



# More About The National Hellenic Museum

The National Hellenic Museum is a storytelling museum that connects Ancient Greece to the modern experience by underscoring its relevance in our contemporary politics, theater, art, sports, and economy. Our exhibitions and cultural programs are inventive, unique, and share the Greek story from unexpected points of view.

## HISTORY

### When was the National Hellenic Museum founded?

The Museum began in 1983 as the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center. In 1992, the Museum opened its doors at its first location with the exhibit, *Celebrating Hellenism*. The Museum relocated two more times before rebranding in 2009 as the National Hellenic Museum and opening in its current location on Halsted Street on December 10, 2011.

### What does "Hellenic" mean?

"Hellenic" is synonymous for the word "Greek." It means: of or pertaining to Greece, its people, language, and culture. Dating back to Homer's time, it is derived from Hellen, grandson of Prometheus, and mythical founder and progenitor of the Greeks, who were named Hellenes in his honor.

## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

### What are the current exhibitions?

*Transcending Boundaries: The Art of Anthony Quinn* is open through January 10, 2016 in the John P. Calamos, Sr. Great Hall.

*Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago* is open through August 2016 on the second floor.

*Reaching for the American Dream: The Greek Story in America* is our core exhibition on the third floor.

### What is the message of the core exhibition?

Tracing the Greek path towards becoming an American, the museum's core exhibition showcases the Greek presence in definitive moments of American history, such as the Civil War, the American Labor Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. Greek immigration to America began in the mid 1800s because gainful employment was scarce in Greece at this time. Between 1900 and 1915, 25% of all Greek men ages 15 to 40 immigrated to America (approximately 1/6 of Greece's total population). Today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 1,380,088 people of Greek ancestry living in the United States. Areas with large Greek population often mirror the areas the Greek immigrants originally settled: New York, Illinois, California, and Florida to name just a few.

## UPCOMING CULTURAL PROGRAMS

### Greek Philosophers, Founding Fathers & American Law

January 28, 2016 at 6:30pm

Richard Allen Posner, Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit in Chicago, and most cited legal scholar of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will discuss the influence of Greek philosophers on America's founders, laws, and institutions.

### Antiquities in Peril – Heritage at Risk

February 18, 2016 at 6:30pm

The recent destruction of antiquities and archaeological sites in the Middle East horrified the world. A panel of experts will discuss how we can protect our shared heritage by holding our own selves accountable and empowering others.



### **The Trial of Antigone: Heroine or Enemy of the State**

March 10, 2016 at 6pm at The Field Museum

Following the success of the trials of Socrates and Orestes, the legal dream team of Bob Clifford, Patrick Collins, and Dan Webb, take on the case of Antigone, the Greek princess who defied the law and paid the ultimate price. Held in The Field Museum's elegant James Simpson Theatre, you, the citizens, will be asked to cast your vote: guilty or not guilty.

### **Democracy & Knowledge: Lessons from Classical Athens**

April 10, 2016 at 2:30pm

Stanford University classicist and political scientist, Josiah Ober, will reexamine democracy's origins, values, and limitations in contemporary politics.

### **Ethics in Medicine & Science: The Significance of the Hippocratic Oath**

Date and time TBD

Esteemed medical and scientific experts, scholars, and religious leaders will discuss the ethics of Hippocrates' "First, do no harm," and will debate whether it can provide a framework for contemporary ethical dilemmas.

## **THE BUILDING, 333 S. HALSTED ST. IN GREEKTOWN**

### **Why is the building modern?**

The building incorporates historic architectural examples, such as a covered walkway, or stoa, found in classical pagan structures and natural wood accents and elements common to Byzantine monastic structures. The symbolic heart of the building is a dramatic, sky-lit east-to-west staircase that represents the immigrant experience, cultural ties to Greece and the limitless potential of Greek Americans in the United States.

### **What are the materials used to construct the building?**

The Museum is constructed with natural limestone and glass, materials that represent the artistic and technological traditions Greeks have impacted from the Classical Age to the modern day. The building contains design elements associated with Aristotle, such as earth, wind, and fire. Although water is not physically present, light and glassy surfaces are incorporated to represent the importance of water.

### **How big is the building?**

It is a four-story, 40,000 square-foot, LEED-certification-pending building that is home to extensive collections and archives of more than 17,000 spanning thousands of years.

## **THE ARCHITECT**

### **Who designed the building?**

Demetrios Stavrianos, a Greek American from the south side of Chicago, is the Museum's principal designer. He is the Senior Associate Vice President at the Chicago office of RTKL, a worldwide architecture, engineering, planning, and creative services organization. Stavrianos drew inspiration for the building from Greek monasteries and the "meteroa," which means "suspended in the air" or "in the heavens above."

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW, CONTACT**

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