

BENAKI MUSEUM



5 open-to-public museums and **1** ready to open soon_ **5** research centres_ Over **120,000** artworks dating from the Paleolithic to this day_ **895** artworks from the Museum's collections travelled around the world, fostering bonds with prominent cultural institutions_ More than **181,000** volumes are accessible by the public in Greece's largest museum library_ **7** conservation laboratories_ **175** professionals offering high-quality cultural experiences to the public_ **67** volunteers_ Over **300,000** people visit the Benaki Museum annually_ **35** temporary exhibitions in 2016_ Over **475** cultural events organised last year, including conferences, presentations, lectures, theatre and dance performances, music events and concerts, film screenings, press conferences and festivals_ **22,750** children and **297** adults took part in **287** educational programmes_ **1,821** Individual Members_ **23** Corporate Members_ **890** 'Friends of the Benaki Museum'_ @TheBenakiMuseum: over **135,885** likes at facebook.com_ over **18,083** followers at twitter.com_ over **20,123** followers at instagram.com_ **5** Museum Shops, focused on promoting contemporary design and supporting traditional craftsmen, continue to produce and sell quality replicas, publications on art, architecture, design and more_ **17** new book titles added this year to the Benaki Museum Publications list, totalling **481** books_ **3** café-restaurants serve as meeting points offering relaxation as well as a range of gastronomic experiences in a warm environment, ideal for corporate and other events.

2016

Greek Culture...

Prehistoric, Ancient Greek and Roman Art (10,110 items), **Byzantine Art, Icons and Coptic Textiles** (5,779 items), **Liturgical Vestments and Vessels** (1,772 items), **Modern Greek Art, Heirlooms and Modern Coins** (23,885 items), **Paintings, Drawings and Engravings** (10,500 items), **Library** (181,000 volumes & 436 manuscripts), **'Filippos Eliou' Bibliology Laboratory** (8,300 volumes & 72 card indexes), **Photographic Archives** (over 1,000,000 negatives & 78,572 original prints), **Historical Archives** (1,310 archival units), **Performing Arts Archives** (2,500 items & 4 archives), **Modern Greek Architecture Archives** (130 archives), **Collection of Toys and Games** (30,100 items), **Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture—The Ghika Gallery** (4,631 items), **Benaki Museum / The Yannis Pappas Sculpture Studio** (2,051 items)

... in Dialogue with World Cultures

Benaki Museum of Islamic Art (12,100 items), **Chinese Art** (1,425 items), **Pre-Columbian Art** (2,538 items), **World Cultures** (353 items)

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Introduction

The Benaki Museum was founded by Antonis Benakis in 1930 and subsequently donated to the Greek state. It is the oldest museum in Greece operating as a Foundation under Private Law. Between 1973 and 2014, under the directorship of a visionary and charismatic leader, Professor Angelos Delivorrias, and with the support of dedicated Board of Trustees members, the Benaki Museum emerged as the most active museum institution in Greece.

Arranged across nine buildings open to the public, the Museum's collections are extremely diverse, featuring four archives, an extensive library and over 500,000 works of art, books, photographs, and rare documents. The Museum welcomes over 300,000 visitors per year and offers a range of activities serving various educational and social needs. It holds a unique place as a truly multi-faceted institution within the broader network of museums in Greece.

Every year, the Benaki Museum presents dozens of temporary exhibitions and organises conferences, lectures and special events on subjects connected to its collections and expansive range of activities.

Mission Statement

The Benaki Museum aims to:

- preserve and make accessible as widely as possible its diverse collections through all available channels of communication and display;
- support research onto history, archaeology and the study of material culture, architecture, photography, visual and performing arts and literature;
- educate and engage its audiences through permanent, temporary and travelling exhibitions, courses, programmes, events, publications and openly available resources;
- play an active role in fostering social cohesion, safeguarding world heritage and inspiring intercultural dialogue; and
- maintain a dynamic connection with ongoing cultural processes in Greece and beyond.

Focus Areas

The Benaki Museum's main activities include educational programmes, exhibitions, research and publications, lectures, conferences and special events on Archaeology, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Culture, Modern Greek Art and Material Culture, European Art, Islamic Art, Chinese Art, World Cultures, Design, Architecture, Photography, Music, Theatre, History and Literature.



Timeline

In 1930 Antonis Benakis (1873–1954) converted his paternal home, one of the most attractive mansions in Athens, into the first museum founded on private initiative in Greece, which he subsequently donated to the Greek nation. The public impact of this initiative was exceptional. Thanks to the ever-growing number of benefactors and donors, the Museum continues to be endowed daily with valuable artworks, which expand its collections and research potential.

Brief History

- 1930** Foundation of the Benaki Museum and donation to the Greek state by Antonis Benakis
- 1931** Opening of the Benaki Museum and establishment of the Library
- 1954** Death of Antonis Benakis
- 1955** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Historical Archives
- 1957** Establishment of the ‘Friends of the Benaki Museum’ Society
- 1973** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Photographic Archives
- 1974** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Conservation Department
- 1977** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Shop
- 1978** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Educational Department
- 1991** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Information Technology Department
- 1991** Donation by artist Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika of all his works in his possession
- 1995** Establishment of the Modern Greek Architecture Archives
- 1995** Establishment of the Department of Toys and Childhood
- 2000** Opening of the refurbished Benaki Museum of Greek Culture
- 2002** Donation of the sculpture studio of Yannis Pappas and all the works within by the artist and his son Alekos Pappas
- 2004** Opening of the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art
- 2004** Opening of the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street
- 2005** Opening of the Benaki Museum / The Yannis Pappas Sculpture Studio
- 2006** Establishment of the Benaki Museum Publications Department
- 2011** British author Patrick Leigh Fermor’s house bequeathed to the Benaki Museum
- 2011** Establishment of the ‘Members of the Benaki Museum’
- 2012** Opening of the Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture – The Ghika Gallery
- 2012** The Mentis Fibre Manufactory donated to the Benaki Museum
- 2014** Launch of long-term partnership with the Hellenic Museum of Melbourne
- 2017** Conclusion of works for the opening of the Benaki Museum of Toys





Collections

By virtue of its collections, the Benaki Museum can be best described as the museum of Greek Culture in all its manifestations and in dialogue with World Cultures.

Greek Culture

The collection of Greek art, archaeology and material culture held by the Benaki Museum is exceptionally wide-ranging; in fact, it is considered as one of the most important collections of its kind in the world. It includes more than 40,000 items, painting a spectacular historical panorama of the Greek world from Prehistory to the Roman and Byzantine periods; from the fall of Constantinople (1453) through the Frankish and Ottoman periods to the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1821; and from the formation of the Modern Greek State (1830) to 1940, when Greece entered World War II.

The Greek collection also includes almost 6,000 paintings and drawings, mainly by European artists of the 17th to 19th centuries, as well as works by Greek artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. These works constitute one of the most important archival sources of pictorial information about the Greek world during the periods of Latin and Ottoman rule. In a similar vein, the collection of works by 20th century Greek artists, including the major bequests of works by Yannis Pappas and Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika, complements the panorama of Greek cultural continuity.

The Greek collections from Prehistory to the early 20th century are exhibited at the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture (see page 21), whereas Greece's intellectual and artistic life during the last century is presented at the Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture—The Ghika Gallery (see page 23) and at the Benaki Museum / The Yannis Pappas Sculpture Studio (see page 24).



Islamic Art

The Benaki Museum of Islamic Art (see *page 23*) opened to the public in 2004. It houses the collection formed by the founder of the Museum, Antonis Benakis, in the early 20th century, while he was living in Egypt. This core collection was enriched by other donations and today consists of about 12,100 objects from North Africa, Egypt, Turkey, the Near East, the Iranian world and India.

The Museum traces the evolution of Islamic art from its origins to the late Ottoman period and into the mid-20th century. The collection includes ceramics, metalwork, jewellery, textiles, woodwork, glassware as well as ivories, funerary steles, arms and armor. Its importance is made manifest in the Museum's numerous collaborations with world-renowned institutions, such as the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar and the Indianapolis Museum of Arts (see *pages 43 and 44*).



Chinese Art

The Chinese Art collection consists mainly of the donation of 800 ceramics by George Eumorfopoulos, one of the most important early 20th century collectors of Chinese art. The material culture of China from the third millennium BC to the 19th century AD is represented by more than 1,400 items.

Neolithic vases decorated with geometric patterns are among the earliest ever discovered, while funerary sculpture from the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) includes iconic figurines, which introduced this neglected field of Chinese art to the world. The collection also features elegantly proportioned ceramics dating from the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), porcelain from the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1644 AD and 1644–1911 AD), as well as textiles, metalwork, glasswares, snuff bottles and objects made of semiprecious stones. For the time being items from the Chinese Art collection are only exhibited in temporary shows.

Pre-Columbian Art

The Benaki Museum Pre-Columbian Art Collection is unique in Greece. Most of its 183 artefacts and 2,355 spindle whorls were donated to the Benaki Museum by Georgios Gontikas. They represent a range of cultures from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Costa Rica and Mexico and include ceramic and stone vessels and figurines, embroidery and tools, which illuminate diverse aspects of the life and culture of Pre-Columbian people: technology, materials used, apparel, rituals, social practices, customs and ideas.

Highlights of the collection include fifteen vessels with the 'negative decoration' technique, a suite of stone tools, two zoomorphic mortars in the form of a jaguar—all from Ecuador; Nasca vessels from Peru; and a large collection of varied spindle whorls from different parts of the Americas. The material from Ecuador is of particular interest as it is rare in museum collections. For now items from the Pre-Columbian Art collection are only exhibited in temporary shows.



Toys and Games

The collection of Toys and Games was created in 1991, when Maria Argyriadi donated to the Benaki Museum her collection. Today, the collection includes 30,100 items from antiquity to 1970 originating from the broader Greek world but also from other regions in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia.

The Greek section comprises infants' and children's toys spanning the Classical, Roman, Byzantine and modern periods, among them hand-made traditional toys dating from the 18th to the 20th century, articles from country festivals, 20th century commercial products, team sports, board games and seasonal games. The European section features dolls and games of urban and rural manufacture dating between the 17th and the 20th centuries, mainly from England, France and Germany. There is also a collection of 19th and 20th century European regional dolls dressed in costumes from various parts of Greece.

The collection of Toys and Games, accompanied by rich archival material, will be exhibited in the Benaki Museum of Toys (*see page 25*).



Library

Established in 1931, the Benaki Museum Library holds the largest collection of books operating in any museum in Greece, holding more than 181,000 volumes and 436 manuscripts. Their content is related to the Museum's other collections, broadly covering the following topics: Greek History and Art, Folklore, Intellectual Life and Religion, particularly during the period of Ottoman rule and modern times. It also holds noteworthy collections of books about Islamic Art and the Art of the Far East.

Visitors can access priceless Byzantine and Post-Byzantine manuscripts (Benaki Museum collection, collection of Damianos Kyriazis and the Exchangeable Populations Fund collection) dating from the 10th to the 19th century, as well as travellers' texts, old and rare editions, valuable folios, illustrated volumes and unique copies of books from the 15th to the 19th century. The Library is reference only; visitors can be supplied with photocopies, microfilm, photographs and digital printouts when possible.

Today the Library is organised as a network of book hubs since each department in the Museum holds its own reference collection. Beyond the main collection housed in the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture (see page 21), such hubs have been set up at the Benaki Museum of 20th Century Art—The Ghika Gallery (7,500 volumes, see page 23), at the Benaki Museum of Toys (6,000 volumes, see page 25), at the Benaki Museum / The Delta House (10,000 volumes, see page 24), at the Modern Greek Architecture Archives (4,500 volumes), at the Photographic Archives (6,000 volumes) and at the 'Filippos Eliou' Bibliology Workshop (8,300 volumes), all three housed at the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street (see page 22).



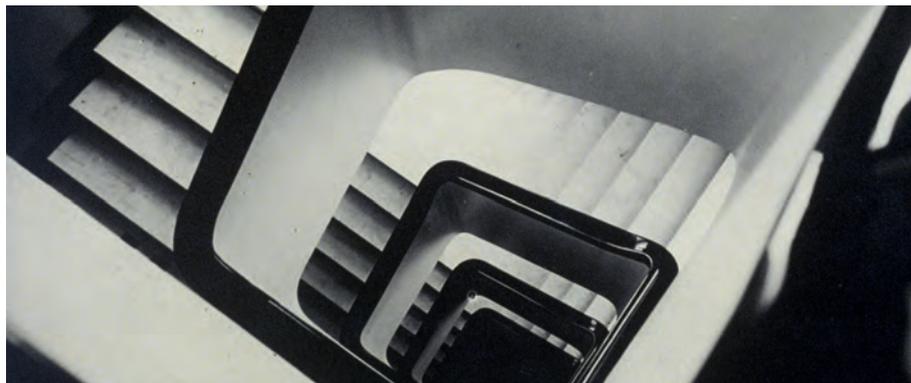
Archives

Photographic Archives

The Benaki Museum Photographic Archives were established in 1973, in order to collect, preserve and document photographs of Early Christian, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art and Architecture. Aimilia Geroulanou, Antonis Benakis' grand-daughter, envisioned a special department, which would be dedicated to preserving and promoting Greece's neglected photographic heritage. Since then, the Archives' original scope has been extended to cover photographic images of Greece and Greek culture, touching on both history and contemporary society.

The Photographic Archives now include photographs depicting traditional trades, customs and agricultural practices, the World War II and Post-War periods, social and cultural events, antiquities, Byzantine churches, neoclassical and traditional architecture and urban settlements. They consist of 1,000,000 negatives and 78,572 original prints, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. The material was gathered through the purchase or donation of important collections, including those of the professional photographers Nelly's, Voula Papaioannou, Pericles Papachatzidakis, Dimitris Harissiadis, Nikolaos Rizos and Nikolaos Tombazis.

Recently, the Benaki Museum Photographic Archives have focused on the history of photography in Greece and the work of early Greek photographers. They have also commissioned contemporary photographers to record subjects of Greek interest. The Photographic Archives are housed at the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street (see *page 22*).

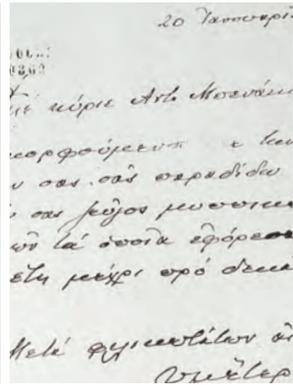
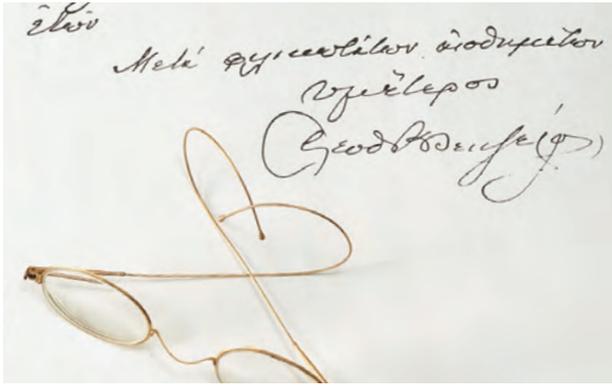


Modern Greek Architecture Archives

The Benaki Museum Modern Greek Architecture Archives were founded in April 1995 with the aim to collect, record and classify all information related to Modern Greek architecture, urban design and topography, be it printed, visual or oral and including drawings, models, maps, engravings, photographs, manuscripts and letters.

The Archives include information relating to the evolution of civic architecture in the Greek state, which had been hitherto scattered throughout various private and public collections in Greece and abroad. Apart from a few references in papers and publications, this information was hitherto undocumented but necessary for enabling research on the original appearance and evolution of Modern Greek cities. The need to collect this material was especially pressing, since contemporary urban growth rates frequently result in the alteration and destruction of urban centres. In Athens, for instance, few examples remain from the multitude of buildings that gave the city its historical appearance.

The Modern Greek Architecture Archives are housed at the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street (*see page 22*).



Historical Archives

The Benaki Museum Historical Archives constitute one of the best-organised and most extensive archival collections in Greece. They were established as an independent department in 1955. Most of the archival material originates in Antonis Benakis' personal collection, as well as in subsequent donations by private benefactors. Focusing on the history of the Greek nation, the collection includes documents, records and other historical artefacts, mostly relating to the political, economic and social life of the past three centuries.

Since 1994, the Benaki Museum Historical Archives have been housed in the Delta House (see page 24), where author Penelope Delta, sister of Antonis Benakis, wrote her best-known stories.



Performing Arts Archives

The Benaki Museum Performing Arts Archives were set up in 2005. They focus primarily on the evolution of Greek performing arts during the 20th century. For documentation the Benaki Museum is collaborating with the Theatre Studies Department of the University of Athens. So far, a significant amount of original theatrical material, as well as files related to the art of dance, have been collected, mainly through purchases and donations.

The Performing Arts Archives are open to researchers only by appointment and will soon be accessible online.





Buildings

The rapid growth of the Benaki Museum's collections and activities called for the enlargement of its facilities and the re-housing of its holdings in new venues; this entailed an overall review of its exhibition strategy. With the advent of the new millennium, the Benaki Museum had evolved into a versatile and expansive museum organisation.

Benaki Museum of Greek Culture

The Benaki Museum flagship building, situated in the Kolonaki area, re-opened in 2000. It presents the historical and cultural development of Hellenism from Prehistory to the 20th century. The collections include masterpieces from the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, the Classical, Roman and Byzantine Eras, all the way to the period of Frankish and Ottoman rule, the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the formation of the Modern Greek State, the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922 and World War II.

The breadth and variety of these collections defines the Benaki Museum and sets it apart, not as another historical museum, an art museum or a museum of decorative arts, but as the museum of Greek culture, in all its manifestations (*see page 11*).

Apart from the permanent exhibition, the building houses the Benaki Museum Library and a temporary exhibition space.



Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street

The Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street is a 1960s industrial building transformed into a state-of-the-art museum space around a central atrium, with a 400-seat auditorium and 3,000 m² of exhibition space over three floors. It is equipped with the latest technological equipment in order to satisfy the most demanding cultural events and exhibitions on art, music, dance, theatre and film, as well as conferences. Moreover, it houses the Modern Greek Architecture Archives (see *page 17*) and the Photographic Archives (see *page 16*). The Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archives are also hosted on the first floor of the building.



Benaki Museum of Islamic Art

Situated in a neoclassical-style building complex in the Kerameikos area of Athens, it houses one of the most important collections of Islamic material culture worldwide (see page 12).

During the refurbishment of the building, a section of the ancient city wall of Athens was uncovered at basement level; it is now open to the public.

Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture—The Ghika Gallery

The building at 3 Kriezotou Street belonged to artist Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika, who donated it to the Benaki Museum during his lifetime, in 1991. The permanent exhibition housed there attests to the exceptional intellectual and artistic output of Greece during the tumultuous 20th century, focusing on the work of an outstanding generation of intellectuals and artists in close contact with the European avant-garde (see page 11).



Benaki Museum / The Yannis Pappas Sculpture Studio

This unique example of the workspace of an artist devoted to both sculpture and painting was donated to the Benaki Museum by his son, Alekos Pappas. According to the artist's wish, the space continues to function as a workshop for students at the Athens School of Fine Arts.

The main aim of the donation was that the artist's works remain together in their original setting. Therefore, only a small selection is on show at the Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture—The Ghika Gallery (see *page 23*).

Benaki Museum / The Delta House

The Delta House was named after Penelope Delta, sister of Antonis Benakis and one of the most celebrated authors of children's books. In this house she wrote her best-known stories and kept her diary, an invaluable source of information with important testimonies about her own life and the tumultuous history of modern Greece.

The building, situated in the historic suburb of Kifisia to the north of Athens, is a typical example of early 20th-century eclectic style, with a number of features borrowed from medieval architecture. Since 1994, the Historical Archives (see *page 18*) are housed in the Delta House.



Benaki Museum of Toys

Dating to the late 19th century and designed in the Neo-Gothic style with symmetrical towers and ramparts, this building is one of the few such houses to have survived in Athens. Bequeathed to the Museum by Athanasios and Vera Kouloura, it is located on Poseidonos Avenue in the seaside suburb of Palaio Phaliro.

The Kouloura Mansion is now housing the Benaki Museum collection of toys, games and childhood items (see *page 14*), which is expected to be open to the public very soon.

Benaki Museum / Centre for Textile Techniques—‘Mentis’

The Centre for Textile Techniques—‘Mentis’ became part of the Benaki Museum in 2012. It is situated at 6 Polyfimou Street in the neighbourhood of Petralona. It offers visitors the opportunity to learn how a traditional workshop operates and to follow every step involved in silk processing and the crafting of passementerie items, for which ‘Mentis’ was renowned. It also aims to become a centre for the conservation of traditional crafts and techniques related to thread processing, weaving and embroidery.



Kamilio Nollas © 2012

Benaki Museum / The Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor House

Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor donated their beautiful home in Kardamyli to the Benaki Museum. According to their expressed desire and the donation contract, the house can be used to host intellectuals and scholars (writers, researchers, artists, poets, etc) who are looking for a quiet and hospitable place to work. The Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor Centre, which is planned to operate at the property, will provide a space for honorary hosting, hospitality to young writers and scientists, higher educational activities in collaboration with universities in Greece and abroad as well as educational and cultural events and guided tours open to the general public.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation has undertaken the cost of the repair and restoration works as well as the cost of the necessary equipment for the operation of the Centre.



Activity

Conservation

The Benaki Museum Conservation Department has been in operation since 1974 and consists of seven different workshops: Icons–Oil Paintings–Wood Carvings, Wall Paintings, Ceramics, Metal–Glass–Bone, Textiles, Photography and Paper. The main task of the Department is to use the technical means available to examine, conserve and restore works from the Museum's collections, as well as to prevent further damage by guaranteeing the appropriate environmental conditions for the exhibition and storage of works of art.

The Conservation Department also undertakes consultation and conservation services for private individuals. For more information, visit www.benakiconservation.com

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department was established in 1991 in order to introduce, develop, coordinate and support the use of information technology at the Benaki Museum. Its activities include the digitisation of collections and archives and the management of digital records, with the help of a special workshop. It also promotes the Museum's collections and Greek culture in general, by developing multimedia applications. In the course of its operation, the Department has kept close track of developments in information technology and communication; it has also participated actively in many European programmes, through which new and pioneering computer technologies have been tested and applied.



Exhibitions

The Museum organises and hosts more than 30 exhibitions per year, alternating between thematic and solo exhibitions of artists. Since 2000, almost 400 exhibitions have taken place in all fields of artistic expression, from painting to video. Through lectures and conferences, the Benaki Museum encourages the artists and curators to exchange ideas and viewpoints with the public. In order to commission, present and host exhibitions and shows, directly or indirectly related to its collections, the Museum has collaborated with major fellow museums and cultural foundations, both in Greece and abroad, for example the DESTE Foundation, the Hellenic Institute of Architecture, the Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation and the Athens Photo Festival.

A **small selection** of exhibitions follows:

2016

AS ONE

Organised by NEON and the MAI (Marina Abramović Institute)

THOMAS HOPE: DRAWINGS OF OTTOMAN ISTANBUL

CERAMICS FROM CHINA

THE EQUILIBRISTS

In collaboration with the DESTE Foundation.

LUCIEN HERVÉ: THE SUMMERTIME OF MONSIEUR LE CORBUSIER

[OUT] TOPIAS. PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC / OUTDOOR SPACE

In collaboration with the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space

2015

TONY CRAGG

KIM GORDON, DESIGN OFFICE: NOISE NAME PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES OF ROCK BANDS THAT ARE BROKEN UP

In collaboration with the DESTE Foundation



WOLF SUSCHITZKY: VOYAGE IN GREECE IN THE '60s

**SANTIAGO CALATRAVA, THE RENAISSANCE OF THE CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS
AT GROUND ZERO**

WOR(TH)SHIP. TASSOS VRETTOS

2014

EL GRECO

A wide-ranging programme of exhibitions and culture activities

MASSIMO LISTRI, PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHITECTURE

ANDRO WEKUA. PINK WAVE HUNTER

In collaboration with the DESTE Foundation

2013

MARTINO GAMPER: 100 CHAIRS IN 100 DAYS AND ITS 100 WAYS

CONSTANTINE MANOS, A GREEK PORTFOLIO, 50 YEARS LATER

THOMAS CHIMES, INTO THE WHITE

In collaboration with the J.F.Costopoulos Foundation and the Locks Gallery (Philadelphia, USA)

2012

COSTAS KOULENTIANOS: A RETROSPECTIVE

THE GREEK MONSTERS

First show of an exhibition celebrating Beetroot's 'consistently brilliant level' in design, awarded with the red-dot Communication Design Award as Agency of the Year, 2011



2011

DAMIEN HIRST, NEW RELIGION

In collaboration with the British Council and the Paul Stolper Gallery, London

DIMITRIS PIKIONIS 1887–1968

2010

ANSEL ADAMS

In collaboration with the British Council and the Paul Stolper Gallery, London

2009

FROM THE LAND OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE: TREASURES OF ANCIENT COLCHIS

In collaboration with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World / New York University, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Monuments Protection of Georgia, the Georgian National Museum and the Archaeological Museum at Vani

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

In collaboration with the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin and the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art

JAMES ENSOR: L'OEUVRE GRAVÉ

In collaboration with the KBC Bank of Belgium

2008

LEGORETTA+LEGORETTA: ASPECTS AND COLOUR. MYSTERY AND MAGIC IN ARCHITECTURE

JACQUES LACARRIÈRE: GREECE THROUGH HIS LENS

JOSEF KOUDELKA: RETROSPECTIVE

2007

STEPHEN ANTONAKOS: A RETROSPECTIVE

RRRIPP PAPER FASHION

In collaboration with ATOPOS

ALVARO SIZA

PARALLEL NIPPON: CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE

2006

**GREEK EMBROIDERY, 17TH–19TH CENTURY:
WORKS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM
AND THE BENAKI MUSEUM, ATHENS**

THE MYTHS OF FRIEDRICH DÜRRENMATT

In collaboration with the Dürrenmatt Centre in Neuchâtel

2005

DAVID HOCKNEY: WORDS AND IMAGES

In collaboration with the British Council

LUIS BARRAGÁN: LIGHT, WATER AND COLOUR IN ARCHITECTURE

2004

PTYCHOSEIS = FOLDS + PLEATS:

DRAPERY FROM ANCIENT GREEK DRESS TO 21ST CENTURY FASHION

The first major international fashion exhibition in Greece with a special place for the work of Issey Miyake

**ICONS AND MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE MONASTERY AT SINAI:
A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST**

In collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

2003

THE BULL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: MYTHS AND CULTS

In collaboration with the City History Museum of Barcelona, the Hellenic Culture Organisation S.A.
and the Cultural Olympiad 2001–2004

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON: THE EUROPEANS

2000

MOTHER OF GOD: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE VIRGIN IN BYZANTINE ART

1998

FROM THE PORTRAITS OF FAYUM TO THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ART OF BYZANTINE ICONS

1997

THE GLORY OF BYZANTIUM AT SINAI

In collaboration with the Metropolitan Museum of Art



Cultural Events

Conferences

The Benaki Museum organises a great number of conferences on all the arts as well as on numerous disciplines.

Performances

The Benaki Museum calls on artists to create links between the visual arts and other contemporary forms of creative expression. In accordance with its rich heritage, the Museum's vision is to bring together different cultures and art forms. To this end, it has hosted different genres of dance and it has established a programme of theatrical performances worthy of the tradition of Greek tragedy. Finally, the Museum hosts performances of all kinds of music, be they classical, world music, modern or traditional.



Publications

Publishing the fruits of its multifarious activities has always been a key element of the Benaki Museum philosophy. Its publishing activity was intensified after the year 2000, in proportion with the Museum's multilevel development.

The publications (printed as well as electronic) are usually bilingual, in Greek and English, and they reflect the Museum's mission statement. They fall into two main categories, exhibition catalogues and studies.

Since 2001, the Museum also issues the annual journal *Museio Benaki* (Benaki Museum).



Education

The Benaki Museum welcomes all visitors and affirms its commitment to offering programmes and services that are accessible to everyone. The Education Department aims to provide an interface between the Museum and its public, with proposals for the appreciation and understanding of its collections, so that diverse audiences can find reasons for repeat visits to the various annexes.

School Groups

In 1978 the Benaki Museum became the first Greek museum to offer programmes for children. Since then, the Education Department designs, coordinates and implements a variety of educational activities for school groups of all levels. Students are encouraged to explore the exhibits in an engaging and meaningful way. Teachers are regularly invited to familiarise themselves with the collections through gallery tours and seminars, while they can bring the Museum to their classroom using resources published by the Department.

Children and Families

Fascinating itineraries enriched by creative activities are offered to children and families during weekends and school holidays. Through a year-long atelier young participants can build a significant relationship with art and history within the Museum. During the summer vacation they can enjoy weekly open-air workshops in the neighbouring National Garden.



Adults

The Department organises lectures, seminars and workshops for adults connected to the permanent collections and temporary exhibitions. In collaboration with curators, scholars and artists, it offers a range of subjects that support lifelong learning and creativity.

Visitors with Disabilities

Visitors with disabilities are welcome to engage with the Museum's collections and archives through specially designed access programmes. Multisensory workshops for adults with impaired vision or blindness are held monthly in the Museum's galleries.

Access programmes for school groups with learning, developmental and sensory disabilities are also offered on a regular basis.

The Benaki Museum in the World

The Benaki Museum serves its mission while bringing Greece to the forefront of international cultural exchanges. Using its assets and calibre as a cornerstone, it has formed strong international alliances in several directions: working collaborations, integrated partnerships, knowledge networks and co-operations with creative and cultural bodies. Out of such outreach initiatives emerge developments in the whole spectrum of Benaki Museum activity: multifaceted exhibition projects, mobility and visibility of collections, research and publications, technological innovation, inclusive education, community engagement practices, conservation expertise, professional development and capacity-building opportunities, international exchanges of people, artworks, ideas and practices.

Local - Global Cultural and Educational Alliances

2011 onwards | Princeton University | Art Museum and Program in Hellenic Studies

The Benaki Museum and Princeton University have entered a memorandum of understanding, building on a series of communications and exchanges over the past two decades. This partnership is part of a broader strategy to develop an international network that advances each institution's mission through the common goals and collective resources—works of art, curatorial and scholarly expertise—that complement those of its partner institution. The partnership serves to enhance the Benaki Museum's global visibility, promoting its international profile as a research institution and leveraging the substantial intellectual resources of Princeton University. It also serves the teaching and research mission of the University through a primary focus on the Greek world—ancient, medieval and modern—under the aegis of the Center for Hellenic Studies and relevant academic departments, including the Art Museum.

So far, Benaki Museum curators have collaborated with Princeton University as Visiting Research Fellows and a number of projects have taken form as a result, including the 2017 project 'Liquid Antiquity,' which combines a publication and an installation at the Benaki Museum.

Embassy of the United States in Athens

The US Embassy in Athens is a strong and stable partner supporting the Benaki Museum's activity in the fields of education, capacity building and exhibitions.

2016 | ARTFUL OBSERVATION: EXPLORING SIGHT THROUGH MULTIPLE SENSES

A workshop on multisensory museum practices in the context of 'Seeing with the Senses, Lab for Multisensory Narratives,' an educational programme for visually impaired people and museum professionals. The US Embassy supported the participation of keynote speaker Georgia Krantz.

2011 onwards | INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM CONFERENCE

A series of free-entrance museum conferences hosted at the Benaki Museum, featuring experts from internationally acclaimed institutions: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate St Ives Gallery, the Boston Children's Museum, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the New Museum, among many others. Over 500 professionals and students gather yearly to share ideas and insights on state-of-the-art museum practices: programming, communication, new media and technologies, audience development, innovative education, revenue-building strategies, cultural tourism, accessibility and inclusiveness. The US Embassy is the main partner in the organisation.

British Council Greece

Focusing mainly on artistic exchanges and capacity building, our long-term collaboration with the British Council is based on a shared interest in cultural relations and educational opportunities.

2016 onwards | TRANSFORMING FUTURE MUSEUMS: INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM ACADEMY | MUSEUM NETWORK

The British Council has launched an intensive professional development programme designed to boost the museum and heritage sector in Greece by enabling it to respond to the challenges and possibilities of a new era. This initiative is effected in partnership with the Benaki Museum which has provided venues and people to support this effort, which also includes the creation of a peer-to-peer museum network.

2012 onwards | INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM CONFERENCE

The British Council is the third partner—together with the US Embassy—in the organising committee of the yearly conferences mentioned above, thus contributing with a British perspective into the matters discussed.

2011 onwards | ARTISTS IN DIALOGUE

This collaborative project invites artists of national and international significance from Greece, Cyprus and the United Kingdom to create original works in dialogue with the Benaki Museum, thus 'activating' the permanent collections and spaces as well as initiating a process of understanding issues of identity and public space. The project aims to nurture the conditions for mutuality and increased understanding of the cultures of the partner countries, building strong links between all partners and creating spaces for the discussion of contemporary issues around art and arts institutions. Exhibitions include:

2015 | ZAFOS XAGORARIS: DOWNHILL CLASSROOMS

2013 | ADAM CHODZKO

2012 | ANTONIS PITTAS: LANDART

2011 | ANDY HOLDEN: THE COOKHAM ERRATICS

French School of Athens (EFA)

A long-term research partnership on the cultural exchanges between France and Greece during the 20th century through international and interdisciplinary research programmes:

2017–2019 | CHRISTIAN ZERVOS: ZERVOS AU MIROIR DE LA GRÈCE

A programme on the publisher and art critic Christian Zervos.

2012–2017 | ATHÈNES–PARIS 1945–1975

A quadrennial programme in partnership with the Institute of Mediterranean Studies on artistic and intellectual exchanges between Greece and France during the Post-War era.

2008–2011 | PARIS-ATHÈNES: LE DOUBLE VOYAGE 1917–1939

A quadrennial programme in partnership with the Institute of Mediterranean Studies on the cultural exchanges between France and Greece during the Interwar period.

British Embassy Athens

Collaborative projects hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2016 onwards | INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM CONFERENCE

The British Embassy joined in as fourth partner—together with the Benaki Museum, the US Embassy and the British Council—in the organising committee of the yearly conferences mentioned above.

Embassy of Switzerland in Greece

Collaborative projects hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2015 | SWISS NOW

Exhibition and round table talk.

2007 | THE MYTHS OF FRIEDRICH DÜRRENMATT

An exhibition, part of the Greek Festival and in collaboration with the Dürrenmatt Centre in Neuchâtel

Embassy of Spain in Athens

Collaborative projects hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2012 | SERIES OF LECTURES 'CITY EUROPE. SPANISH ARCHITECTS IN ATHENS'

This lecture series introduced some of the most distinguished exponents of contemporary Spanish architecture.

Embassy of Canada in Greece

Collaborative projects hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2012 | A TOTEM FROM DISTANT CANADA AT THE BENAKI MUSEUM

Exhibition and educational programme to celebrate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Greece and Canada. A traditional Totem Pole was restored 'live' and displayed at the ground floor of the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street.

The Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish Embassies and Institutes in Athens

Collaborative projects hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2009–2010 | HYPERBOREAN REFRACTIONS OF EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE: DENMARK—NORWAY—SWEDEN—FINLAND: 8 LECTURES AND 3 EXHIBITIONS

The series traced the steps of some of the groundbreaking historical figures in Scandinavian architecture.

Embassy of Mexico in Athens

Collaborative exhibitions hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2008 | LEGORRETA + LEGORRETA: ASPECTS AND COLOUR. MYSTERY AND MAGIC IN ARCHITECTURE

2006 | MEXICO. THE REVOLUTION AND BEYOND: PHOTOGRAPHS BY AGUSTIN VICTOR CASASOLA, 1900–1940

2005–2006 | LUIS BARRAGÁN: LIGHT, WATER AND COLOUR IN ARCHITECTURE

Institut Français d'Athènes and Embassy of France in Greece

Collaborative exhibitions hosted at the Benaki Museum include:

2007 | JEAN COCTEAU AND GREECE

2007 | FLUXUS: C'EST GRATUIT

2006 | PROFILS: 15 YEARS OF CREATIVE OUTPUT IN FRANCE

Embassy of Chile in Athens

2006 | CHILEAN ART: CROSSING BORDERS

European Union Programmes, Projects and Networks

Since the 1990s, the Benaki Museum has participated, as main partner, in a great number of European Union (EU) programmes, mostly through its Information Technology Department, the Conservation Department and the Education Department. It has also been part of European cultural exchange programmes with the aim to cultivate pioneering ideas and generate socio-economic impact with partners throughout the EU.

The Benaki Museum has been awarded for best practice by the INFORMATION SOCIETY Operational Programme 2004–2006 with the ‘Prize for Excellence and Honorary Distinction’ for its successful implementation of information technology culture projects and for best case study in the CULTURE 2007–2013 projects ‘In Praise of Shadows,’ ‘Twice a Stranger’ and ‘Witness the Past.’ Projects include:

2015–2017 | **TANDEM Europe—WHAT IS HOME?**

2012–2015 | **EXHIBITIONS AND CONGRESS FOR THE ‘EL GRECO’ YEAR**

2011–2014 | **EUROPEANA INSIDE**

2010–2012 | **TWICE A STRANGER**

2009–2011 | **WITNESS THE PAST**

2007–2009 | **IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS**

2001–2002 | **E-ISLAM**

2000–2003 | **HOLAUTHENTIC**

2000–2002 | **JEWELMED**

1999–2001 | **HUMAN NETWORK FOR CULTURAL INFORMATICS PROGRAMME**

1999–2000 | **TOYMUSE**

1996–2000 | **LASERART**

1995–1996 | **OIKOS**

1995–1997 | **TISSUS-ESPRIT**

1995–1997 | **POLEMON**

1994–1995 | **ESSI FAME-ESPRIT**

1992–1994 | **HI-FI GOLD OF GREECE**

1992–1993 | **SACRED WAY**

Such participations have empowered the design and development of multimedia applications, information technology, networking technologies with other museums and cultural organisations as well as capacity building.



International Cultural Platforms

The Benaki Museum participates in international cultural platforms that promote research and enable a wide audience to access the major digital resources of its collections, library and archives. Indicatively:

Europeana

A multi-lingual portal of Europe's cultural collections with millions of digitised items from European museums, libraries, archives and multi-media collections. The Benaki Museum participates with 14,641 objects representative of its collections of art and archival material.

Google Arts and Culture

An online platform through which the public can access high-resolution images of artworks housed in the initiative's partner museums. The Museum participates with 600 artworks from the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture and 50 artworks from the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art.

MICHAEL

A multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe, which includes 41 artworks from the Benaki Museum collections.

Museum with no Frontiers

A portal for the Alliance of Civilisations. A long-term collaboration with MWNF, which has resulted in projects like *Discover Carpet Art* (2017), *Sharing History* (2015) and *Explore Islamic Art Collections* (2012). The Benaki Museum participates with 100 artworks.

The Index of Christian Art at Princeton University

A partnership focusing on the Greek world through the 'Index of Christian Art' database. The Benaki Museum participates with 801 artworks.

Claros

An international research collaboration that enables simultaneous searching of major collections in university research institutes and museum. The Benaki Museum participates with 165 artworks.

Longterm Exhibition Partnerships

2015–2017 | with documenta 14 'Learning From Athens'

This institutional partnership, rich in content and people relations, developed organically from studying the Benaki Museum's rich materials and from sharing views on the future of institutions, the reception of modernism as well as on strategic practices of representing history, memory and tradition. It started as an open-ended discussion on research matters that interest both institutions such as the local versions of modernism, popular art, modern architecture as well as historical and photographic documents on Greece's relation with the European metropolises.

The result of this synergy was having one of the central exhibitions of documenta 14 at the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street but also expanding to the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art, the Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture—The Ghika Gallery and the Benaki Museum Centre for Textiles Techniques—'Mentis.'

2014 onwards | with DESTE Foundation

This collaboration aims to promote new and radical developments in contemporary art practice and inspire novel curatorial approaches through a series of solo and group contemporary art exhibitions featuring international artists. Resulting exhibitions are showcased at the Benaki Museum and include:

2016 | THE EQUILIBRISTS

2016 | GEORGE LAPPAS. HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2015 | αμετρία

2015 | KIM GORDON. DESIGN OFFICE: NOISE NAME PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES OF ROCK BANDS THAT ARE BROKEN UP

2015 | FAMILY BUSINESS

2014 | ANDRO WEKUA. PINK WAVE HUNTER

2014 | DESTEFASHIONCOLLECTION: 1 TO 8

2014 onwards | with the Hellenic Museum in Melbourne, Australia

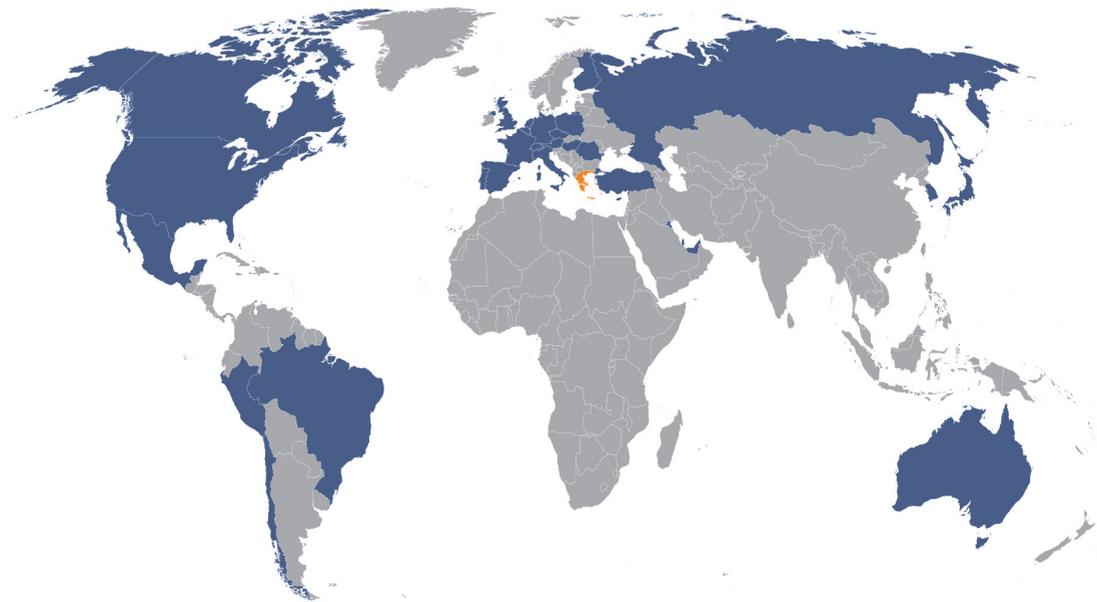
A long-term partnership between the two museums, which includes a long-term exhibition and travelling exhibitions from the Benaki Museum collections to Melbourne. This partnership leads the way for future global endeavours in arts programming. For the Benaki Museum it is an important outreach initiative. Exhibitions in Melbourne so far:

2016–2017 | THE ART OF ADORNMENT. GREEK JEWELLERY OF THE 17TH–19TH C. FROM THE BENAKI MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

2014–2019 | GODS, MYTHS AND MORTALS: GREEK TREASURES ACROSS THE MILLENNIA FROM THE BENAKI MUSEUM

2016–2018 | with the Athens International Airport and Costa Navarino

The three bodies have joined forces with novel exhibition projects. Leveraging the treasures safeguarded by the Benaki Museum, contemporary creators are invited every year to design works of art inspired by its collections. The new artworks are then exhibited in two parallel venues, at Athens International Airport and at Costa Navarino.



Travelling Artworks

A significant number of works of art from the Benaki Museum collections travels all over the world, participating in an average of 15 to 20 international exhibitions every year. Here are some examples from the last decade:

ART FROM GREECE

2017, The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

SOULEVEMENTS / UPRISINGS

2016–2017, Jeu De Paume, Paris, France

ICONS. TREASURES OF REFUGEES

2016, History Museum of Nantes, Château des ducs de Bretagne, Nantes, France

CERAMICA APLICADA A LA ARQUITECTURA

2016, Design Museum of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

PERGAMON AND THE ART OF THE HELLENISTIC KINGDOMS

2016, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

COURT AND COSMOS: THE GREAT AGE OF THE SELJUQS

2016, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

HEADS AND TAILS–TALES AND BODIES: ENGRAVING THE HUMAN FIGURE FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

2016, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia

DEMO:POLIS. THE RIGHT TO PUBLIC SPACE

2016, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany

'LIFE IS SHORT BUT ART IS LONG.' THE ART OF HEALING IN BYZANTIUM

2015, Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey

KADINLAR

2015, Twentse Welle Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

PATTERNS OF MAGNIFICENCE. TRADITION AND REINVENTION IN GREEK WOMEN COSTUME

2014–2015, The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus

SACRED PLACES, SACRED BOOKS

2014–2015, Museum Aan de Stroom, Antwerp, Belgium

DOMUS MARE NOSTRUM—HABITER LE MYTHE MÉDITERRANÉEN

2014, Hôtel des Arts, Toulon, France

THE GREEK OF TOLEDO

2014, Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, Spain

GALERIE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE (GALLERY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN)

2013–2016, Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Marseille, France

HEAVEN AND EARTH: THE ART OF BYZANTIUM FROM GREEK COLLECTIONS

2013, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA

2014, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, USA

2014–2015, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA

LONGING FOR MECCA—THE PILGRIM'S JOURNEY

2013–2014, Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde, Amsterdam, Netherlands

SPLENDORS OF ANCIENT EAST

2013, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah Museum, Kuwait City, Kuwait

BEAUTY AND BELIEF. CROSSING BRIDGES WITH THE ARTS OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

2012, Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo, USA

2013, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, USA

2013, Newark Museum, Newark, USA

2013, Portland Art Museum, Portland, USA

EL GRECO'S VISUAL POETICS

2012, National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan

2013, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Tokyo, Japan

**OTTO THE GREAT AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE: EMPERORSHIP
FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES**

2012, Kulturhistorisches Museum, Magdeburg, Germany

BYZANTIUM AND ISLAM. AGE OF TRANSITION

2012, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

HAJJ—JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF ISLAM

2012, British Museum, London, United Kingdom

GIFTS OF THE SULTANS: THE ART OF GIVING AT THE ISLAMIC COURTS

2011, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA

2012, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar

UN RÊVE D'ÉTERNITÉ

2011-2012, Boghossian Foundation, Villa Empain, Centre d'art et de dialogue entre les cultures d'Orient et d'Occident, Brussels, Belgium

NTÉPTI* HUMANISM

2011, Faggionato Gallery, London, United Kingdom

THOMAS HOPE. REGENCY DESIGNER AND COLLECTOR

2008, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom, and the Bard Graduate Center, New York, USA

THE CENTURY OF GIORGIO DE CHIRICO, METAPHYSICS AND ARCHITECTURE

2007, Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain

**GREEK EMBROIDERY, 17TH–19TH CENTURY: FROM THE COLLECTIONS
OF THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM AND THE BENAKI MUSEUM, ATHENS**

2006, The Hellenic Centre, London, United Kingdom



Giving Back to Society

Further to the contribution by the Education Department (see pages 34-35), the Benaki Museum is trying to maximise its social impact through a number of activities. Here are some examples:

2017 | Outreach Programme for the Elderly sponsored by the Tima Charitable Foundation

Specially designed tours for the elderly, thanks to a donation by the TIMA Charitable Foundation. 'KAPI' (Centres of Open Protection for the Elderly) that wish to participate tour the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture collections for free, guided by curators. The programme also offers participants free transportation from and to their 'KAPI'.

2016–2017 | 'What is Home?' Collecting and Sharing Expressions of Identity

'What is Home?' is an engagement process focused on youth, aiming to provoke expressions of identity through art and culture, using cultural entities as mediators. The project runs in the context of TANDEM Europe and in collaboration with Italian organisation Segni d'Infanzia. By organising a number of educational programmes, exhibitions, workshops and public activities the project directly engaged more than 200 people, including teenagers from the shelter for unaccompanied minors STEGI+, whose work was exhibited at the Benaki Museum.

2016 | Collecting Goods and Books for Children

During the 2016 Book Bazaar, the Benaki Museum collaborated with the Non Governmental Organisation PRAKSIS to motivate visitors to contribute to the Organisation's action: providing refugees and vulnerable individuals (such as children) with basic items in order to cover their basic needs. Children visitors were also invited to donate children's books.

2004 onwards | Collaboration of the Benaki Museum Shop with Vulnerable Groups

The Benaki Museum Shop is committed to expanding the Museum's social responsibility programme by giving back to the community. It actively collaborates with several social providers, including therapeutic programmes, jails, workshops for reintegration, such as KETHEA PAREMVASI, TO ERGASTIRI, PIXIDA, PS.N.A., Korydallos Prison, ARSI and many others, by commissioning and distributing their products and supporting their work.

2000 onwards | Book Donations to Educational and Cultural Institutions

The Benaki Museum Library and Benaki Museum Publications systematically provide schools, universities and other educational and cultural institutions around Greece with spare titles as well as all new Benaki Museum publications. To date, more than 5,000 books have filled the shelves of over 100 institutions in all corners of Greece.

2000 onwards | Maximising Potential for Free Admissions

Since its reopening in 2000, the Benaki Museum was the first to institutionalise weekly free admissions on Thursdays, combined with extending opening hours to midnight. During a hard period of recovery, this effort continued with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. To date, the Benaki Museum makes all best effort to offer free admission to vulnerable groups such as unemployment card holders, students and people with disabilities.



The Benaki Museum Shop

The Benaki Museum Shop, the first museum shop in Greece, opened in 1977. Its primary purpose is to produce and sell replicas of the exhibits, in order to support the Museum's activities. It also aims to preserve endangered traditional techniques and to encourage and support the craftsmen who use them. For example, the painters of the icons sold in the Shop use the same materials as traditional Byzantine icon painters—egg tempera, natural earth pigments and burnished gold leaf. A great number of the fabrics sold are hand-woven on a loom, while certain embroideries are hand-made by trained embroiderers.

The Shop welcomes young designers and is a venue for young Greek creators who find inspiration in the Museum's collections. Some of these young artists use age-old, traditional techniques with very interesting results, making tradition the springboard for contemporary works of art. Other artists are inspired by the items in the permanent exhibitions of the Museum and breathe new life into them, creating original, and occasionally entertaining, works of art. The crowning achievement of the Shop's approach to new artists was the opening of another Shop in the Benaki Museum at 138 Pireos Street in 2004, as well as a third one, in the Benaki Museum of 20th Century Greek Culture—The Ghika Gallery.



Over 300 Greek designers and artists have displayed their work to date. The Shop has tried to assemble the best that Greece has to offer, in accordance with the country's rich artistic heritage, and to give our artists the opportunity to make their work known in Greece and abroad. A series of small exhibitions with works by Greek artists (innovators in the applied arts) entitled 'Material Quests' are held in the Shop, so that their work can be presented as an integrated product of aesthetics and art, content and form.

Finally, special creations for children made by young designers are part of our wider effort to expose children to art. These include books, artefacts and games for all ages. In collaboration with museums from all over the world, such as the Tate Gallery, the Centre Pompidou, the MoMA and others, the Shop offers items that stimulate children's imagination and engage them creatively, while introducing them to works of art, art trends and techniques in an entertaining way.

Governance and Management

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT: Aimilia Yeroulanou

MEMBERS: Angelos Delivorrias, Constantinos Martinos, Yerassimos Yannopoulos, Yannis Pyrgiotis, Despina Geroulanou, Irini Geroulanou, Costantza Sbokou-Constantakopoulou, Panagiotis Pikrammenos, Vassilis Antoniadis

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Irini Geroulanou, George Manginis, Haris Siampanis

Contact Information

BENAKI MUSEUM OF GREEK CULTURE

1 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T +30 210 3671000 | M benaki@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM AT 138 PIREOS STREET

138 Pireos Str., 118 54, Athens | T +30 210 3453111 | M benaki@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

22 Ag. Asomaton Str., 105 53, Athens | T +30 210 3251311 | M islamic_collection@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM OF 20th CENTURY GREEK CULTURE – THE GHIKA GALLERY

3 Kriezotou Str., 106 71, Athens | T +30 210 3615702 | M ghika_gallery@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM / THE YANNIS PAPPAS SCULPTURE STUDIO

38 Anakreonos Str., 157 72, Zografou, Athens | T +30 210 7773946

BENAKI MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

138 Pireos Str., 118 54, Athens | T +30 2107211033 | M photographic_archive@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM MODERN GREEK ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES

138 Pireos Str., 118 54, Athens | T +30 210 345 3111 | M dcna@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

38 Emm. Benaki Str., 145 61, Kifisia, Athens | T +30 210 8079878 | M historical_archives@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM / THE PATRICK AND JOAN LEIGH FERMOR HOUSE

1 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T +30 210 3671090 | F +30 210 3622547 | M plfproject@benaki.gr

BENAKI MUSEUM SHOP

1 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T +30 210 3671034 | M the-shop@benaki.gr

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

1 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T +30 210 3671023 | C +30 6937386888 | M letta@benaki.gr

EXHIBITIONS DEPARTMENT

1 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T +30 210 3671011 | M sarri@benaki.gr

CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

6 Isiodou Str., 106 74 Athens | T +30 210 7214524, +30 210 7258790 | M conservation@benaki.gr
www.benakiconservation.com

BENAKI MUSEUM MEMBERS

3 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T + 30 212 6875272, + 30 212 6875279 | M members@benaki.gr

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING DEPARTMENT

3 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T + 30 212 6875299 | M fundraising@benaki.gr

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT

3 Koumbari Str., 106 74, Athens | T +30 210 3671048 | C +30 6957211096 | M siampanis@benaki.gr

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