.C.
Found in Athens, Kerameikos, Grave 15, height 15.5 (6 1/8), Athens, Kerameikos Museum, 547

*3 Clay Skyphos, Attic, c. 770 B.C.
Found in Eleusis (south cemetery), height 6.4 (2 1/2), Eleusis, Archaeological Museum, 910

4 Clay Kantharos, third quarter of the eighth century B.C.
Attic work, attributed to the Burly workshop, found in a tomb south of the Acropolis, height 11.6 (4 1/2), Athens, First Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, ERK 630

5 Clay Oinochoe, third quarter of the eighth century B.C.
Attic work, attributed to the Burly workshop, found in a grave on the south side of the Acropolis, height 12.4 (4 7/8), Athens, First Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, 1955 ERK 643

*°6 Bronze Statuette of a Warrior, Attic, third quarter of the eighth century B.C.
Found on the Athenian Acropolis, height 21 (8 1/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, X 6616

7 Bronze Statuette of a Flute Player, end of the eighth century B.C.
Found in Sparta in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in 1907, height 7 (2 3/4), Sparta, Archaeological Museum, 2155

8 Bronze Statuette of a Nude Warrior, Argive workshop, second half of the eighth century, B.C.
Found in Olympia in 1960, height 14.4 (5 5/8), Olympia, Archaeological Museum, B 4600

9 Bronze Statuette of a Warrior, first quarter of the seventh century B.C.

Found in Olympia below the foundations of the Temple of Hera, height 23.7 (9 1/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, X 6178a

10 Bronze Leg of a Tripod Cauldron, Cretan, end of the eighth century B.C.

Found in Olympia (excavations in the stadium), height 46.5 (18 1/4), Olympia, Archaeological Museum, B 1730

11 Clay Amphora, 750/735 B.C.

Attic, attributed to the Hirschfeld Painter, provenance unknown, gift of Damianos Kyriazis, height 55.5 (21 7/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 18062

12 Clay Oinochoe, Attic, after 730 B.C.

Found in a grave in the Athenian Agora, height 22.8 (9), Athens, Agora Museum, P 4885

13 Clay Skyphos, Attic, last quarter of the eighth century B.C.

Found in Athens, height 6.5 (2 1/2), diameter 16 (6 1/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 874

14 Clay Pyxis, Laconian, third quarter of the eighth century B.C.

Found in the sanctuary of Apollo at Amyclae (Sparta), height 29 (11 3/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 234

15 Clay Hydria, Protoattic, last quarter of the eighth century B.C.

Provenance unknown, gift of Gregorios Empedocles, height 42 (16 1/2), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 18 435

16 Terracotta Head of a Female Statuette, end of the eighth century B.C.

Found in Amyclae (south of Sparta), height 8 (3 1/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 4382

17 Terracotta Head of a Warrior Statuette, end of the eighth century B.C.

Found in Amyclae (south of Sparta), height 12 (4 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 4381

*18 Fragment of a Clay Plaque, Protoattic, c. 700 B.C.

Found at Sounion, 7 x 12 (2 3/4 x 4 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 14935

°19 Clay Cup with High Fenestrated Conical Base, Attic, c. 680 B.C.

found in Athens (Kerameikos excavations), height 17 (6 5/8), Athens, Kerameikos Museum, 1153

20 Oinochoe, 675 - 640 B.C.

From Tomb L. at Arkades, Crete, height 31.8, diameter 26 (12 1/2 x 10 1/4), Herakleion Museum, 6971

*°21 Fragment of a Clay Vase, middle of the seventh century B.C.

The Odyssey scene of the Blinding of Polyphemos, found in Argos in 1952, 31 x 25 (12 1/8 x 9 7/8), Argos, Archaeological Museum, C 149

- 22 Clay Oinochoe, mid-seventh century B.C.
Protoattic, perhaps from an Aeginetan workshop, found in a sanctuary at Colonna on Aegina in the 1890s, diameter 22.5 (8 7/8), Aegina, Archaeological Museum, 1754
- 23 Terracotta Statuette of a Mourning Woman, last quarter of the eleventh century B.C.
Found on Thera (excavation of the Sellada cemetery) in 1896, height 31 (12 1/8), Thera, Archaeological Museum, 392
- 24 Terracotta Statuette of a Woman, Boeotian, c. first quarter of the sixth century B.C.
From Boeotia, height 15 (5 7/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 4157
- 25 Hammered Bronze Relief, Cycladic, third quarter of the seventh century B.C.
Found in Olympia northeast of the treasury terrace, 22.5 x 33 (8 7/8 x 13), Olympia, Archaeological Museum, BE 11a
- 26 Fragment of a Clay Relief Pithos, Tenian workshop, second quarter of the seventh century B.C.
Found near the Frankish citadel of Xoburgo in Tenos in 1938, height 22 (8 5/8), Tenos, Archaeological Museum, B. 1
- 27 Clay Polychrome Plaque, Attic, mid-seventh century B.C.
Found in Athens (at the northwest foot of the Areopagus) in 1932, 24.8 x 13.3 (9 3/4 x 5 1/4), Athens, Agora Museum, T 175
- 28 Bronze Statuette of a Kouros, around 620 B.C.
Found in Delphi in 1895, height 19 (7 1/2), Delphi, Archaeological Museum, 2527
- *29 Fragment of a Poros Relief, around 630 B.C.
Found in Mycenae in 1886 and 1897, height 40 (15 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 2869
- 30 Fragment of a Terracotta Sima, Thasian workshop, c. 560 - 550 B.C.
Found on Thasos (in the settlement behind the Silene Gate) in 1971, Thasos, Archaeological Museum, 71-3295: P 6641
- *31 Clay Aryballos, c. 590 B.C.
Corinthian, attributed to the Otterlo Painter, found in Tanagra, Boeotia, in 1888, height 14 (5 1/2) Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 969
- *32 Terracotta Figurine of a Horseman, Boeotian, sixth century B.C.
Found in Tanagra, Boeotia, height 26 (10 1/4) Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 4017
- *33 Clay Loutrophoros, beginning of the sixth century B.C.
Attic, attributed to the KX Painter, found in Athens (Kerameikos excavations), height to rim 47 (18 3/8), Athens, Kerameikos Museum, 2865
- 34 Clay Skyphos, Attic, beginning of the sixth century B.C.
Found in Athens (Kerameikos excavations), height 11.4, diameter 16 (4 1/2 x 6 1/4), Athens, Kerameikos Museum, 2869

35 Hammered Bronze Relief, probably Samian, c. 570 B.C.
Found in Olympia (site of the new museum) in 1959, 31.3 x 15 (12 1/4 x 5 7/8), Olympia, Archaeological Museum, BM 77

°36 Black-Figure Siana Cup, c. 560 B.C.
Attic, attributed to the Taras Painter, found in Corinth, height 13.9, diameter 26.6 (5 1/2 x 10 1/2), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 530

37 Clay Dish, c. 570 B.C.
Provenance unknown, height 1.5, diameter 9.5 (5/8 x 3 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 628

38 Fragment of a Marble Grave Stele, c. 560 B.C.
Attributed to the Master of the Rampin Rider, found at the Dipylon in the Athenian Kerameikos in 1873, height 35 (13 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 38

39 Bronze Statuette of a Kouros, Samian, early sixth century B.C.
From the Heraion on Samos, height 19 (7 3/8), Samos Museum, B 1675

40 Bronze Statuette of a Woman, Samian, first half of the sixth century B.C.
Found near the temple of Zeus in Olympia in 1878, height 22.5 (8 7/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 6149

41 Bronze Statuette of a Woman, Milesian, before the middle of the sixth century B.C.
Found on the Athenian Acropolis (excavations of 1885-1889), height 11 (4 3/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 6493

42 Bronze Statuette of a Woman, Samian, 560-550 B.C.
Found in the Heraion on Samos in 1963, height 27 (10 5/8), Vathy (Samos), Archaeological Museum, B 1441

43 Terracotta Alabastron in the Shape of a Young Woman, Rhodian, c. 560/550 B.C.
Found in Thebes, height 26 (10 1/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 5669

44 Terracotta Antefix with Palmette Finial, Thasian, second half of the sixth century B.C.
Found in Thasos near the sanctuary of Heracles, 17 x 19.4 (6 5/8 x 7 5/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 16004

45 Bronze Statuette of a Youth, Attic, last quarter of the sixth century B.C.
Found in the Acropolis (excavations of 1885-1889), height 11.2 (4 3/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 6598

**46 Bronze Statuette of a Young Girl, Laconian, mid-sixth century B.C.
Found in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, height 12 (4 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum (Karapanos Collection), 24

47 Bronze Statuette of an Athlete, Attic, c. 500 B.C.
Found on the Acropolis in 1888, height 27 (10 5/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 6445

*°48 Clay Vase in the Shape of a Kneeling Boy, Attic work, 540-530 B.C.
Found in the ancient Agora of Athens, height 25.5 (10), Athens, Agora Museum, P. 1231

**49 Clay Red-Figured Kylix, Attic, c. 490 B.C.
Found in Karditsa, height 12 (4 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 1409

°50 Red-figure Kylix of "Type B", c. 505 B.C.
Attic, signed by Phintias as potter, found in Tanagra, Boeotia, in 1888, height 8, diameter 13 (3 1/8 x 5 1/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 1628

°51 Red-figure Kylix, Attic, c. 500 B.C.
Found in Athenian Agora in 1954, height 7.4, diameter 18 (2 7/8 x 7 1/16), Athens, Agora Museum, P 24113

52 Marble Statue of a Kouros, c. 570-560 B.C.
Ionian work of a local workshop, found on Thera (opposite the cemetery at Cape Exomytis) in 1836, height 124 (48 7/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 8

*°53 Marble Statue of a Kouros, Boeotian(?) work, c. 530-520 B.C.
Found in the sanctuary of Apollo on Mount Ptoon, the torso in 1885, the head in 1903, height 160 (63), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 12

°54 Marble Kouros, end of the sixth century B.C.
From Thracian Raideustos, height 58 (22 3/4), Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum, 930

55 Marble Statue of a Kore, Attic, c. 530 B.C.
Found on the Acropolis west of the Erechtheum in 1886, height 95.4 (37 1/2), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 678

*°56 Marble Statue of a Kore, Attic, beginning of the fifth century B.C.
Found on the Acropolis southwest of the Parthenon in 1888, height 122.5 (48 1/4), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 685

°57 Marble Statue of a Kore, Attic, c. 490 B.C.
Found on the Acropolis east of the Parthenon in 1882-1883, height 119 (46 7/8), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 684

*58 Marble Head of a Kore, around 510 B.C.
Found on the Acropolis, height 14.2 (5 1/2), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 643

59 Clay Figurine, Attic, end of the sixth century B.C.
Found on the Acropolis, height 31.1 (12 1/4), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 10484

°60 Red-Figure Alabastron, c. 520 B.C.
Attic workshop, attributed to the painter Paseas, found in Athens in 1891, height 17 (6 5/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 1740

61 Clay Relief Plaque, end of the sixth to the beginning of the fifth century B.C.

Found on the Acropolis, 21.8 x 15.7 (8 3/4 x 6 1/8), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 13055

*°62 Clay Plastic Vase in the Shape of a Female Head, Boeotian, c. 490-480 B.C.

Found in Tanagra, Boeotia, height 13 (5 1/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 4073

*°63 Square Marble Relief Base for a Statue, end of the sixth century B.C.

Attic, under island influence, found south of the Piraeus Gate in the city wall of Athens in 1922, 27 x 72 x 79 (10 5/8 x 28 1/4 x 31 1/8), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 3477

*°64 Marble Relief Plaque from a Funerary Monument, end of the sixth century B.C.

Found in Athens near the Theseion, height 101 (39 3/4), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 1959

°65 Marble Head of a Bearded Man, c. 500 B.C.

Found on the Acropolis, height 17.9 (7), Athens, Acropolis Museum, 621

*°66 Marble Group of Theseus and Antiope, Attic workshop(?), 500-490 B.C.

Found in Eretria (excavations of the Temple of Apollo Daphnephoros) in 1900, height 112 (44 1/8), Chalcis, Archaeological Museum, 4

°67 Marble Relief of a Victorious Boy Athlete, Attic, c. 470-460 B.C.

Found in the sanctuary of Athena at Sounion in 1915, 48 x 49.5 (18 7/8 x 19 1/2), Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 3344