

Venus in a gold bikini

An unexpected visitor at the Acropolis Museum

The Acropolis Museum, on the occasion of the International Women's Day (**8 March 2023**), is commencing a new series of exhibitions titled "Temporary and unexpected visitors", including artwork from other world museums, that the Acropolis Museum will host periodically, either in relation to a celebratory event, or unexpectedly, thus enriching visitors' aesthetics and knowledge.

On the same day last year, the Museum focused on the intellectual contribution of female poets in antiquity, presenting works by Lena Platonos and performed by Maria Farantouri.

This year, the Museum focuses on female beauty, presenting a work of sculpture that captivates us by the peerless pulchritude of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, to whom Paris, as a judge of three goddesses, offered the *apple of discord* to the *Fairest of them all*, the fairest of form among the three.

This year's unexpected visitor is the sculpture "Venus in a gold bikini", from the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. This great artwork will be displayed in the Museum ground floor **from 8 March until 28 May 2023**. Entrance to the Museum ground floor is free. During this exhibition, a video will be on display and a free bilingual explanatory leaflet will be available for visitors. Below are selected texts from the leaflet:

"...The statuette was found alongside other ancient artwork in 1954 in the so called ever since '*House of Venus in bikini*' in Pompeii and kept in the "Secret Cabinet" of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, due to its exquisite quality, the rarity of its decorative elements and its strong erotic aura..."

"...The marble's whiteness that glows towards the light (the verb used in ancient greek to denote the glowing of light, is the same verb that produces the noun *marble*) and admirably becomes the golden decoration of her body, creating an impression of a snowwhite, soft skin, inviting and challenging you to touch it..."

"...Under the goddesses' nose's chambers there lay the relatively small, diverted on the upper part lips, which have an erasmian austerity, creating a sensation that the goddess lays on a heavenly sphere, in contradiction to the one created by the "dressed" nudity and the rippling of her body's white flesh, the well-shaped abdominal area and the young Priapus's erection. As a whole it seems to hover between the heavenly and the pandemos (common to all the people) erotic sphere of the goddess and the golden decoration of her body alludes to the "golden Aphrodite" of the Homeric hymn: Iliad book 9, 389: *not though she vied in beauty with golden Aphrodite...*"

Finally, the Acropolis Museum is programming a presentation for the rearrangement of the exhibition in the Archaic Acropolis Gallery, for which an official announcement will be coming soon.