



**The historic masterpieces of the New Acropolis Museum—including the archaeological remains of ancient Athens left visible beneath the building and portions of the Parthenon frieze installed at the top— will be displayed in total for the first time when the Museum celebrates its much-anticipated official opening on Saturday, June 20, 2009.**

Designed by [Bernard Tschumi](#) Architects of New York/Paris with Michael Photiadis of Athens as local associate architect, the Museum has presented a number of temporary exhibitions in a lower-floor gallery over the past year. With the official opening, visitors will at last view the full suite of galleries, presented in a dramatic architectural experience designed explicitly for this collection.

Photographs by Christian Richters

With more than 150,000 square feet of exhibition space—ten times more than the previous Acropolis museum—the New Acropolis Museum will display surviving antiquities from the Acropolis and serve as a catalyst for strengthening international interest in the classical world. The 226,000 square foot Museum is both a defining cultural project for Greece and a key reference point for the art community around the globe.

To present the unparalleled collection, architect and lead designer Bernard Tschumi created a

deliberately non-monumental structure whose simple and precise design invokes the mathematical and conceptual clarity of ancient Greek architecture.

“The form of the building arose as a response to the challenges of creating a structure that was worthy of housing the most dramatic sculptures of Greek antiquity, and doing so in an overwhelmingly historic and monumental setting,” explains Tschumi. “The site at the foot of the Acropolis confronted us with the Parthenon itself, one of the most influential buildings in Western civilization. At the same time, we had to consider the sensitive archaeological excavations, the presence of the contemporary city and its street grid, and the special challenges of the hot climate in Athens and an earthquake region.



Located in Athens's historic area of Makryianni, the New Acropolis Museum stands less than 1,000 feet southeast of the Parthenon, at the entrance of a network of pedestrian walkways that link the key archaeological sites and monuments of the Acropolis. This location was carefully selected to enable a dialogue between the Museum's exhibition spaces and the Acropolis buildings. Tschumi won the commission in 2001 as the result of a design competition judged by a prestigious jury of architects, engineers, and archaeologists, chaired by Santiago Calatrava.

“The design was chosen for its simple, clear, and beautiful solution that is in accord with the beauty and classical simplicity of the Museum's unique exhibits and that ensures a museological and architectural experience that is relevant today and for the foreseeable future,” stated Professor Dimitrios Pandermalis, President of the Organization for the Construction of the New Acropolis Museum.

During pre-construction, archaeologists discovered the remains of an ancient Athenian city, excavating over 43,000 square feet. These remains have been preserved and integrated into

the Museum design and are an important part of the visitor experience.

The building is articulated in three layers, with a base, a middle zone, and a top. The base hovers over the excavation site on more than 100 slender concrete pillars, which have been individually positioned with the help of experts so as not to disturb the delicate remnants. This level contains the main entrance lobby and temporary exhibition spaces, as well as openings and glass floors looking onto archaeological excavations.

A glass ramp leads to a double-height space in the middle section, which accommodates the permanent collection galleries from the Archaic to the late Roman period, and a mezzanine level with catering venues and a public terrace.

The building culminates in the Parthenon Gallery, a rectangular, glass-enclosed, sky-lit space that is rotated 23 degrees from the rest of the building so as to align with the Parthenon. The gallery's glass outer walls allow visitors uninterrupted, 360-degree views of the ancient temple and the surrounding city. In the center of the Parthenon Gallery, the rectangular concrete core of the Museum serves as the wall on which the Parthenon frieze is exhibited, placed in the exact same arrangement and orientation as when it adorned the monument.

The route through these layers forms a three-dimensional loop, guiding visitors through the collection, which is installed in chronological sequence. Beginning with the archaeological excavations, visible through the glass floor in the entrance gallery, the sequence reaches a programmatic high point with the Parthenon Frieze, set in a gallery at the top of the building against dramatic views of the Acropolis, and then loops down to finish in the Roman Empire galleries below. The sequence of movement through the Museum's exhibitions is designed to be of the utmost clarity and to accommodate the large groups of visitors expected daily.

# The New Acropolis Museum, Designed by Bernard Tschumi Architects

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