

Acropolis Museum

A highlights report  
June 2019 – May 2020



11 years

# President's message

On 20 June 2019, we celebrated our ten-year anniversary at the Acropolis Museum. The highlight of the day was the opening of the archeological excavation below the Museum building, which finally took place after 25 years of hard work and great anticipation. Visitors are therefore now enjoying another exhibition level at the Museum, through a pleasant stroll along steel walkways erected between the houses, baths and workshops of an ancient neighborhood south of the Acropolis.

The main goal for the Museum in the coming years will be the continued enhancement of our exhibitions. This will include the enrichment of our presentation on the two great temples of the ancient Acropolis – the original Parthenon (580/570 BC), known as the Hekatompedon; and the so-called 'Archaïos Naos' (520/510 BC), the predecessor of the Erechtheion. We consider it necessary for our visitors to easily comprehend that the Museum presents architectural members, sculptures and votive offerings from not just one, but two great eras of the Acropolis: the Archaic and the Classical.

Attendance at the Museum during the second half of 2019 was extremely high, similar to that of the previous year. However, due to the pandemic spread of the new corona virus, beginning early in the first six-month period of 2020, visitor numbers began to decline significantly, ultimately reaching zero when the Museum was forced to close for the

health and safety of our staff and visitors on 14 March 2020.

Despite these developments, the Museum has not remained inactive. A portion of the staff and some external collaborators, taking the necessary protective measures, continued to carry out planned exhibition works, conservation projects, building repairs and in-depth cleaning works. Restarting the Museum's operation for the public will be a challenge, as the infectious disease has not yet disappeared and health-related protective measures will certainly be strict. Nonetheless, the Museum has now been thoroughly refreshed and fully expects to carry on as a flagship, aspiring not only to recover, but also to continue promoting and embracing innovation.

Many thanks again this year to the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens and the Acropolis Restoration Service for their invaluable cooperation.

Dimitrios Pandermalis  
President of the Acropolis Museum







# Our visitors\*

## Total visitors

1,283,125

## Visitors arriving independently

79%

1,019,185

## Visitors arriving in organised groups

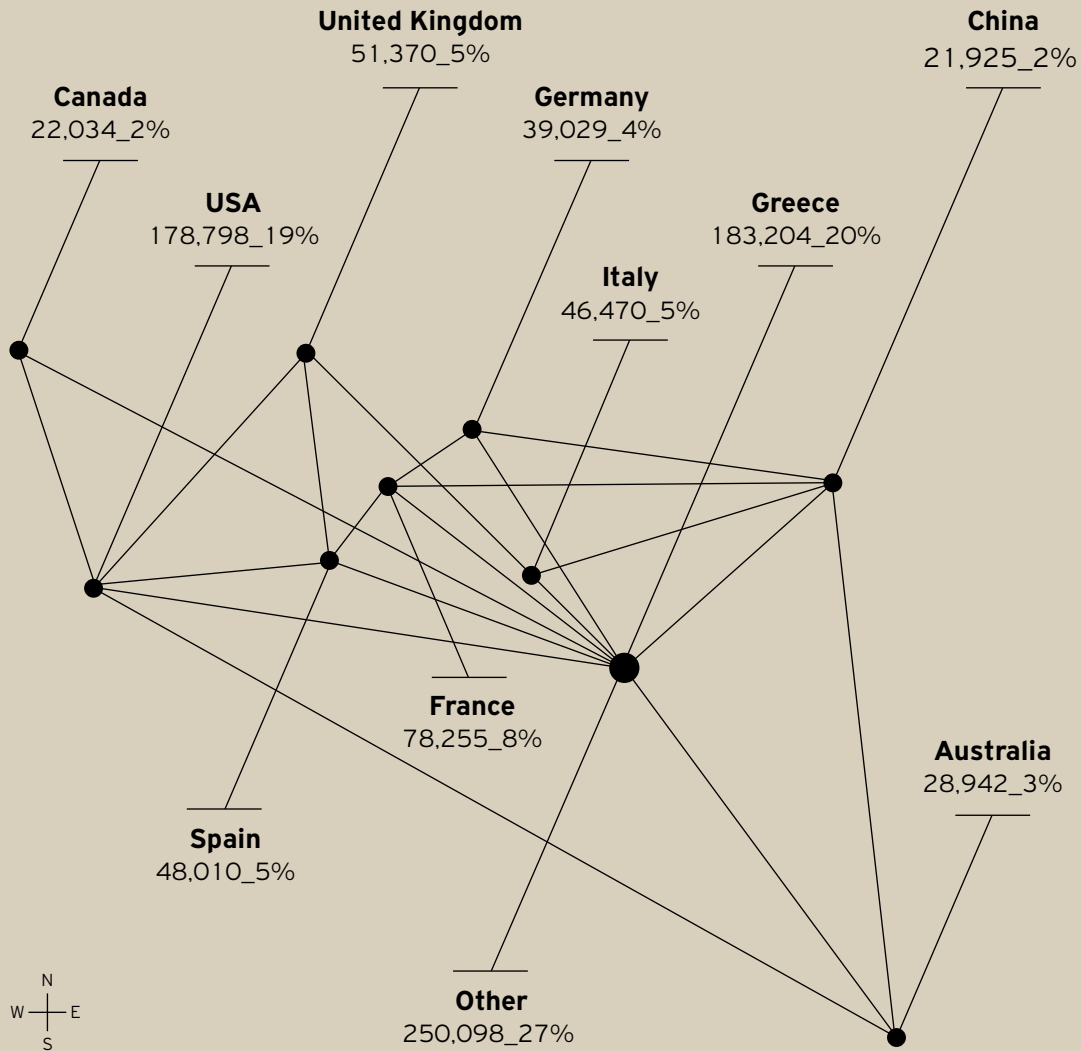
21%

263,940

\* From 14 March 2020 to 14 June 2020, the Museum closed due to emergency health measures taken against the corona virus (Covid-19).

### Main countries of origin\*

for visitors arriving independently

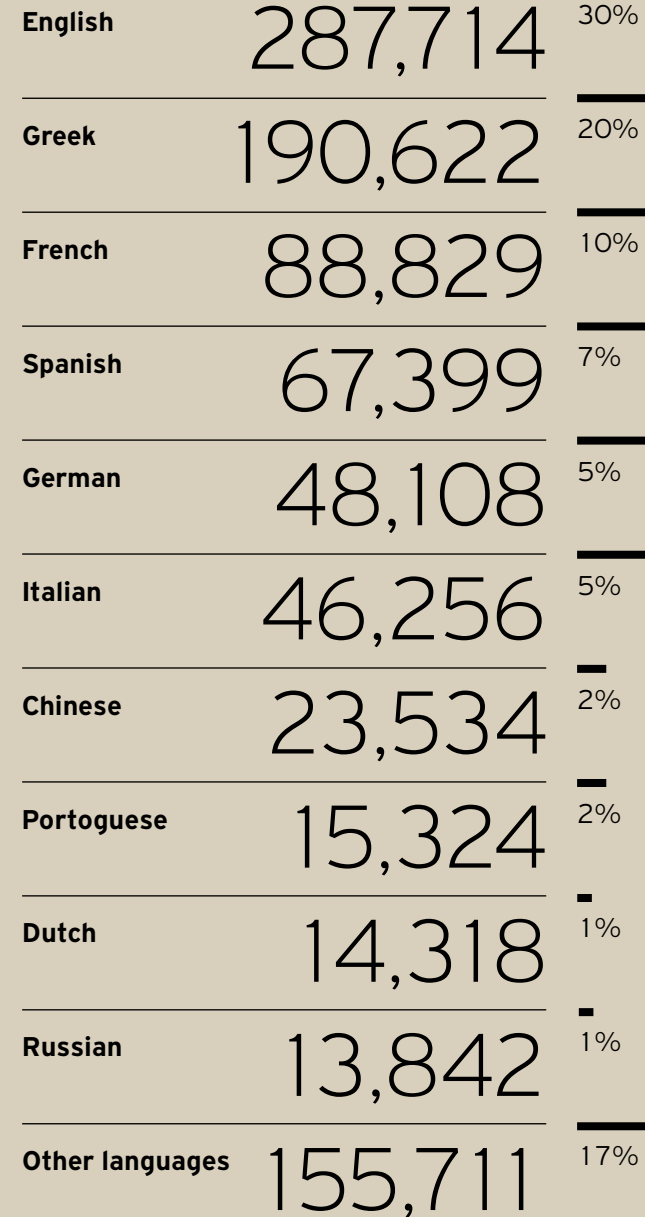


### Total visitors\*

948,135

### Main languages spoken\*

by visitors arriving independently



\* Not included in this figure are visitors of events, restaurant customers and visitors of the temporary exhibition 'Chisel and Memory. The Contribution of Marble Craftsmanship to the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments'.

# School visitors

## Total visitors in groups

263,940

### Student groups

32%

84,835

### Adult groups

68%

179,105

## Total free-admission tickets

408,115

32% of all tickets

## Total discounted admission tickets

108,356

8% of all tickets

## Total visitors in school groups

84,835

### Greek school students

56%

47,274

### Foreign school students

44%

37,561

### Primary school students

27%

22,750

### Secondary school students

58%

49,103

### Tertiary school students

13%

11,262

### Other school students

2%

1,720

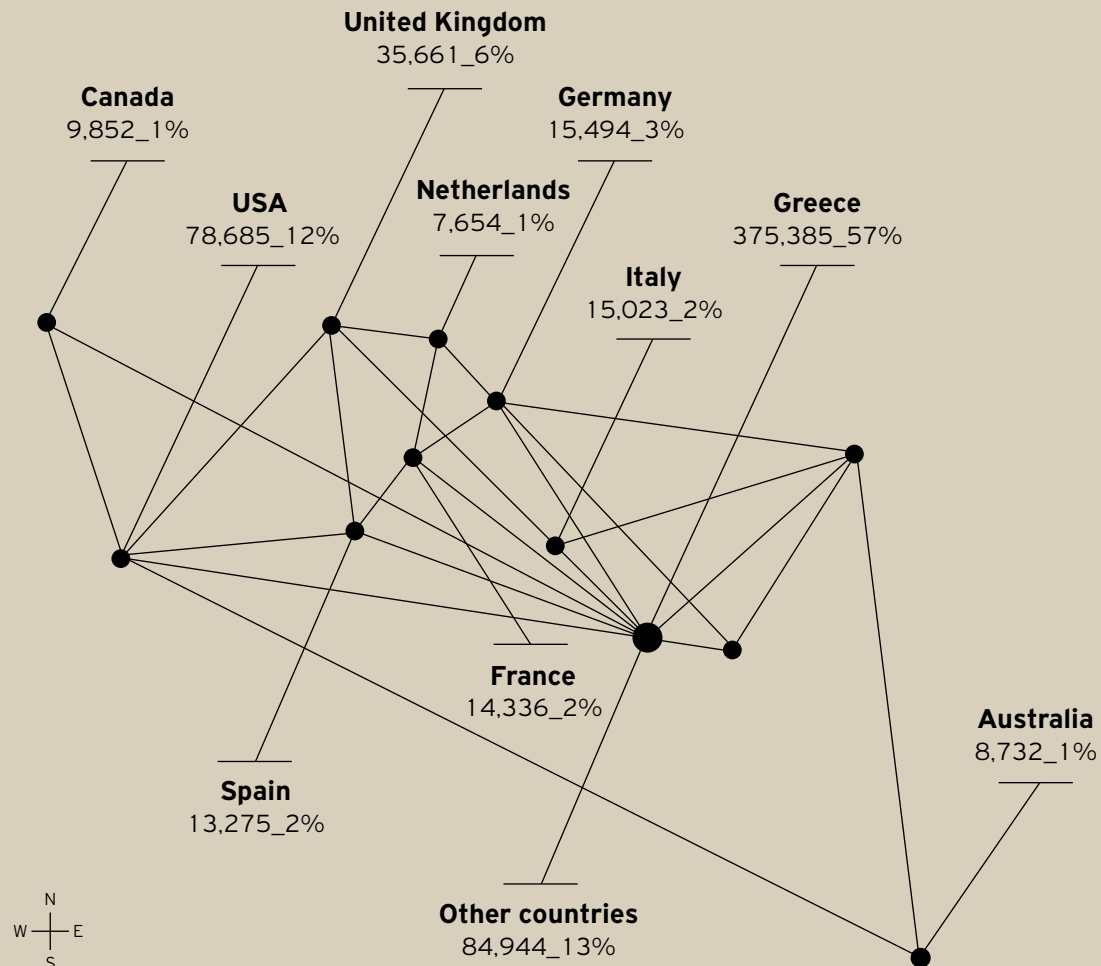
The above data was collected and analyzed by the Visitors' Reception Department of the Acropolis Museum.

# Virtual visitors

## Total visitors to Museum website

659,041

## Main countries of origin of Museum website visitors



## Total friends on Museum Facebook page

412,131

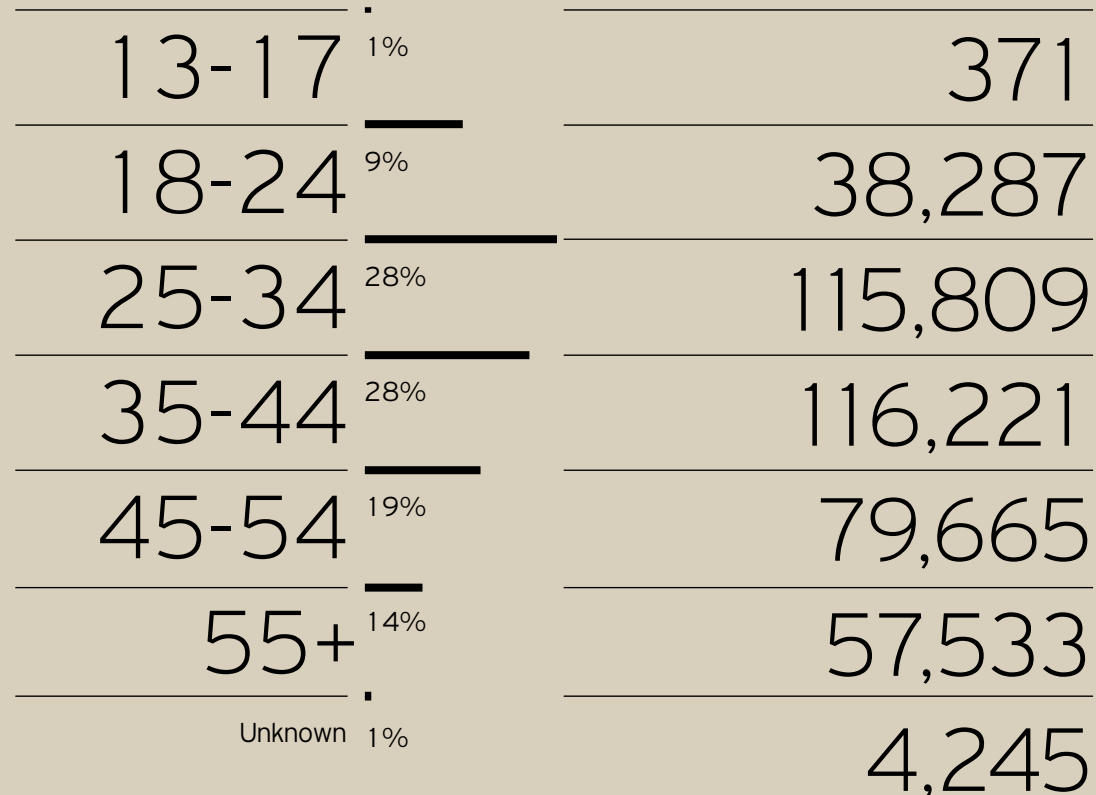
## Main countries of origin of friends on Museum Facebook page

Greece	302,079	73%
USA	16,331	4%
Germany	10,003	3%
Cyprus	9,779	2%
United Kingdom	9,073	2%
Italy	5,888	1%
Australia	4,402	1%
Canada	2,791	1%
Serbia	2,783	1%
France	2,773	1%
Other countries	46,229	11%



# Changes and improvements to the collections

## Age of friends on Museum Facebook page



The above data was collected and analyzed by the Independent Office of Communications & Promotion of the Acropolis Museum.

## The permanent collection

The enrichment of the permanent collection with new works and the refreshed presentation of particularly important exhibits are top priorities for the Acropolis Museum.

During the past year, in the Archaic Acropolis Gallery, the head of the 'Polos Kore' (Acr. 696) was removed from an enclosed showcase and reunited with the fragments of its body previously curated in the Museum storerooms. Adapting the loose fragments to an innovative modular suspension system has led to the reconstruction of yet another Archaic Kore. In the 'Lyon Kore' (Acr. 269), the copy of the missing piece located in Lyon was replaced by a new cast, and the fragments were adjusted in an obvious and reversible manner, without reshaping, which has altered the philosophy behind the sculpture's presentation. Improvements were also made to the displays of the quadriga (Acr. 575) and a panther (Acr. 552), both attributed to the metopes of the Hekatompedon.

In the Parthenon Gallery, a throne, which is an architectural part of the Parthenon, was added to the atrium, accompanied by a video display of its colourful decoration. Moreover, the laser cleaning programme of the west frieze has been completed, with procedures performed on five additional blocks, specifically Blocks XIII to XVI and Block XI.

Lastly, on-site cleaning was carried out for the exhibit Acr. 681, displayed on the west side of the first floor, which belongs to a plaque of the protective parapet originally enclosing the sanctuary of Athena Nike.

## Conservation

The Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Casts completed the conservation of twelve marble objects, 307 ceramic objects and 180 metal objects from the Museum's collections. Additionally, the desalination of 332 archaeological artefacts was carried out, and the cleaning and maintenance of the architectural remains of the excavation displayed beneath the Museum.

## Archaeological storerooms

The Department of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Antiquities Collection continued the important work of updating and enriching the digital catalogs of the objects curated in the Museum's archaeological storerooms. Staff members have completed the consolidation and audit of the digital catalogs of the 'South Acropolis' excavation material, and have proceeded with the study and dating of the excavated archaeological finds of the Makrygiannis plot. The Library of George and Katerina Despini, located on the Museum's surrounding grounds, was organised and inaugurated on 18 June 2019. Lastly, 53 new scholarly monographs were uploaded to the Acropolis Museum's library database, organised thematically,

while the Museum's newly completed publication 'Acropolis Museum. The Excavation' was distributed to 103 libraries, archaeological institutions and foundations.

### **Loan exhibits**

The Museum participated in the loan of exhibits for four major exhibitions organised in Greece and abroad.

The portrait of Alexander the Great (Acr. 1331) was presented in the exhibition 'The Joint Exhibition of Asian Civilization', at the National Museum of China in Beijing (10/5/2019 – 20/8/2019). The Parthenon frieze fragment S 1776 was transferred to the Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, for the exhibition titled 'Acropolis Redux: Caryatid/Frieze' (18/5/2019 – 14/7/2019). The Museum also participated in the exhibition 'The Greeks. Agamemnon to Alexander the Great', in the Hangaram Art Museum of the Seoul Arts Centre in South Korea, with the exhibits Kore Acr. 673 and the decree EM 2811+ EM 7180 (5/6/2019 – 15/9/2019). Finally, seven important exhibits travelled to Indianapolis in the United States of America – including the Kore statue Acr. 678, the bust of Plato M 163 and the cast copies of Blocks VII, VIII, IX, X and XI of the Parthenon's west frieze – on the occasion of the exhibition 'Ancient Greece. Life, Myth and Heroes' (15/6/2019 – 30/12/2019).

### **The archaeological excavation beneath the Museum**

With the opening of the archaeological excavation of the Museum in June 2019, archaeologists from the Department of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Antiquities Collection offered organised guided tours to 642 visitors within the first three months, as well as special presentations to 100 members of the Association of Licensed Tourist Guides. Furthermore, they developed proposals for the improvement of the excavation site and the enhancement of learning materials for visitors.

### **New technologies**

UV-IR photography continued to be used to detect and identify traces of decorative paint, with the simultaneous use of an XRF machine, specifically with regard to five exhibits (Blocks XIV and XIII of the Parthenon's west frieze; Acr. 696; Acr. 5754; and Acr. 698). The 3D model of the 'Lyon Kore' (Acr. 269) was created as part of the 3D printing and digitization of three Museum sculptures (Acr. 269, Acr. 1313, Acr. 696) and the fragment of the Rodin bust (CO467).

### **Digital documentation of the collections**

The Department of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Antiquities Collection continued the ongoing project of enriching the digital database for the Museum's collections (MuseumPlus). Over the past year, 509

new entries relating to the upcoming exhibition of finds from the excavation were documented and uploaded, as well as 160 new entries from the Parthenon Gallery, reaching a total number of 10,548 records.

### **The digital museum**

The Museum's ambitious programme of digital application development has finally come to an end. The Museum had received a grant from the Regional Operational Programme Attica 2014-2020, administered jointly by the Acropolis Museum and the Information Society SA, with the work undertaken by the successful tender contractor HELLENIC Telecommunications SA.

The Museum's new website provides visitors the opportunity to browse through a contemporary multilingual platform, which represents an organic part of the Museum's communication, educational and museological approach to the different audiences we aim to reach. Local and international online visitors can take a virtual journey through the Museum's exhibition galleries and become initially acquainted with 2,127 exhibits from its permanent collection. A separate website with fun games and exciting videos for children is offered for our younger visitors.

Within the context of this project, the following elements have been digitized: 496 excavation diaries, 110,000 photographs,

18,410 registration records and 7,500 conservation records of movable objects. In addition, 550 objects of the permanent collection were photographed and 3D scanning of these was undertaken. Also, 23 digital applications were created, suitable for installation either in the Museum's interior spaces or on the website. This time-consuming programme has occupied a large proportion of the Museum's staff, mainly the Department of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Antiquities Collection, the Department of Educational Programmes, the Independent Office of Communications & Promotion, and the Independent Office of the President of the Board of Directors.

# Promotion of the exhibits

## **Gallery talks and discussions**

Over the past year, the Archaeologist-Hosts of the Department of Educational Programmes have been available at a designated spot in the Archaic Acropolis Gallery for questions, discussions and comments from Greek and foreign visitors. At the same time, the following gallery talks were offered to visitors on a weekly basis in both Greek and English: 'A Walk Through the Museum with an Archaeologist', in which 1,695 visitors participated over a period of eight months; 'Walking in the Ancient Neighborhood of the Acropolis Museum', with 700 participants over a period of three months, and 'The Lost Statue of Athena Parthenos', attended by 499 visitors solely on the occasion of 28 October 2019. Given its success on that day, the latter talk was introduced as a regular event, with 330 visitors participating over a period of four months.

## **Production of cast reproductions of Museum exhibits**

The Department of Conservation of Antiquities and Casts produced a total of 4,610 cast reproductions of exhibits, sold in the Museum Shops, all created using acrylic resin, high-quality plaster and bronze. Casts made of bronze were produced in collaboration with an external foundry. Moreover, six new production molds were created; high-precision patinas were applied for painting details on five casts; and experiments were conducted

to improve production techniques employing new materials for casts and patinas.

## **Study, photography and filming of exhibits**

Over the past year, the Department of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Antiquities Collection granted 69 permits for the photography and the licensing of photographs of exhibits, as well as 17 filming permits for film crews, in addition to accommodating 15 requests for the study of archaeological material.

## **Family backpacks and family trails**

The Museum's specially designed family backpacks have helped children and their parents learn about our exhibits in a fun and creative way. Over the past year, the three backpacks – 'In Search of the Goddess Athena', 'Archaic Colours', and 'The Parthenon Sculptures' – were used by a total of 2,700 families, of which 42% came from Greece and 58% from other countries. Additionally, 6,176 families from Greece and abroad enjoyed the available family trails through the Museum's galleries. In the summer of 2019, these trails were enriched with further reading materials, including the booklet 'A Special Day at the Acropolis Museum', created for the occasion of the Museum's tenth anniversary, and the booklet 'Chisel and Memory. The Contribution of Marble Craftsmanship to the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments',

created for the temporary exhibition of the same title.

## **Activities for children**

The Department of Educational Programmes offered activities during the past year designed for children of different age groups and their chaperones. The activity 'Experience the Panathenaia Festival with All My Senses' was attended by 117 children, 3 -5 years old, over a period of one month. After touring the Parthenon Gallery, children ended up at the Museum's restaurant, where they tasted sweets similar to those available at the original Panathenaic festival. The activity 'What Happened to Athena's Statue from the Parthenon?' proved especially popular, with 178 children (6-9 years old) participating over a two-month period. At Christmastime 2019, the mobile workshop 'Festive Stories' was hosted, in which children 6-11 years old and their parents discovered the festivals of the ancient Athenians. During the activity, participants created festive theatrical scenery later used to decorate the Museum. This last activity was undertaken in collaboration with the Education Team of the Acropolis Monuments Restoration Service (YSMA).

## **School visits**

During the past year, the number of students visiting the Museum under prearranged group bookings reached 84,835, of which 56% were Greeks and

44% foreigners. The Department of Educational Programmes, in collaboration with YSMA's Education Team, offered organised programmes to Elementary and Junior High School students, such as 'The Parthenon Sculptures', 'Statues Come Alive in Your Own Creations', 'A Trip Through Time at the Acropolis', and 'The Sculpture and Colour Workshop'. High School students had the opportunity to choose among additional programmes, including 'Ancient Faces and You', 'In the Heart of the Museum', 'Contests, Action and Spectacle', and 'Children, Teenagers, Young People'. Lastly, programmes for pre-school groups and foreign school groups of all educational levels were also offered.

## **Teacher training**

Educators had the opportunity to plan independent school visits to the Museum and use the online resources available on the Museum's website, specifically 'The Parthenon Sculptures' and 'The Monuments of the Acropolis'. In addition, YSMA's Education Team continued to provide seminars for teachers, either to enhance their teaching or to assist them in the planning of enriching tours of the Museum for their students.

# Promotion of the Museum

## **Ten years of the Acropolis Museum**

On 20 June 2019, the Museum celebrated its first decade of operation, organising several festivities on this occasion for its visitors.

## **Temporary exhibition: 'Chisel and Memory. The Contribution of Marble Craftsmanship to the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments'**

Since opening its doors ten years ago, the Acropolis Museum has highlighted the close relationship between the unique sculptures it displays and the ancient monuments from which they originate. It is with great pleasure that the Museum has hosted an exceptional exhibition of photographs of YSMA's present-day marble craftsmen at work on the Acropolis. Imbued with a new curatorial spirit, the exhibition was initially organised by the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments in conjunction with YSMA. It was staged at the Acropolis Museum with many super-enlarged photographs that covered entire walls of the galleries, giving the visitor an immediate sense of being on the Acropolis site and watching the work in progress. The exhibition was inaugurated on 10 June 2019 and it will be open to the public until 30 September 2020 in the ground-floor Temporary Exhibition Hall, with free admission for visitors.

## **Lecture: 'The True Colours of the Parthenon Sculptures: Evidence for Traces of Original Polychromy and its Interpretation'**

On 13 June 2019, the Museum hosted a lecture in its Auditorium by the Italian professor Giovanni Verri on the polychromy of the Parthenon sculptures – long a subject of scholarly research, and debate about which has continued for almost two centuries. Awarded an MA in Conservation of Wall Paintings by the Courtauld Institute of Art (University of London), where he currently teaches, Verri has endeavored to develop scientific techniques for the analysis of coloured paint, particularly on Greek and Roman antiquities.

## **Musical concert: 'Instrumental' by Stavros Xarchakos**

On 19 June 2019, visitors had the opportunity to enjoy a unique concert, titled 'Instrumental', by the great Greek composer Stavros Xarchakos, leading an orchestra of eight renowned Greek soloists. On the day of the event, the Museum extended its opening hours until midnight, with free admission from 8 pm onwards.

## **A new exhibition space: the Museum's archaeological excavation**

On 20 June 2019, the Museum celebrated its birthday with free admission for all visitors to its exhibition galleries. On the same evening, the Museum's official

tenth anniversary celebration took place, attended by His Excellency, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic. Highlighting the event were the grand opening of the Museum's archaeological excavation displayed beneath the building, and a special concert performed by the Greek National Opera. The exhibition of the archaeological excavation proved to be of great interest to members of the local and international media.

## **Music at the Museum**

In accordance with established custom, the Museum again invited its visitors to a musical evening under the bright light of the August full moon (15 August 2019). The event, hosted in the Museum's courtyard, featured a group of young artists and their orchestra performing well-known songs about the moon. On the day of the event, the Museum extended its opening hours until midnight, with free admission from 8 pm onwards.

On the afternoon of 31 October 2019, the Museum once again welcomed the award-winning Athens String Quartet, of the Athens State Orchestra, for a concert of Beethoven's and Dvorak's compositions.

During the Christmas holiday season, visitors enjoyed a festive concert by the Jazz Octet of the Athens Military Guard, on 22 December 2019, and a New Year's concert by the STAB Saxophone Quartet, on 29 December 2019. On New Year's Eve, the Museum's President, Prof. Dimitrios

Pandermalis, welcomed the Association of the Asia Minor Community of Egaleo 'Nees Kydonies', which performed carols on the Museum's ground floor.

## **Additional free-admission days**

During the past year, on the occasion of World Tourism Day, on 27 September 2019, and on the National Holiday of 28 October, admission for visitors was free 5 pm – 10 pm and 8 am – 6 pm respectively. On the single occasion of 28 October, the Museum was pleased to receive 14,736 visitors. On these free-admission days, visitors had the opportunity to enjoy a guided walk through the Museum's archaeological excavation and its permanent collections, as well as a special tour concerning the lost statue of Athena Parthenos.

## **Museum presentations, local and abroad**

Over the past twelve months, the Museum's President, Prof. Dimitrios Pandermalis, has represented the Museum in a series of local and international conferences.

In the summer of 2019, he presented a lecture about the stories of the Parthenon sculptures on the occasion of the 48th Olympus Festival, 10 June 2019, in the Acropolis Museum, and again on 9 August 2019 at the archaeological site of Dion. On 21-22 June 2019, he participated in a world conference at the Zappeion Hall concerning the repercussions of climate change on cultural heritage. On 12 July 2019,

he spoke about the ten-year history of the Acropolis Museum at the Sixth Meeting of the Aegean Arts International Festival, which took place in Heraklion, Crete.

On 31 October 2019, Prof. Pandermalis offered an opening address at the international scientific conference titled 'They are Not Silent After All... Human Remains in Archaeological Museums. Ethics & Display', organised by the Directorate of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports. The Museum's President also participated, again with opening addresses, in 1) a conference organised by the International Council of Museums at the Acropolis Museum, held on 21 November 2019, titled 'Embracing the Virtual. European Museums Respond to the Digital Challenge'; and 2) a conference concerning climate change and the need to protect Mediterranean cultural heritage, held on 21 January 2020, organised by the Marianna V. Vardinoyannis Foundation under the auspices of H. E. the President of the Hellenic Republic. Lastly, on 31 January 2020, the President made a presentation of the Acropolis Museum's digital applications at the 21st Hellenic Heart Failure Congress, organised by the Hellenic Heart Failure Research Society.

The President was also invited abroad to speak about the ten-year history of the Acropolis Museum at events hosted by the Hellenic Community of Luxembourg, on 3 December 2019, and the Cultural Circle

of Friends of Greece in Basel, Switzerland, on 6 December 2019. At the latter event, the President was accompanied by the Acropolis Museum's Swiss architect, Bernard Tschumi.

### **Museum E-shop**

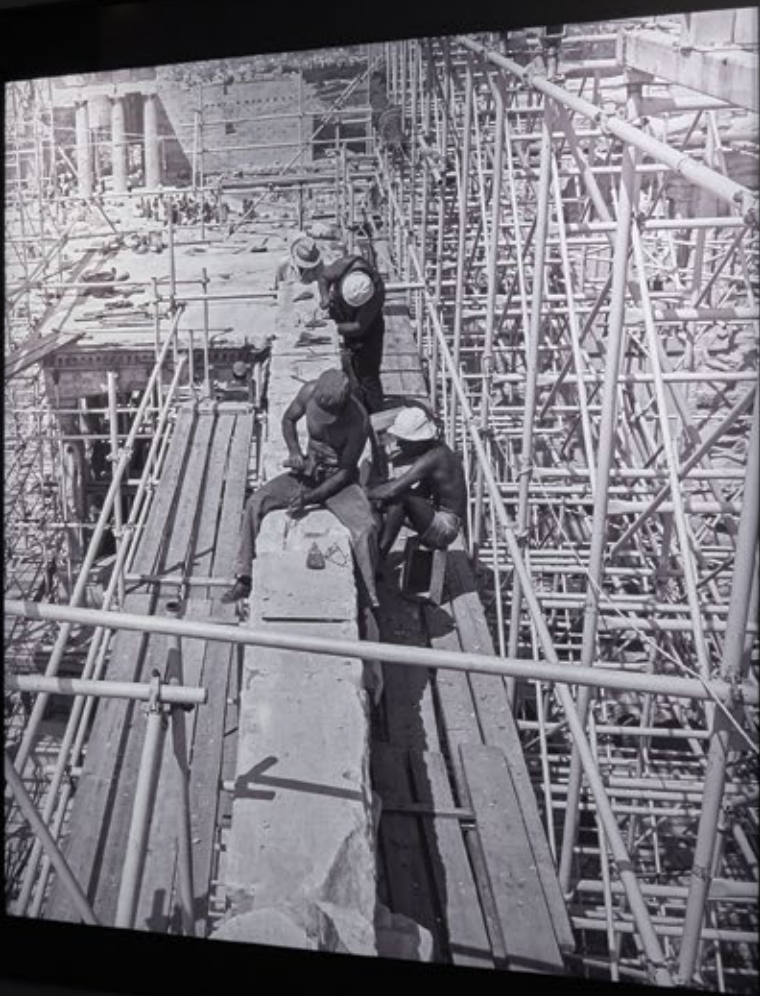
The Museum has intensified its efforts to develop its E-shop and plans for the shop to join the Museum's online presence in 2020.

### **Staff training**

Over the past year, the Museum held four competitions for the recruitment of seasonal staff with six- and eight-month contracts. The tender announced in February 2020 was not completed, due to emergency health measures taken against the spread of Covid-19 and the temporary closing of the Museum. For the orientation of new staff members that were successfully hired, the Museum used a combination of training videos, produced by the Museum itself, and presentations by experienced staff members, as well as on-site training.

The Acropolis Museum would like to express its gratitude to SAMSUNG Electronics Hellas, for its invaluable, ongoing support.







# Acropolis Museum Board of Directors

## President

### **Dimitrios Pandermalis**

Professor of Archaeology

## Members (in alphabetical order)

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**Editing**

John Leonard

**Photographs**

Giorgos Vitsaropoulos

Front cover – back cover:

Rear view of the painted reproduction of Kore Acr. 685, a gift of the E. Gilleron family to the Acropolis Museum, standing beside (back cover) the original statue. Archaic Acropolis Gallery.

1. Syma moulding, from the northeast corner of the Parthenon's roof, ending in an impressive lion's head rain spout. Parthenon Gallery.

2. Part of the tower-hall of Building E, in the ancient Athenian neighbourhood now exhibited beneath the Acropolis Museum.

3. Snapshot from the inauguration tour of the Acropolis Museum's archaeological excavation on 20 June 2019.

4. Views from the Acropolis Museum's temporary exhibition 'Chisel and Memory. The Contribution of Marble Craftsmanship to the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments'.

**Design**

G Design Studio

June 2020

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