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**HELLENIC HEADS**  
GEORGE PETRIDES



PRECEDENTE SCULTOREO  
SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

"Ho attinto anche ai racconti che avevo sentito dai miei genitori, che erano adolescenti in Grecia negli anni '40, così come alle mie letture su quel periodo. Volevo catturare non i titoli ufficiali dei generali e delle battaglie, ma piuttosto l'esperienza del civile greco quotidiano: le privazioni, la carestia e l'orrore."

**L'UOMO DELLE DUE GUERRE: IL GRECO E L'EBREO**

Periodo: anni Quaranta e Cinquanta  
Stato: Grecia  
1941-1945  
Scultore: George Petrides  
Scultura composta: 100 frammenti  
Materie: bronzo  
Dimensioni: 100x100x100 cm  
Pesi: 400 kg  
L'opera è stata commissionata dal Comune di Roma nel 2017.  
L'opera è stata inaugurata il 15 settembre 2017.  
L'opera è stata restaurata nel 2018.  
L'opera è stata restaurata nel 2018.

A PERSONAL  
EXPLORATION  
OF GREEK HISTORY  
AND CULTURE  
OVER 2,500 YEARS

**HELLENIC HEADS**  
GEORGE PETRIDES

With contributions by  
**Paul Laster**  
**Natasha Gural**  
**Katy Diamond Hamer**  
**S. David**  
and **Shannon Leahey**

Installation view of "Hellenic Heads" at the Courtyard of San Giorgio dei Greci, Venice, 2024



**CORE:**  
LE NOSTRE  
SPERANZE  
PER IL FUTURO

Periodo storico  
Il presente guardando al futuro

Scultore  
George Petrides

IL PRESENTE  
GUARDARE  
VERSO IL FUTURO





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

10	<b>Introduction</b> Shannon Leahey
16	<b>George Petrides' Personal Engagement with Hellenic History</b> Paul Laster
30	<b>Globally Renowned Sculptor George Petrides Carves a Matriarchal Gaze into Greek History and Heritage</b> Natasha Gural
38	<b>The Past Made Contemporary: How Artist George Petrides Confronts Time</b> Katy Diamond Hamer
44	<b>"The Refugee" Finds Homes Around the World</b>
52	<b>George Petrides: Hellenic Heads</b> S. David
58	<b>Interview: George Petrides with Shannon Leahey</b>
72	<b>Classical Greece (510 BC – 323 BC)</b> Thalia: Foundation of Western Civilization
92	<b>Byzantine Empire (330 – 1453)</b> Archon: Establishing Christianity
112	<b>Greek War of Independence (1821 – 1829)</b> Heroines of 1821: Female Leadership
132	<b>Burning of Smyrna (1922)</b> The Refugee: To Lose and to Rebuild
152	<b>The 1940s: Nazi Occupation and Greek Civil War</b> Man of Two Wars: The Greek and the Jew
174	<b>The Present Looking to the Future</b> Kore: Our Hopes for Our Children
186	<b>About George Petrides</b>

Church of San Giorgio dei Greci,  
Venice, Italy. Photo by Juergen  
Ritterbach / Alamy Stock Photo

# INTRODUCTION

Shannon Leahey

11 Shannon Leahey



The Embassy of Greece to the U.S.A. in Washington, DC.

I am so pleased to welcome you to the *Hellenic Heads* exhibit. Having worked with George since he first conceived of the six sculptures displayed here, I've had the privilege to watch them evolve, coalesce into a collection, and travel the world. My own experience of the busts has deepened over time as well. When I was assisting with the research phase of the project, they were a window into Greek history, from the myths of Classical Greece that I'd heard about since childhood to the War of Independence, which I, as an American, knew very little about. Later, as I heard some of the personal stories that inspired George—his grandmother fleeing the city of Smyrna as it burned, his parents' surviving the brutal decade of the 1940s with their hope and resolve intact—the exhibit became a reflection of both a single family's story within specific cultural moments and also the story of how all families use their bonds to survive. Even now, I'm amazed by how often the day's news will touch upon some theme that is connected in my mind to *Hellenic Heads*: the piece titled "The Refugee" gazes down upon the displaced populations of today's conflicts with empathy; "Man of Two Wars" sees the persistent waves of injustice that the individual citizen has little power to control; the one named "Heroines of 1821" looks on with resolve as contemporary women continue to battle the constant challenges to their autonomy and authority. Like all great art, the pieces you see here are a prism through which to view the world.

Though the heads in the exhibit are now long complete, they continue to find new paths of connection. The exhibit has visited venues in Washington, D.C., the Hamptons, Chicago, and Venice, and is set to continue on to Istanbul and beyond. Other Petrides sculptures that are related to the *Heads* carry their message yet further: a large version of "The Refugee" now has a permanent home in the Athens neighborhood where so many of the immigrants from Asia Minor rebuilt their lives; a smaller cousin of the classically-inspired "Thalia" shares space with famed works of contemporary art at Tiffany's Landmark; a reimagined edition of "Archon" will soon stand on the grounds of a Greek Orthodox church in Southampton and gaze upon a cross made from salvaged steel girders of the destroyed World Trade Center, allowing visitors to reflect on multiple aspects of their history and cultural identity.

The path of *Hellenic Heads* is not over yet; I'm so happy that today you become part of its journey.

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SCULTOREO

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# GEORGE PETRIDES' PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH HELLENIC HISTORY

**PAUL LASTER**

Originally published in Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art on July 2023  
and reprinted by the permission of the author.

17 Paul Laster

An Athens-born, Greek-American artist, George Petrides studied Classical Greek literature, philosophy and history at Harvard College in Cambridge in the 1980s. Raised in a family of artists and business people, he was exposed to art and culture as a child in Greece and then in New York, after his family moved to New York when he was three years old. Establishing a successful career as an investment banker on Wall Street, he began to spend his spare time pursuing a developing passion by taking drawing, painting and sculpture classes at the New York Studio School, Art Students League in New York and the Academie de la Grande Chaumière, where Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder and Isamu Noguchi had once studied, in Paris. By 2017, Petrides was finally ready to take a leap of faith and decided to dedicate himself to making art full time.

Making sculpture his primary medium, Petrides started small with intimate figurative works that referenced European art history in clay, a medium that's as old as time. Through his raw reinterpretations of Classical Greek, Hellenistic and Roman statuary, he created contemporary artworks that looked as though they had just been uncovered in archeological digs. Mostly working from live models, he built up the material to fashion a form that captured the likeness of his subject, while referencing a history of sculptural figuration that goes back more than 2,500 years. Depicting the figure in a primordial state, he presented viewers with an abstracted rendition of the human body—the body in a raw state, a being in the state of becoming. Often armless, legless and headless, his figures had their origins in the past yet

Installation view of "Hellenic Heads:  
A Personal Exploration of Greek History  
and Culture over 2,500 Years" at the Embassy  
of Greece to the United States of America  
in Washington, D.C., May 5 - June 10, 2022.





Installation view of "Figure and Form: George Petrides and Nassos Daphnis" at the Consulate of Greece in New York, December 16, 2021 - February 3, 2022.



Installation view of "Hellenic Heads: A Personal Exploration of Greek History and Culture over 2,500 Years" at the Embassy of Greece to the United States of America in Washington, D.C., May 5 - June 10, 2022.

were born in the moment, through a lens in which the artist embraced the old to make it anew.

Nine of the artist's handcrafted sculptures were shown in the exhibition *Figure and Form: George Petrides and Nassos Daphnis*, which paired Petrides' powerful clay and bronze figures with geometric abstract paintings by the celebrated Greek-American modernist Nassos Daphnis, who had shown for more than 30 years with the legendary Leo Castelli Gallery, at the Upper East Side galleries of the Consulate of Greece in New York in 2021.

Motivated by the enthusiastic response to the show, Petrides immediately set about his next engagement with Greek history by researching his homeland's rich cultural past. Conceiving a sculptural project that would touch on six significant periods of Hellenic history that could be presented during the centennial of the Destruction of Smyrna, which his grandmother had sorrowfully experienced in 1922, the artist made larger-than-life heads inspired by art historical precedents—something that no other artists had ever done.

Petrides soon began creating large-scale heads to represent the Classical Greek Period (510 BC to 323 BC), the Byzantine Period (330 to 1453), the Greek War of Independence (1821 to 1829), the Destruction of Smyrna (1922), the Nazi occupation and Greek Civil War (1941 to 1949) and present-day Greece. For each period, he "checked in" with past masterworks to see how an earlier sculptor had addressed similar themes to those he wished to convey.

In the process of sculpting these Hellenic Heads, the innovative artist began to employ new digital techniques mixed with traditional handiwork—a contemporary way of working with sculpture that artists like Jeff Koons, Barry X. Ball and Sanford Biggers have also been exploring. Beginning with his handmade figures in clay, created as small-scale models, Petrides scanned the 3D works to make digital files. Refining and altering the visual files in the computer until he obtained the desired results, he used 3D printing and CNC milling to create a larger sculpture, which he then modified with a variety of construction materials and power tools. Lastly, the finished pieces were either treated with ground metal and expressively patinated or cast at a foundry in bronze.

Studying the Classical Greek Period, Petrides was attracted to the mythological female muses, who were known as the

George Petrides,  
*Thalia – Bust Brass Blue*, 2022.

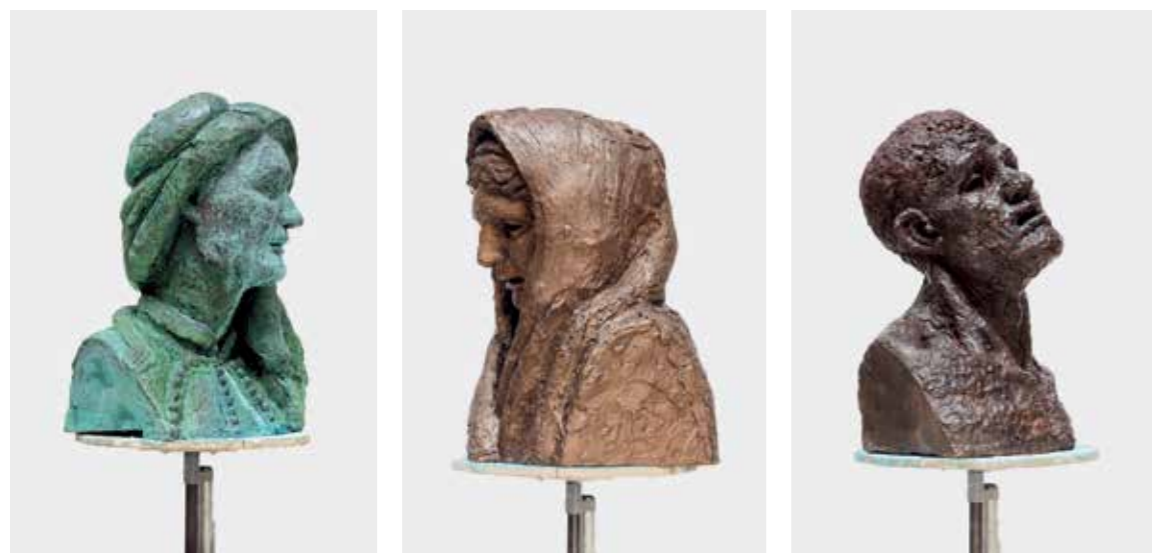
George Petrides,  
*Archon*, 2022.



daughters of Zeus. He chose the Roman copy *Thalia*, The Muse of Comedy and Pastoral Poetry, from the Vatican Museums in Rome, as his sculptural precedent for the piece. In the process of sculpting the head in clay, however, he began to think of his mother and—by referring to black-and-white photographs of her when she was around 20 years old and still living in Greece—he gradually fashioned his mother's face into an arresting version of the muse. The turquoise sculpture, *Thalia – Bust Brass Blue* (2022) has a look of a young woman with the weathered texture of an artwork that has just been unearthed.

Remembering the Colossal head of Constantine the Great (ca. 400) from the Capitoline Museums in Rome and a smaller marble head of Constantine, who was the founder of the Byzantine Empire, from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection, Petrides chose the bust of Greek ruler to be the sculptural precedent for the Byzantine Period. The artist kept the hair crowning the head of Constantine in his sculpture *Archon* (2022), which means leader in Greek, but filled the giant figure's face with his father's features. Cut at the shoulders, the massive red-patinated bust confronts viewers with a noble gaze.

Leaders of another sort inspired the artist's approach to conceptualizing the Greek War of Independence period in the early 1800s. Researching the revolution, he discovered three women who had been heroines in naval battles. He considered using one of the three strong females who had been fearless in



their pursuit of liberty, but instead of casting one of them to be the subject of his large sculpture he shaped it after a colleague in Greece, Eleftheria Gkoufa. Eleftheria, which means liberty in Greek, is an Athens-based Cultural Manager, who has overseen the Figure and Form and Hellenic Heads exhibitions, and a Conservator at the Benaki Museum. When sculpting her head for *Heroines of 1821* (2022), Petrides captured the characteristics of the three military leaders of the past—strength, resilience and defiance—in her humane pose.

The Destruction of Smyrna period is captured in Petrides' sculpture *The Refugee* (2022), which was inspired by two works by Donatello (Habakkuk and Mary Magdalene) and *The Deposition* (The Florentine Pietà) by Michelangelo, which was the main sculptural precedent. It was modeled, however, after the artist's grandmother, who escaped the fires that raged in the center of culture and commerce when the Turkish military captured the city in 1922 and thousands died. His grandmother, who was 19 when she lost her home and had to handle the challenge of being a refugee in Greece during troubling times, is tenderly depicted in bronze and black wax, yet in a despairing pose, which portrays the struggles she faced in rebuilding her life.

Petrides' *Man of Two Wars* (2022), which represents the period of the Nazi occupation of Greece and the Greek Civil War in the 1940s, is a self-portrait, rendered in dark patina and based on Auguste Rodin's sculpture of Pierre de Weissant,

George Petrides,  
*Heroines of 1821*, 2022.

George Petrides,  
*The Refugee*, 2022.

George Petrides,  
*Man of two wars*, 2022.



George Petrides,  
*Kore*, 2022.

one of the six Burghers of Calais. The Nazi's invaded Greece in 1941 and plundered the country, which led to a starvation of the masses. The Jewish communities suffered greatly, with the Nazis deporting and murdering most of the Greek Jewish population in the death camps. Depicting a figure of deprivation who still tries to keep his head high, Petrides' sculpture captures tales the artist had heard of the period from his parents, who were teenagers in Greece at the time, and other family members and citizens who suffered through the decade's hardships.

After exploring the dark periods of Greek history, Petrides wanted to close the series of sculptures with a ray of hope. Having his daughter pose for studies from the ages ten to twelve, he decided to use a recent study to create the sculptural head *Kore* (2022). Taking Jean-Antoine Houdon's white marble bust of five-year-old Louise Brongniart as an inspiration, Petrides envisioned the sculpture as expressing the optimism of a young girl for her future and the hope that a country and people feel for their prospects, too.

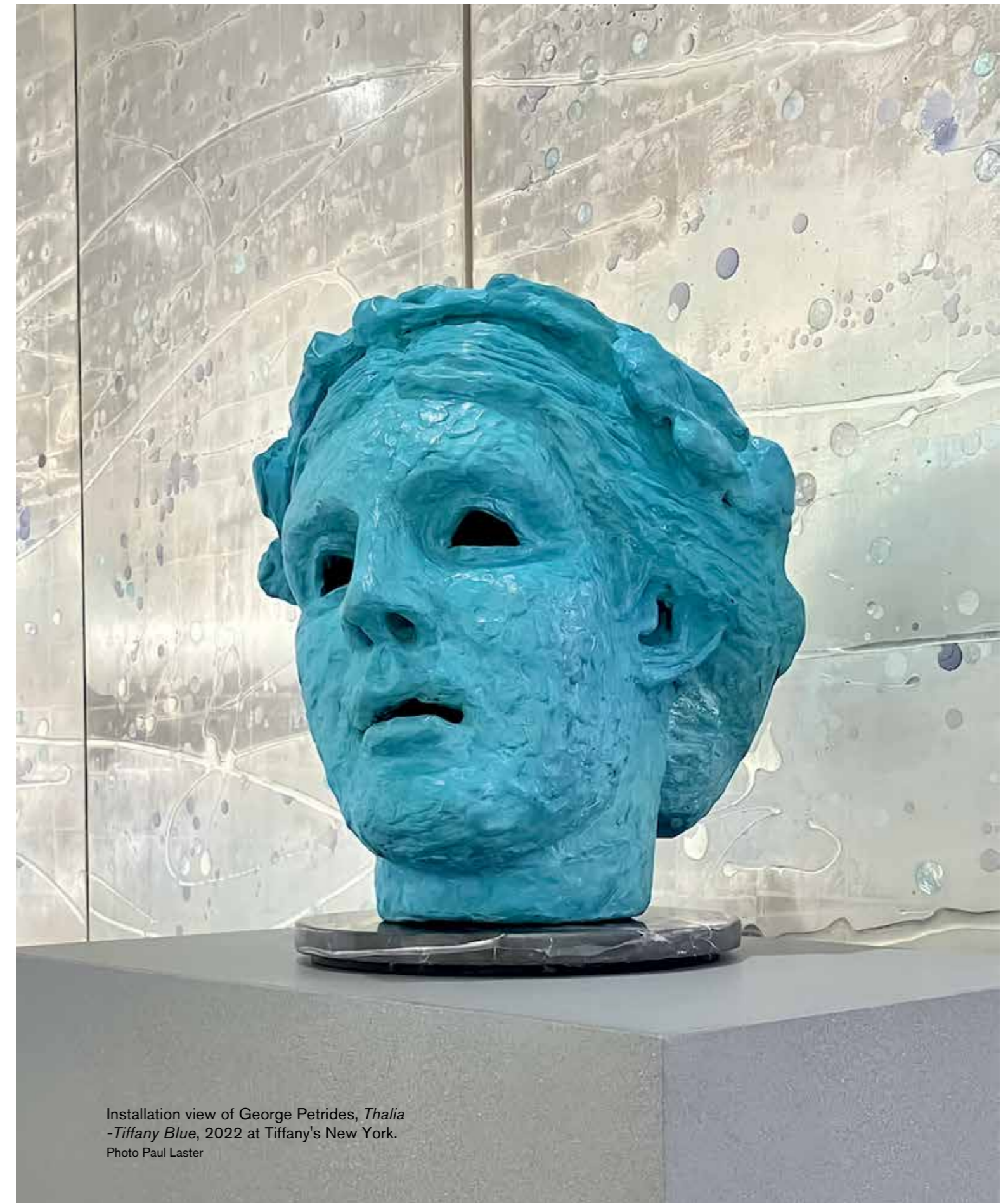
Following the completion of the six sculptures, they were exhibited at the Embassy of Greece to the United States of America in Washington, D.C. on Europe Day—May 14, 2022—with over 2,000 people seeing the exhibition *Hellenic Heads: A Personal Exploration of Greek History and Culture over 2,500 Years* that day. From there the show traveled to the Muses Cultural

Center in Southampton, New York, in the summer of that year and the Maliotis Cultural Center near Boston in the fall.

By chance, while the exhibition was on the East End of Long Island, someone shared a copy of the accompanying monograph with the architect Peter Marino, who has a foundation exhibiting works from his vast collection of art and design objects in Southampton. He quickly became a patron, purchasing multiple works for his own collection.

Marino recommended to Alexandre Arnault, Tiffany & Co. Executive Vice President, that the storied house commission Petrides to create a Hellenic Head for his latest design project, the renovation of Tiffany's Flagship Store at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street, in the heart of New York City. With curated works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Jenny Holzer, Rashid Johnson, Nancy Lorenz, Julian Schnabel and Sarah Sze spread throughout the stylish store and a massive Daniel Arsham sculpture of an eroded statue of Venus at the base of a spiral of staircase, Marino bookended the Arsham piece with Petrides' Tiffany Blue sculptural head of Thalia (robustly cast in bronze) on the store's exclusive High Jewelry Salon on seventh floor, where diamonds are a shopper's best friend.

In a new venue and with a new title, the Hellenic Heads exhibition has traveled to the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago, where it is on view from July 21 to December 10, 2023. Looking ahead, the historical show is currently being scheduled at museums in Europe and the Middle East, and then—when the exhibition finally comes to an end—the six sculptures will be dispersed to the collections of six major museums, where they will have the chance to live alongside some of their celebrated sculptural precedents.



Installation view of George Petrides, *Thalia*  
-*Tiffany Blue*, 2022 at Tiffany's New York.  
Photo Paul Laster



PRECEDENTE SCULTOREO

SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

EROINE DEL 1821:  
LEADERSHIP FEMMINILE

"Ho trovato qualcuno vicino a me, il cui nome è Eleftheria, che in greco significa Libertà, cosa che ho interpretato come un segno che questo era il modello giusto per un combattente in una guerra di indipendenza. Questo pezzo non è specificamente uno dei tre leader, ma vuole incarnare le caratteristiche di queste donne."

"I found someone close to me, whose name is Eleftheria, which in Greek means Freedom, something I interpreted as a sign that this was the right model for a fighter in an independence war. This piece is not specifically one of the three leaders, but it wants to embody the characteristics of these women."



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Materiale: [unreadable]  
Anno: [unreadable]  
Dimensioni: [unreadable]  
Prodotto da: [unreadable]



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Materiale: [unreadable]  
Anno: [unreadable]  
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# GLOBALLY RENOWNED SCULPTOR GEORGE PETRIDES CARVES A MATRIARCHAL GAZE INTO GREEK HISTORY AND HERITAGE

**Natasha Gural**

Originally published in Forbes Online on July 13, 2022  
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Her long hair draped to the viewer's right, a woman gazes slightly upwards and appears rapt in contemplation. Circling the colossal bust, we explore her high cheekbones, wide eyes, and her fierce, feminine profile, fully visible to our left with her hair tucked behind her ear.

Sculpted from mixed media, including metals and patinas, George Petrides depicts his fiancée, while borrowing from Charles Cordier's mid-nineteenth century bust of an African visitor to the Paris Salon of 1848. A young African woman served as the model for a companion piece in 1851. Eleftheria (derived from the Greek word for freedom and liberty) Gkoufa sat for Petrides in 2021, striking an elegant, commanding pose to represent the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829), when women played vital roles to gain break from Ottoman rule.

Petrides seeks to convey "strength, resilience, defiance" by using Gkoufa, a conservator at the Benaki Museum in Athens, who also works privately as a Exhibition Cultural Manager, to serve as a present-day warrior-heroine. Gkoufa breathes new life into the legend of Kapetanissa (Captain) Laskarina Bouboulina, who devoted herself, her ships, and fortune to the wars, only to be killed in a family dispute in 1825, as well as aristocratic Man-to Mavrogenous, who financed ships and equipment for men battling Ottoman forces in the Peloponnese, and Domna Visvizi, who captained the Kalomoira warship.

"I find that whether in the past or in the present, female nature has the same core values. Women are ready to be inspired by great ideas and ideals, they are fighting for their freedom, their survival, their spiritual awakening. They struggle and fight alongside their men and their families and are gifted by their very nature with the most powerful 'weapons,'" Gkoufa said. "Across history, these 'weapons' vary depending on the time and social stratification, but the female core is strong and capable of causing daily revolutions regardless of the era."

My 12-year-old son Michael Alexander observed the "mossy texture and color" of the bust. Unintentionally, yet aptly, Heroines of 1821 evokes the Statue of Liberty, which slowly turned green when its outer surface covered in hundreds of thin copper sheets reacted with the air to form a patina or verdigris.

Heroines of 1821 is among six more-than-double-life-size busts, including four women, on view at The Muses in Southampton, New York, through September 5. Hellenic Heads: George

Petrides opened at the Embassy of Greece in the U.S. in Washington, D.C., between May 9 and June 10. Works in the exhibition, which will travel to other U.S. cities, as well as Europe and Asia, showcase Petrides' hybrid of innovative and formal techniques that begins by sculpting in clay from a live model or photographs. Next, the clay form is 3D scanned to create digital file that he can then rework in modeling software. The modified file, much enlarged from the clay, then comes back into the real world by being 3D printed in plastic or CNC milled in foam. He then reworks that piece by hand, using power tools and construction materials, and applying metals and patinas. Sometimes he casts the each work in bronze, using the ancient Greek lost-wax process of pouring molten metal into a wax model mold. Attributed to the Hittites, an ancient group of Indo-Europeans who moved into Asia Minor and formed an empire at Hattusa in Anatolia (modern Türkiye) around 1600 BCE, Greek sculptors perfected lost-wax casting into the method used today.

"I am was interested in anti-monumentality because when *Life During Wartime* was showing in Washington D.C., where there were all the statues of the generals saying, 'you go left, you do this,' and I was interested in the anti-monument to the civilian who was suffering," said Petrides, during a private tour of the exhibition. "I want people to look at *Life During Wartime* and *The Refugee* and see the Greek Jew during the Nazi Occupation, the Greek civilian during the famines of the Civil War (1943-1949), the Ukrainian civilian today, being bombarded or rushing across the border with only a suitcase., the Jewish civilian."

The Athens-born, Greek-American artist conveys deeply personal narratives that provoke universal dialogues around key historical events that impact Greek culture and history. Traversing 2,500 years of Greek history, Petrides reveals trauma that is excruciatingly relevant today, inflamed by Russian President Vladimir Putin's bloodthirsty invasion of Ukraine. The escalation of the bitter, simmering eight-year Russo-Ukrainian War, which suddenly erupted in the global media, impacts all Slavic people and underscores the pain of Orthodox Christians everywhere. Ninety-eight percent of the Greek population identifies as Orthodox, along with 78 percent of people in Ukraine, and 71 percent of people in Russia, according to a 2015 Pew Research Center survey.

Petrides' visceral yet graceful sculptures simultaneously look back and push forward, the darkness of our past serving to guide toward future humanity. Acknowledging the pain of others, recognizing the atrocities perpetrated against the oppressed, we can embrace the brave leaders and survivors who strive to lead us toward a peaceful existence.

A student of Classical Greek literature, philosophy and history, at Harvard College, Petrides visited Mount Athos four times to immerse himself in Byzantine art and culture. For this project, he dug into research of the Classical Greek Period (510 BC to 323 BC), the Byzantine Period (330 to 1453), the Greek War of Independence (1821 to 1829), the Destruction of Smyrna (1922), the Nazi occupation and Greek Civil War (1941 to 1949), and present-day Greece.

Moreover, the focus on empowered women informs our perspective on history. While no known societies are unambiguously matriarchal, Greek history continues to confound scholars examining the possibilities which can be traced to the earliest recorded histories. Mediterranean matriarchal religion and the patriarchal system wed in Classical Greece, giving birth to the foundation of Greek culture. Cecrops (Kekrops), a mythical half-man half-serpent and the first king of Athens, along with the other early ancient kings, were all believed to have been born from Gaia (Gaea), the Greek goddess of Earth, mother of all life, much like the Roman Terra Mater (Mother Earth). Moreover, ancient Athenians self-identified as autochthones (original or indigenous inhabitants of a place), intrinsically rooting themselves to Gaia.

"I believe that the role of women in modern Greek society, a society that, in my opinion, has always been matriarchal, does not differ much from the past," said Gkoufa. "It is always about the same female 'heroic' nature that struggles daily through many and demanding roles (personal and professional), to maintain her position, to achieve her dreams and to take care of her loved ones, with militancy but also with nurturing inherent in the female nature.

The artist's 12-year-old daughter, Sofia Petrides, posed earlier this year for *Kore*, a contemporary interpretation of Jean-Antoine Houdon's *Louise Brongniart* (1779, after a portrait of 1777), one of which is on view at The Met Fifth Avenue in Gallery 552. Houdon displayed several busts, including a pair of Louise Brongniart and her brother Alexandre, the children of Neoclas-

sical architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, at the Salon of 1777. The example at The Met features a ruffled fichu fastened around the girl's bare chest.

Evoking optimism and innocence, *Kore* offers hope for future generations of Greeks and Greek-Americans. While *Hellenic Heads* explores the complexities of generational trauma, *Kore* looks forward to overcoming the strife that continues to plague humanity. Glowing with a bluish hue and her long hair parted in the center and flowing freely, *Kore* connects with heritage and draws us back to the past as her placement at The Muses faces her paternal grandmother, Panayota Papaioannou, whose likeness stands in for *Thalia*, and who nurtures Sofia to this day.

Petrides relied on black and white photographs taken in Greece when his mother was around 20 years old to sculpt the contemporary re-imagining of the goddess who presided over comedy and idyllic poetry. From the ancient Greek meaning “the joyous, the flourishing”, Petrides was inspired specifically by a 2nd century Roman statue of *Thalia*, with a tympanum and a comic mask, copied from a 4th century BC Hellenistic statue, at the Vatican Museums in Rome.

Her eyes and slightly-agape mouth hollow welcomes us into a conversation. In this context, we imagine the wisdom and stories she passes down to Sofia.

Imbued with the deepest trauma, *The Refugee*, crafted as a re-imagining of Petrides' maternal grandmother, Maria Blizioti, as she may have been in 1922 (age 19), draws us into the circle of four matrilineal generations. Blizioti escaped the Burning of Smyrna in 1922, when as many as 125,000 Greek and Armenian Christians reportedly died when the port city was destroyed after flames raged for up to nine days. Most scholars attribute the blaze, which leveled the Greek and Armenian quarters of the city while sparing any damage to the Muslim and Jewish quarters, to Turkish soldiers who set fire to Greek and Armenian homes and businesses in what is now Izmir, Türkiye. As many as 400,000 Greek and Armenian refugees rushed the waterfront, where they languished under brutal conditions for nearly two weeks.

Borrowing from Michelangelo's *The Deposition* (1547 and 1555), housed at Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence, where it is often called the *Florentine Pietà*, *The Refugee* references the Burning of Smyrna in 1922 and the subsequent population exchange between Greece and Türkiye in 1923. The shrouded

figure with hollow eyes pulls us into her story, revealing what it was like to witness her homeland destroyed. “I am proud and humbled that *The Refugee* is now being made into a larger size to be erected in a public square in a part of Athens where many refugees settled in 1922 or 1923”, Petrides said.

The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (the Lausanne Convention), was an agreement between the Greek and Turkish governments signed in Lausanne, Switzerland, on January 30, 1923, following the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922. Some 1.5 million Anatolian Orthodox Christians were involuntarily expelled from Türkiye to Greece, while about 500,000 Muslims from Greece (particularly from the north) were simultaneously involuntarily transferred to Türkiye.

“I have always been interested in my Greek heritage, absorbing it through my family members: a grandmother who escaped the Destruction of Smyrna in 1922 and parents who lived through the 1940s Nazi occupation and ensuing Greek civil war,” Petrides said.

Petrides rounds out his familial exhibition with a self-portrait and a likeness of his late father. The current installation at The Muses' Library is adjacent to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church of the Hamptons. Check for future exhibition dates.

“Institutions interested in Greek history and culture are requesting the Hellenic Heads. As it is a non-profit, non-selling exhibition, we have to balance these requests with expenses and sponsor support, and hope to be announcing the next venues soon. I hope these will include Boston, LA, two cities in Europe, then Türkiye and China”, said Petrides, who aims to spread awareness of all facets of Greek history with art that transcends time and geography through themes that remain relatable and relevant to all of us.



ERONE  
DEL 1821  
LEONARDO  
VERONILE

HEROINES  
OF 1821  
LEONARDO  
VERONILE



HEROINES  
OF 1821  
LEONARDO  
VERONILE



HEROINES  
OF 1821  
LEONARDO  
VERONILE



HEROINES  
OF 1821  
LEONARDO  
VERONILE

PRECEDENTE  
SCULTOREO

SCULPTURAL  
PRECEDENT

ARCONTE:  
FONDARE IL  
CRISTIANESIMO

ARCHON:  
ESTABLISHING  
CHRISTIANITY

“Mentre lavoravo alla mia versione della scultura, ho scoperto che assumeva le caratteristiche di mio padre. Il nome, Arconte, potrebbe essere considerato un leader o una persona nobile ed è così che penso al carattere di mio padre. Purtroppo è morto nel 2017, ma credo di aver catturato alcune delle sue qualità in questo lavoro”.

“As I worked on my version of the sculpture, I found that it took on characteristics of my father. The name, Archon, could be said to be a leader or a noble person and that is how I think of my father's character. Sadly, he passed



# THE PAST MADE CONTEMPORARY: HOW ARTIST GEORGE PETRIDES CONFRONTS TIME

Katy Diamond Hamer

Κάτοπτρον είδους χαλκός εστί, οίνος δε νοός.  
Bronze is the mirror of the form; wine, of the heart.

Aeschylus, 525-456 BC

How does one look towards the past with a mirror, and still see something new reflected back? This is something that many artists face in their respective practices as it's nearly impossible to not be informed of, or inspired by art history. As a contemporary sculptor George Petrides delves deeply into historical facts, references to his family and Greece, the country where he was born. Focusing on extracting and shining a light onto figures from a vibrant if tumultuous past, that can become part of a relevant dialogue today. His work is a re-telling of time so to speak, a new narrative on an old story. The above quote jumped out at me because many of his sculptures go through a laborious process to come into fruition—the end result being bronze.

The Aeschylus quote and bronze as the “mirror” of the form is fascinating because when thinking about ancient Greek art, one often might think of carved stone. Yet, bronze, the medium mentioned in the quote and that favored by Petrides, is a malleable substance. Bronze in its liquid state, can be anything that the maker wants it to be. The same might be said of clay, or stone, but bronze is the only one that is poured into a mold. It is the final stage. Much like the carvings of Michelangelo that stand in the Accademia Gallery leading the way to his infamous David, there is a period where one decides something is finished no matter how it looks to outside eyes.

With bronze, the substance itself cannot easily be reworked once molded. Unlike polished steel or aluminum which are newer highly reflective sculptural materials, bronze does reflect light, but in a muted way. It does not have the clarity of a true mirror or a still pool of water. Technically and philosophically, how can it mirror form? Conceptually, the thought is quite beautiful. Any form from which a mold is made, can be filled with bronze. The result, specifically if figurative or representative, mirrors other iterations of that object or likeness. Whether human or otherwise, the medium allows for a life-like duplicate to be made. I remember peering at The Burgers of Calais, free-standing sculpture by Rodin at The Metropolitan Museum of Art as a child, not realizing that it wasn't carved or chiseled. The amazing feature of bronze captures every nuanced detail. This is true also with George Petrides, Hellenic Heads. His fin-

gerprints, textures and molded choices are physical decisions made prior to the mold.

Beginning as many sculptors do, with clay and an armature, Petrides molds busts by hand in clay. There is a physicality to the work, movement of his body in space, rotating around the three-dimensional form which emerges slowly out of the clay. It's in this early stage of the process where he creates a historical fissure. Between this process and the bronze result, he utilizes a digital process before making a mold. Through his use of technology—scale, form, and color can be quickly revised. A digital scan, allows for nuanced alterations, a stretched neck, a veiled face. Before a bronze cast is made, a 3-D printed object emerges out of pixels which go from invisible to tangible. Petrides refers to this part of his practice as “practical and not utilized for the sake of technology.” Yet I find it enlightening to think about these large, bronze heads so deliciously linked to an ancient past, and briefly connected to our digital present. As if a sketch in the process, the heads so grand in scale and features, are constructed in plastic. What would the ancient Greeks have thought about plastic? Like bronze, it is malleable in a liquid form, but with a shorter or perhaps just different lifespan (depending on recycling). Contemporary art has less to do with time and longevity as it prefers to be in the moment. George Petrides is tied to a generation prior and the generation of the future. When working with digitally printed materials, Petrides enters a space only able to be occupied now. Sitting in front of a computer, he is in 2022, devoid of the past and not concerned with an immediate digital future. His own history is an invisible novel, a story passed on.

His series *Hellenic Heads*, features women from history—reminders of hardship and triumph. They are formidable, phantasmagoric, mighty, and somehow also mournful. Their textured skin is painted with a patina that creates various shades of greens and blues, appearing chunky and flaked even if smooth to the touch. There is an essence of agedness and adoration in their likenesses. As a father, there is a sense of reverence in the way Petrides portrays women in his work. The women in *Hellenic Heads* reference important historical moments. One in particular titled, *Heroines of 1821*, honors the women who fought alongside male soldiers in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829). Historically rare, women were on the frontlines, some of the first to witness death.

One of the few men in this series, *Life During Wartime* comes in various iterations and materials. His face, cast downward, resem-

bles the posturing of a bust by Rodin, a likeness of Pierre de Wiessant, ca. 1910 part of the permanent collection at the Brooklyn Museum. Both Petrides' portrayal and Rodin's Wiessant, are men of turmoil. Their expressions are troubled, conflicted. In fact, *Life During Wartime* contends with the history of Greece and the occupation by Nazi soldiers. The story is still challenging for many to speak about as once World War II was over, Greece launched into its own civil war, and never truly recuperated from the death of 70,000 Greek Jews, and the 300,000 who died from starvation. Petrides' bust is an homage to this time, a brutal if honest reminder for those who not only passed, but those who survived.

Amongst the female busts that are part of *Hellenic Heads*, my favorite is *Kore*, which looks at Greece today. Based on the artist's daughter, the work is not a period at the end of a sentence, but rather the ellipsis—a continuation. As Petrides moves through his own trauma and that of his birth country, the result is a moment of clarity that arrives from the younger generation. We often swim in the muck of history; negative or positive. This collective, societal, haunting experience is not unlike a gauze or fine dust that covers everything. The wars of the past often continue in other forms in the future. From Petrides' rolodex of referenced time periods outside of those already mentioned, he has revisited the Classical Greek Period, Byzantine Empire, and the Greek War of Independence. Moving through these historical periods, delving into the way they've marked time has made an impression, both literally and figuratively, on his work. But through the veil, is *Kore*, innocence, possibility, and unbridled energy.

*Hellenic Heads* unabashedly asks us to confront the past through an altered beauty extracted and thrust into the present. In 2019, artist Huma Bhabha shared with *Sculpture Magazine's* Editor-in-Chief, Daniel Kunitz, “I'm also interested in understanding why certain things were done, how certain things happen, why through the ages people from some cultures have influenced each other because of crossing over, visitation. You see mutual influences within Greek sculpture and Hindu sculpture because of their proximity and trade—I'm interested in how things grow that way.” Bhabha is an artist that Petrides admires and finds influential. Growth is a topic impossible to ignore. As time and technology allow for a different type of fluidity between cultures, and spaces such as Instagram flatten space, sometimes it is the artist's responsibility to keep the past alive, while trudging towards the future.



IL RIFUGIATO:  
PERDERE E  
RICOSTRUIRE

1922

INCENDIO  
DI SMIRNE  
BURNING  
OF SMYRNA



# "THE REFUGEE" FINDS HOMES AROUND THE WORLD

45

Inherent in the definition of the word "refugee" is the concept of flight, of motion, of travel to parts unknown to find a safe place to call home. It is appropriate, then, that George Petrides's sculpture "The Refugee" has followed many paths, with different versions wending their way around the globe, finding sanctuary in diverse and unexpected places.

## The Hellenic Heads Exhibition at Museums Around the World

"The Refugee" began as one of the six over-lifesize busts in the Hellenic Heads exhibition that has traveled to four venues in the USA. The exhibition is now at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago, Illinois through January 11, 2024. From there the Heads will continue to travel the world, for a total of eight venues.

The Hellenic Heads traveling exhibition was conceived by Petrides, working with Cultural Manager Eleftheria Gkoufa, as an exploration of both the broad scope of Greek history and the artist's roots, featuring over-lifesize head sculptures that were inspired by six important periods in Greek history. "As a Greek American – born in Athens and having spent most of my life in the New York City area – I have always been interested in, and occasionally overwhelmed by, my Greek roots," Petrides said. "I asked myself: What are the influences that shape Greeks and Greeks of the Diaspora like myself?" The story of "The Refugee" is particularly personal to Petrides: His grandmother Maria was one of the tens of thousands of refugees who fled the burning of Smyrna by Ottoman forces in September 1922. As the former center of art and commerce burned, there was large-scale looting, rape, and killing that effectively ended the Greek-Turkish war and resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Armenians and Greeks. Petrides modeled this Hellenic Head, in part, on photos of refugees who crammed onto the waterfront of Smyrna in their attempts to escape the fire; he also drew on what his grandmother might have been thinking and feeling in this time of crisis.





### Public Sculpture in Athens, Greece

Many of the people displaced from the ravaged city and other cities in Asia Minor fled to mainland Greece. "The Refugee," too, found a home in Athens, the same city where Petrides's grandmother Maria rebuilt her life in the 1920s. On September 14, 2022, one hundred years to the day from when Smyrna was set ablaze, Petrides unveiled a version of "The Refugee" in Neo Psychiko, a neighborhood that became a shelter to many refugees from Asia Minor. This version of "The Refugee" was considerably larger, standing almost nine feet high on its base, and was installed permanently near a church - one of the largest in Greece - that was inspired by one of the same name in Vourla, the town near Smyrna where many of the refugees had previously lived. The square in front of the church, Agios Georgios, features a beautiful garden, a children's play area, and a water fountain with the names of the lost homelands carved into red granite. Curiously, there was an empty corner that Petrides felt was crying out for a sculpture. Some of the local residents told him that it had been part of the original plan to include a memorial sculpture, but it had not come to pass. The anniversary ceremony, during which the piece was revealed to the public, was an emotional one for Petrides. "I was moved when people came up to me and expressed their feelings," he said. "One exclaimed 'That's my grandmother!' and in that moment I knew the statue had succeeded."

## Simonopetra Monastery on Mount Athos, Greece

The sculpture was far from finishing its journeys, however. This year, Petrides traveled to the Simonopetra Monastery on Mount Athos, Greece. The monastery, a stunning edifice perched on a cliff overlooking the Aegean Sea, was founded in the 13th century by Simon the Athonite, after having a vision on Christmas Eve (ca. 1250 C.E.) of the Star of Bethlehem hovering over the rock formation and hearing the Virgin Mary telling him to build a monastery on top of the rock and to name it “New Bethlehem.” Over the course of the monastery’s long history, the building experienced several devastating fires, but each time the monastery was rebuilt and the community revived. For several centuries, the monks who lived in the monastery traditionally came from Ionia in Asia Minor, the exact same patch of earth that would later produce the city of Smyrna and its eventual refugees. It was appropriate, then, that the modern-day monks would place a smaller version of “The Refugee” in the library, alongside texts dating back to many centuries.



48

49



“Each version of the Refugee is unique,” Petrides said. “The sizes vary immensely and in making each, by necessity the details vary, for example the arrangement of the hair or the angle of the head. However, the theme and the inspiration behind the piece remains constant, always referring back to my grandmother and her experiences as a young woman.”

## The Consulate of Greece in Smyrna, Türkiye

The artwork has found me more safe harbor, this one in a place that can be called...unique. Last April, 2023, a two-foot-high version of the public statue installed in Athens was placed in the Greek consulate in Smyrna. Today, the city is a bustling one of over three million people, the third largest in Türkiye. One can only imagine what the subject of the sculpture might feel at this turn of events: After a century, “The Refugee” has found her way back to her first home.



## PRECEDENTE SCULTOREO

SCULPTURAL  
PRECEDENT

*"Mentre lavoravo sul pezzo, l'unica cosa rimasta era l'acconciatura e la corona attorno all'acconciatura, ma i lineamenti del viso sono cambiati per assomigliare a mia madre a quell'età."*

*"As I worked on the piece, the only thing that remained was the hairstyle and the crown around the hairstyle, but the features of the face changed to resemble my mother at that age."*



## ARCONTE: FONDARE IL CRISTIANESIMO

Periodo storico  
Impero bizantino (530-1453)

Scultore  
George Petridas

Scultura completata  
2024 (versione II)

Mezzo di scultura  
Tecnica mista tra cui bronzo e patine personalizzate

Dimensioni della scultura  
89 cm di altezza x 57 cm di diametro  
Altezza 35,0 pollici x diametro 24,4 pollici

Modello  
Capitano Christos Petridas

La relazione di Petridas  
Paire dalle foto come capitano di mare, inteso ai 40 anni

Petridas cerca di trasmettere  
Leadership, visione chiara per il futuro

## ARCHON: ESTABLISHING CHRISTIANITY

Historical Period  
Byzantine Empire (530-1453)

Scultore  
George Petridas

# GEORGE PETRIDES: HELLENIC HEADS

**S. David**

Originally published in *The Brooklyn Rail* on July 10, 2022  
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53

S. David

## The Embassy of Greece to the USA

May 9 – June 10, 2022, Washington, DC

In the West, the notion of “Greekness” has long been contested in ambiguous and paradoxical racial terms. This is particularly so in societies touched by the vestiges of the British imperial project, whose cultural arbiters continue to demonstrate (read: the British Museum, with its expropriated Parthenon Marbles) an intense pre-occupation with a historicized and Orientalized Greece. Thus perceived, members of the Greek diaspora are coded as paragons of whiteness—that is, until they aren’t—when the complexities of cultural, linguistic, and historical difference appear to get in the way.

The Greek American sculptor George Petrides seems well aware of these kinds of world- and identity-flattening perceptions and, in his exhibition *Hellenic Heads*—currently on display at the Embassy of Greece in Washington, DC—he appears to most deftly navigate exonymic presumptions of “dual loyalty.” Petrides’s sculpture thus exists within a wider rubric of art addressing co-descent and transnationality. Uniquely, though, his sculptures also function along the more pointed tangents of cultural exchange. In other words, these *Hellenic Heads* do work at the crossings of artful diplomacy and a seemingly self-guided ancestral tourism.

That said, Petrides—who was born in Athens and has spent half his life in New York City—makes clear on the record that he has always been invested in his roots: his grandmother escaped the burning of Smyrna in 1922, and his parents survived the 1940s Nazi occupation of Greece, along with the civil war that followed. In this vein, Petrides’s work, at its most interesting, references and revisits episodes in Greek history beyond the certainty of “mere” antiquity.

The acutely-titled *Life During Wartime* (2022), for instance, is a sculptural self-portrait invoking the spirit and hard-won daily life of the Greek civilian circa mid-twentieth century. Lay conversations about Greek art inevitably circuit a classical ideal that indexes Greece as a monolithic foundation of Western culture. While Petrides’s sculptures pay clear homage to this formal classical model—as well as to its neoclassical acolytes, like Rodin—the artist uses them as simple starting points for a broader conceptual dialogue between himself and history. (While they are different mediums, the relentless expression and elongated figuration in *Wartime* nonetheless call to mind the painterly technique of the Mannerist El Greco.)

And so, naturally, Wartime possesses no archaic smile. Worked through a highly original and sequenced creative process—one that combines both digital 3D printing technologies and traditional handiwork—Petrides’s sculptures bear a kind of stoic neutrality. It is one that allows chronologies to be transposed rather than simply revealed, even amid conceptual drama. In this case, Wartime serves as a poignant reminder that structures bleed: what is now modern Greece has been subject to varying hegemonies since the end of antiquity. These imperial conflicts and exchanges saw their ultimate culmination in Greece’s War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire, which witnessed the (re)birth of a consolidated national identity.

Thus meeting modernity, Petrides’s other sculptures are ironically laconic in every sense. *Heroines of 1821* (2022) scans as a panegyric to a plural and equal Greek society; it is a gesture that is at once hopeful and romantic as it is deliberate. A bust sculpted from a live model (Petrides’s fiancée), *Heroines* feels written almost for the part, evoking something closer to *eleutheria*. Like most of the other Heads, Petrides’s *Heroines* stakes a grounded political neutrality, one that carefully avoids political—but not civic—reference. (While namechecking most of Greece’s history, the exhibition seems to steer clear of potentially sensitive territory, like the 1967–74 Regime of the Colonels, along with the restoration of democracy, the *Metapolitefsi*.)

The arts have always played a salient role in the broader currents of soft power, and it is clear that such programmatic choices are made in an effort of maintaining a kind of apoliticism in the face of wider Hellenic interests. But history is always political; it is the written word made flesh. This year marks the centennial of the Greek genocide, one of many such atrocities at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. This moment deserves recognition as commemoration of revolt against empire.

In this way, there is something almost deconstructive, even decolonial, about Hellenic Heads. As pointed as these other mentioned historical absences may be, they bring a subtle discontinuity that actually helps further animate the sculpture work. The sculptures themselves, as formal and referential as they are, are cautiously celebratory. And while the Greeks have now—in the words of Noel Ignatiev, “become white”—it should be remembered that the ancient Greeks themselves saw their culture as only one end of the linguistic, rather than racial, spectrum.





L'UOMO DELLE DUE GUERRE  
HEAD OF FIVE YEARS

L'UOMO DELLE DUE GUERRE  
HEAD OF FIVE YEARS

IL PRESENTE  
GUARDARE  
VERSO IL FUTURO  
THE PRESENT  
LOOKING  
TO THE FUTURE



# INTERVIEW: GEORGE PETRIDES WITH SHANNON LEAHEY

59 Shannon Leahey

**SL** What are the *Hellenic Heads*?

GP The *Hellenic Heads* are a personal exploration of my personal roots, through over-lifesize head sculptures that have been inspired by six important periods in Greek history spanning 2,500 years. This series is a vehicle for, and the result of, my search for the influences that have shaped me and the people closest to me. I chose six periods in history that could be deemed to have ongoing influence on contemporary Greeks: the Classical Period, the Byzantine Period, the Greek War of Independence, the Destruction of Smyrna (of which the centennial is this year), the Nazi occupation and Greek Civil War, and finally, the Present. I researched each period, considering artifacts, family stories, and historical photographs. I looked at sculptural precedents for inspiration in the major museums of the world—in Athens, of course, but also in New York, Paris and Rome.

**SL** What is the inspiration behind *Hellenic Heads*?

GP As a Greek-American—born in Athens and having spent more than half my life in New York City—I have always been engaged with, and sometimes overwhelmed by, my Greek roots. Starting from age 5 or 6, I was exposed to Greek antiquities by my aunt who was a tour guide to the Acropolis and the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Later, at Harvard College, I studied liberal arts, including Classical Greek literature, philosophy and history, as well as modern Greek literature, taught there by Professor Savvides, the translator of Cavafy and Seferis. Later still, I made four visits to Mount Athos, where I was steeped not just in the Orthodox faith but also in Byzantine art; I recall being dumbfounded seeing icons and relics more than a thousand years old.

People soak up influences from their culture. You can spend your whole life rejecting that influence, but it's the truth: It gets in your system. However, my portraits are not historical copies; they are personal interpretations. When I was sculpting Thalia, inspired by the Classical Greek Period, I looked not just to the piece of the same name in the Vatican Museums, but also to photos of my mother as a young woman in post-war Greece. When I was sculpting Archon, referring to the Byzantine Period, I looked not just to the colossal heads of Constantine the Great at the Capitoline Museums in Rome and The Met in New York, but also to photographs of my father as a young sea captain,

working for Goulandris shipping interests, embodying leadership and clear vision ahead. For *Heroines of 1821*, I wanted to convey the strength, defiance and resilience of three female leaders in the War of Independence (Manto, Laskarina and the overlooked Domna Visvizi of Thrace) and found a modern Greek woman to sit for the piece, a woman with similar personality traits: My fiancée!

**SL** Some of your *Hellenic Heads* have been described as “dark.” Are they? Why?

GP Some, fortunately not all, are “dark” because they reflect the periods I studied. Studying the Destruction of Smyrna, including the experiences of my grandmother who survived it and the published diaries of her brother who fought in the war that preceded it, resulted in a sculpture conveying the sadness of losing their homeland, but also dignity in accepting their fate and rebuilding their lives in a new country, Greece. To study Greece in the 1940s was to learn about my father’s time in an internment camp, to learn about the vibrant Sephardic Jewish community of Thessaloniki whose members were sent to Treblinka, to visit “Pigada” near Meligalas where a relative, the local doctor, was executed in what was the beginning of the Greek Civil War. Many of us are fortunate to have never directly had such experiences in our lives, but similar phenomena exist today, like in the daily lives of Ukrainians these past few months.

That said, the *Hellenic Heads* are presented as a unity, so these “dark” pieces are balanced by others that are “light”: The elegance and thoughtfulness of a classically inspired head, the strength and leadership of a *Heroine of 1821*, a young girl representing the Present, whose optimism reflects her future but also the optimism a nation and people might feel.

**SL** All of your *Hellenic Heads* are larger than lifesize. Some are nearly a meter tall. Why?

GP You see a lot of massive works in some of the ancient art from which I take inspiration, like the fifteen-foot-tall Sounion Kouros in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. If it is meant to be a representative of a person or the energy of a person, then maybe it’s not supposed to fit on a shelf.

Jeff Koons has said that scale changes the way the viewer perceives the work, even if it is the exact same work, enlarged. I have found this to be true as I often do similar works in different sizes, and I can see how viewers react to each. By the way, Jeff Koons is a devotee of the Greek and Roman Department at The Met, where I had the opportunity to meet him and talk in person.

**SL** Your art is focused on the human body, particularly the head. Why?

GP I find my fellow human beings to be the most fascinating, difficult, and rewarding subject. Relationships are important to me in every aspect of my life, which is not to imply that I always succeed at them. I often experience an inability to understand or to connect, which probably drives my interest in figurative sculpting.

As to the head specifically: It is the most human part of the human, the most expressive and the most difficult to convey and the most interesting when the conveyance succeeds.

**SL** What do you think your art says about the human condition?

GP I’m thinking of the title of the first book that came out about my work: “The Beauty of Imperfection.” I think that summarizes my views of our fellow human beings and of life generally: That there is beauty not in spite of but because of imperfections. We are far more emotionally touched by the flaws of the human condition than by any glossy ideal. Many of my pieces show imperfections, and I hope that you will perceive them as beautiful.

**SL** A feature of your work is that they don’t have polished finishes. Can you talk about that choice?

GP Yes, that’s right. I don’t want the surfaces to be pristine or shiny; I want them to show their guts to the world. Lots of my pieces are a combination of materials. I’ve been intrigued by kintsugi pottery with its golden cracks; it’s not the idealized form that draws the eye, but rather its scars. Sometimes the process of carving and exposing layers gives an impression that I’m being brutal to them. But then, human existence can be rough work. I want them to show layers of experience just as humans do.



Sculptor George Petrides in his Athens studio.

**SL How did you come to use mixed media in this manner?**

GP I start with clay to get the basic form and build the volumes. I fire it and then start going to work on it with power tools to subtract volume and epoxy clays to add volume. In doing so I create a variegated, often rough surface that I don't plan in advance. Often I add more materials including found bricks, stone and wood, and ferrous and copper based metals, paints and acids. Sometimes I like the patches of color and material to be tonal, other times for the contrasts to be stronger which can make the form "disintegrate." This part of my process is indeed expressionistic, and I keep reworking the pieces until they seem "done" to me.

**SL Talk about some of the inspirations behind your work.**

GP If you are Greek, you can't help but be inspired by antiquity. There is nothing like going back to ancient times. For example, one of my sculptures, "Boxer at Rest (Self Portrait)" is inspired by a Hellenistic bronze statue at the National Museum of Rome called "The Boxer at Rest" which was loaned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2013. When I saw the piece in New York, I was floored. In that moment, I knew I needed to be a sculptor. It depicted a real person, a boxer who was beaten up, with cauliflower ears and open wounds in his skin. For my piece, I started with a model, Raymond, posing in a similar way to the historic work to get some of the initial forms. After he left, I kept working on the piece, and I found that it acquired personal significance. I realized that I too, although not violent, was a boxer at rest—I had been through major illness, divorce, and a few other challenges. My version of the boxer, like the original, has suffered damage, but is very much alive, still curious, maybe with a wry smile, and able to go back into the ring. Wouldn't that also describe many Greeks we know?

**SL Acclaimed artist George RRorris, who is famous for representations of the human form, wrote that your sculpture reflects the "primitive sensuality" of your soul, "indomitable and unadulterated." Would you say that true art originates in a primordial instinct,**

**even though we often associate art with refinement and sophistication?**

GP I have great respect for George Rorris, both as an artist—one of the most important working today not just in Greece but globally—and as a human being. I am honored that he wrote the essay that appeared in the book “George Petrides: Recent Work 2019-2021” from which you quote.

As to his specific comments: I think he is correct, and expressed it more poetically than I could have. There are many kinds of art, ranging from the cold, conceptual kind to the emotionally-driven “primitive” and “unadulterated,” to use his words. I am happy to be closer to the latter end of that spectrum, for two reasons: First, it is who I am, and I believe in the saying, “Be yourself - everyone else is already taken.” Second, I think that the qualities that Rorris refers to have real power. I hope you feel that power when you see the *Hellenic Heads*.

Is there good art that is refined and sophisticated? Of course! There are as many different kinds of art as there are artists, and viewers must judge for themselves what speaks to them.

**SL Why focus on abstract sculpture rather than realist sculpture?**

GP A lot of traditional sculpture, as well as contemporary sculpture, is what I would consider realistic. While realism takes a lot of skill, I find that less interesting because realism, like painting, has been affected by photography. Prior to photography, kings would commission portraits of themselves and disperse them amongst their many vassals. Everyone would say, “That is King Ludwig.” In the era of photography, that’s no longer an essential function of sculpture.

I find neo-expressionism very interesting. (Neo-expressionism is a style of late modernist or early-postmodern painting and sculpture that emerged in the late 1970s.) For example, German and American neo-expressionists Georg Baselitz and Marcus Lupertz: In their work, you see all these colors and textures. When I see their work, I am not thinking that someone looks like that, I am thinking the artists are trying to convey emotion.

**SL Would you tell us a few words about your initiation into the world of art?**

GP I grew up in a family that was half artists (with a slant towards music; my first cousin is Tassis Christoyannis, one of the top opera singers in Europe) and half business people. Even as a child, it was clear to me that the life of the artist was not an easy one. After a liberal arts degree from Harvard College in 1985, I went to Wall Street. Then in 1996, the Muse beckoned and I started taking art classes in the evenings and on weekends; I discovered the New York Studio School, where I have taken classes over a 20 year period culminating in a Certificate in Sculpture; I have also studied at The Art Students League in New York and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris, where some important Greek artists studied: Apartis, Chryssa, Laskaridou, Sid-iropoulos.

I had been flirting with making the switch to full-time working artist for many years, but didn’t have the courage. Then in 2017, I experienced multiple deaths of friends and family within a two-week period, forcing me to evaluate what I wanted to do with my remaining years on this planet, and I committed fully to making art! In September 2018, a well-known Greek collector acquired a work of mine, and I thought, “OK, now I am a professional artist,” followed shortly by the thought, “I had better get into the studio daily and make more, and better, work!”

Since then I have had solo shows in Dubai, Monaco and Mykonos. I have participated in group shows in Athens, London, and New York, including a two-artist show at the Consulate of Greece in New York.

**SL What draws you primarily to sculpture over other media?**

GP In college, I took plenty of art history but no studio art, which is a pity because one of the significant sculptors of the 20th century, Dimitri Hadzi, also a Greek American, taught at my university when I was there.

So I didn’t take my first adult art class, an oil painting class, until I was in my early 30s, in 1996. I remember the first few pieces I worked on, and I recall the feeling of awkwardness. I was not a natural. Fortunately, I drifted toward drawing, which it turns out is the foundation of everything, including sculpture. Around 1998, I found myself at the New York Studio School in Greenwich

Village, taking classes in the evenings and on weekend mornings. This went on for decades, part-time. At some point, in one of those random but meant-to-be occurrences, I wandered into a sculpture class and my hands worked with a mind of their own. I felt as the French sculptor Auguste Rodin said he felt when he first touched clay: That he was in Heaven.

In a larger context, sculpture is a Greek tradition. Oil painting is primarily what 20th century European artists did, but sculpture is what my Greek ancestors did from Archaic times (7th century BC) into the Byzantine era, when colossal statues of Constantine the Great, the first Roman emperor to espouse Christianity, were placed throughout the empire.

**SL Do you plan a piece far in advance or is the idea constantly changing?**

GP I'll start with an idea, so there's a core of something that might stay constant, but my process is exploratory, so I don't have it planned out all in advance. I tend to think of that process as image-seeking rather than image-making, another connection to the neo-expressionists. Basquiat didn't start with a vision of a finished piece—you can see him crossing out and reworking things right there on the canvas. I strive for the same, albeit in sculptural form.

For example, *Life during Wartime*, the piece for *Hellenic Heads* that takes as inspiration the struggles of the 1940s in Greece—I've been working on it for over a year. While I knew that historical inspiration before I started and I knew I wanted the piece to focus on the experience of average Greek civilians, the piece itself evolved and changed a lot over time.

**SL You mention "Sculptural Precedents" in your working process. Explain.**

GP I often draw inspiration from historic pieces, ranging from the Kouroi to Rodin, not to make a copy, but to see how an accomplished sculptor dealt with similar issues. Sometimes this helps me find my "way in" with my sculpture, although the end result may bear little similarity. For example, when I was starting on my piece related to the Destruction of Smyrna, *The Catastrophe*, I was thinking about my grandmother and how she might have looked and felt in September 1922 when the city

was burned and she lost her whole way of life. Call it serendipity; on my drive back from Monaco, where I had a solo exhibition, to Athens, I stopped in Florence for a few nights. There, at the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, I saw two works that left me in awe: Donatello's *Habbakuk* (1423-26) and Michelangelo's *Deposition* (1547-1555). When you look at *The Catastrophe*, you may pick up on subtle references to both masterpieces.

**SL You have talked about your commitment to ancient Greek sculpture and to non-Greek sculptors, but what about modern Greek sculptors?**

GP The two that excite me most are Yannoulis Chalepas and Yannis Pappas. Both are well represented at the National Glyptothèque in Goudi, which has to be one of the least visited museums in all of Europe. Whenever I visit I am usually the only person there. The Chalepas holdings by the Glyptothèque and by the Onassis Foundation are simply astounding. The other day when I was stuck on a part of *Heroines of 1821*, I picked up a Chalepas catalog (from the excellent Tellogleio exhibition) to see how he had dealt with a similar issue. It worked!

**SL After all those years living outside of Greece—not just as an artist—would you say that your "Greekness" still defines your artistic expression in the same way it did in the beginning?**

GP Yes, I believe so. Although I have lived most of my life in the New York area, my contact with Greece—the language, the culture, the country—has been continuous. Growing up in New York, my parents behaved as if they were on their way back to Greece, and indeed, upon my father's retirement, that is what they did. As for me, I spent five of my teenage years in Athens, and like many Greek-Americans, visited every summer. So, I have always felt connected to my "Greekness," generally as well as artistically.

**SL Do you think the viewer's experience of your work changes depending upon how familiar they are with Greek history and culture?**

GP Inevitably, viewers bring their own experiences and prejudices to the work, and that will always be the case. For example,

the piece in the *Hellenic Heads* exhibit that celebrates the heroines of 1821—a Greek person who knows a lot about the Greek War of Independence is going to view it differently than someone who has never heard of any of this war, which Greeks call “The Struggle”

When I list emotions on some of the signs in the exhibition, it’s what I felt when I was working on the piece, and that has to do with my own very personal experiences and family history. Even so, I think that it’s possible that by looking at the piece, the viewer can feel some of the same.

And I take it seriously that these pieces can have an educational function as well, about Greek history and also about art history. I always try to give viewers some information about the historical inspiration as well as sculptural precedents. Part of what I want them to feel is inspired to learn more, whether it’s about the destruction of Smyrna or about Rodin’s work.





HISTORICAL  
PERIOD

**CLASSICAL  
GREECE**

510 BC – 323 BC

FOUNDATION  
OF WESTERN  
CIVILIZATION

# CLASSICAL GREECE

510 BC – 323 BC

74



1  
*Marble statue of an athlete binding his hair (diadoumenos), found on Delos, Cyclades. Copy from about 100 BC an original from 450-425 BC. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece.*

75 Classical Greece



2  
*Marble votive relief of an athlete, found at Sounion, Attica ca. 460 BC, National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece.*

As the birthplace of many of the pillars of Western civilization, classical Greece may be the period most familiar to history students of all levels. Though major historical events like the Peloponnesian Wars, the Spartan and Theban hegemonies and the expansion of Macedonia were constantly reshaping its borders, the rich culture of Classical Greece was forming and strengthening.

Its legacy in the form of politics, art, science, theater, literature, and philosophy extended far beyond its time period and region to influence the culture of the Roman Empire, and become the very foundations of modern civilization, specifically in the West. This legacy was particularly instrumental in shaping the European Renaissance and the generations that followed it: “The legacy of Greece was strongly felt by post-Renaissance European elite, who saw themselves as the spiritual heirs of Greece. Will Durant wrote in 1939 that “excepting machinery, there is hardly anything secular in our culture that does not come from Greece,” and conversely “there is nothing in Greek civilization that doesn’t illuminate our own.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, October 23). Classical Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:40, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Classical\\_Greece&oldid=1181586495](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Classical_Greece&oldid=1181586495)

We have some clues as to what life was like for Greek citizens during the Classical era: "In Athens, society was male-dominated—only men could be citizens and only upper-class males enjoyed a formal education. Women had few political rights and were expected to remain in the home and bear children. Fully one quarter of the population was made up of slaves, usually prisoners captured during the many clashes that extended Greek influence overseas. These slaves provided much of the manpower that fueled the burgeoning economy, working in shipyards, quarries, mines, and as domestic servants.

"Most homes were modest, windowless and wrapped around a courtyard. Furniture was rare. People spent the majority of the day out of doors enjoying the mild Mediterranean climate. The Greek diet was also modest, based largely on wine and bread. A typical day would start with bread dipped in wine, the same for lunch and a dinner of wine, fruits, vegetables and fish. Consumption of meat was reserved for special occasions such as religious holidays."<sup>2</sup>

The women of Classical Greece had few rights compared to those of their male counterparts; for example, they could not vote or inherit land, and were thus largely relegated to the domestic sphere. And yet, despite the social restraints, there were a number of important female goddesses (Demeter, Artemis, Persephone, etc.) the likes of which were never available to Christian women. In particular, Athena, goddess of wisdom and warfare, is one of the most powerful figures in Greek mythology: "The Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis is dedicated to her, along with numerous other temples and monuments... She was also a warrior goddess, and was believed to lead soldiers into battle as Athena Promachos. Her main festival in Athens was the Panathenaia, which was the most important festival on the Athenian calendar."<sup>3</sup>



3  
Marble grave stele of a little girl, ca. 450-440 BC. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fletcher Fund, 1927), New York.

2. "Everyday Life in Ancient Greece, 4th Century BC." (2001). In *EyeWitness to History*. Retrieved November 15, 2023, from [www.eyewitnesshistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesshistory.com).  
3. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 11). Athena. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:34, November 15, 2023, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Athena&oldid=1184642707>



4



5

4  
East Pediment, Figures K, L, M, of Parthenon, end of the 5th c. BC. British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

5  
North Frieze, XLVII, of Parthenon (Scene of preparations for the procession of horsemen), end of the 5th c. BC. British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

In the context of the art, architecture, and culture of Ancient Greece, the Classical period covers most of the 5th and 4th centuries BC (the most common dates being the fall of the last Athenian tyrant in 510 BC to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC). The Classical period in this sense follows the Greek Dark Ages and Archaic period and is in turn succeeded by the Hellenistic period.

As for sculpture during this time, the Classical Period brought about “a revolution in Greek statuary, usually associated with the introduction of democracy and the end of the aristocratic culture...The Classical period saw changes in the style and function of sculpture. Poses became more naturalistic (see the Charioteer of Delphi for an example of the transition to more naturalistic sculpture), and the technical skill of Greek sculptors in depicting the human form in a variety of poses greatly increased. From about 500 BC statues began to depict real people. The statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton set up in Athens to mark the overthrow of the tyranny were said to be the first public monuments to actual people...

“In the Classical period for the first time we know the names of individual sculptors. Phidias oversaw the design and building of the Parthenon. Praxiteles made the female nude respectable for the first time in the Late Classical period (mid-4th century): his Aphrodite of Knidos, which survives in copies, was said by Pliny to be the greatest statue in the world.”<sup>4</sup>

Another renowned sculptor of the time was Polykleitos of Argos, who was “particularly famous for formulating a system of proportions that achieved this artistic effect and allowed others to reproduce it. His treatise, the Canon, is now lost, but one of his most important sculptural works, the Diadoumenos, survives in numerous ancient marble copies of the bronze original. Bronze, valued for its tensile strength and lustrous beauty, became the preferred medium for freestanding statuary, although very few bronze originals of the fifth century BC survive. What we know of these famous sculptures comes primarily from ancient literature and later Roman copies in marble.”<sup>5</sup>

4. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 19). Ancient Greek art. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:04, July 20, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ancient\\_Greek\\_art&oldid=1099177658](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ancient_Greek_art&oldid=1099177658)

5. Hemingway, Colette, and Seán Hemingway. (January 2008) “The Art of Classical



6  
*Funerary stele of Hegeso*, ca. 410-400 BC. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece.

7  
*Marble votive relief of the Eleusian deities, the so-called Big Eleusian Relief*, found at Eleusis, Attica, ca. 440-430 BC. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece.



7



8  
*Bronze statue of Zeus or Poseidon, found at the bottom of the sea off cape Artemision, in north Euboea ca. 460 BC. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece.*

9  
*The cylix of Apollo, ca. 480-470 BC. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, Greece.*



10  
*Attic red figure vase of the Polygnotos Workshop. The poet Sappho is depicted sitting reciting a poem to her friends, one of whom holds a lyre, ca. 440-430 BC. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece.*



### The Muses

A group of goddesses that have had lasting cultural impact are the Muses. The Muses or “nine sisters” were the goddesses of literature, science, and the arts. Usually presented as the daughters of Zeus, they were thought to have allowed people to forget their pain. They played an important role in artistic life, but also in civic life: “When Pythagoras arrived at Croton, his first advice to the Crotoniates was to build a shrine to the Muses at the center of the city, to promote civic harmony and learning.”<sup>6</sup>

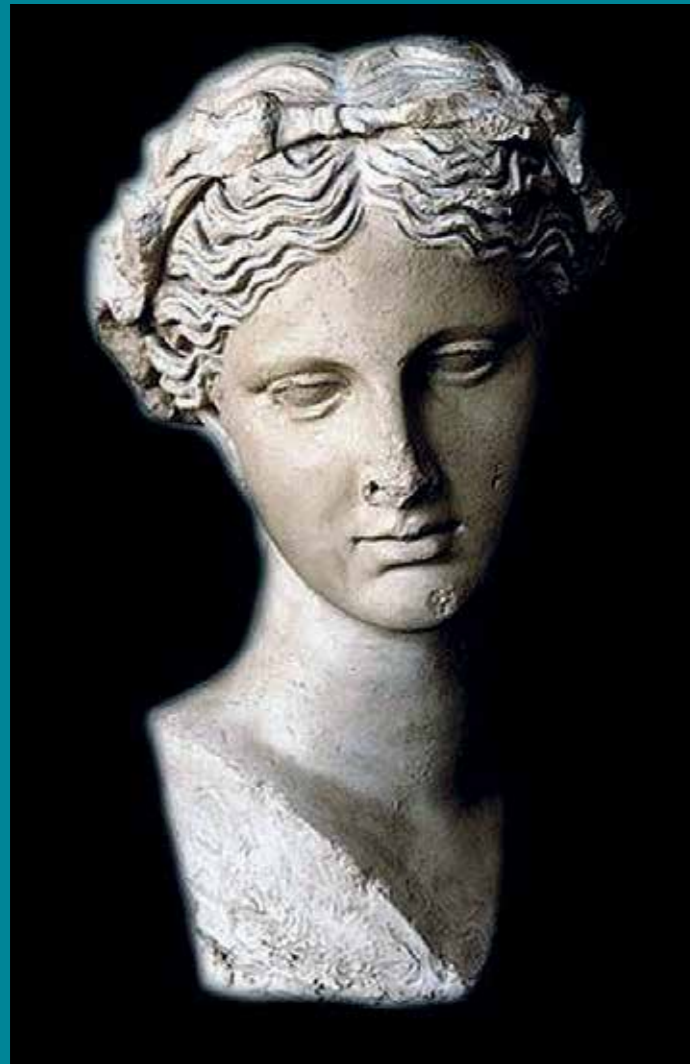
Thalia was one of the two muses of the Greek theater. Her name means “flourishing,” perhaps because her songs were thought to sound new even as they aged.

The Muses were often portrayed in all manner of artworks, from literature to sculpture. “Ancient authors and some later authors and artists invoke Muses when writing poetry, hymns or epic history.”<sup>7</sup> They were so prevalent in works of art that they have become embedded in the very idea of art and creativity; the word *muse* has come to represent an artist’s inspiration, and it is the root of the word *museum*.

6. Greece (ca. 480–323 B.C.).— In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tacg/hd\\_tacg.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tacg/hd_tacg.htm)  
 7. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 9). Muses. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:53, November 15, 2023, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Muses&oldid=1184310119>  
 7. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 9). Muses. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:53, November 15, 2023, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Muses&oldid=1184310119>

# SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

82



11  
*Thalia, The Muse of Comedy and Pastoral Poetry*, Roman copy of Greek original of Classical Period. Vatican Museums, Rome.

83 Classical Greece

For this first period, the Classical Greek period, I found a piece called *Thalia, Muse of Comedy*. This sculpture, currently owned by the Vatican Museums, was recovered from an excavated Roman villa near Tivoli and probably dates from the 2nd century. It is likely based on an original from the Classical period (4th century BC). It depicts Thalia, the eighth-born of the muses, seated next to a mask of comedy, and it was found alongside a group of sculptures, including several other Muses. The villa where the sculpture was excavated in 1775 was initially thought to have belonged to Cassius, the foremost instigator of the murder of Julius Caesar, though this fact has been more recently disputed.

Thalia is typically portrayed in art as “a young woman with a joyous air, crowned with ivy, wearing boots and holding a comic mask in her hand. Many of her statues also hold a bugle and a trumpet (both used to support the actors’ voices in ancient comedy), or occasionally a shepherd’s staff or a wreath of ivy.”<sup>8</sup> This sculpture follows some of these conventions, including the mask, the shepherd’s staff and the wreath of ivy entwined in her hair.

The piece was lent as part of an exhibition called Treasures of the Vatican to the Metropolitan Museum in New York some years ago. I was inspired by the piece and I started doing my own version of it. But as I was working on it, I found that it took on the characteristics of my mother, specifically as a woman around twenty years old from black and white photographs from Greece. As I worked on the piece, the only thing that remained was the hairstyle and the crown around the hairstyle, but the features of the face changed to resemble my mother at that age.

8. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, June 7). Thalia (Muse). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 17:32, July 24, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thalia\\_\(Muse\)&oldid=1092041177](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thalia_(Muse)&oldid=1092041177)

# HELLENIC HEAD

## THALIA: FOUNDATION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

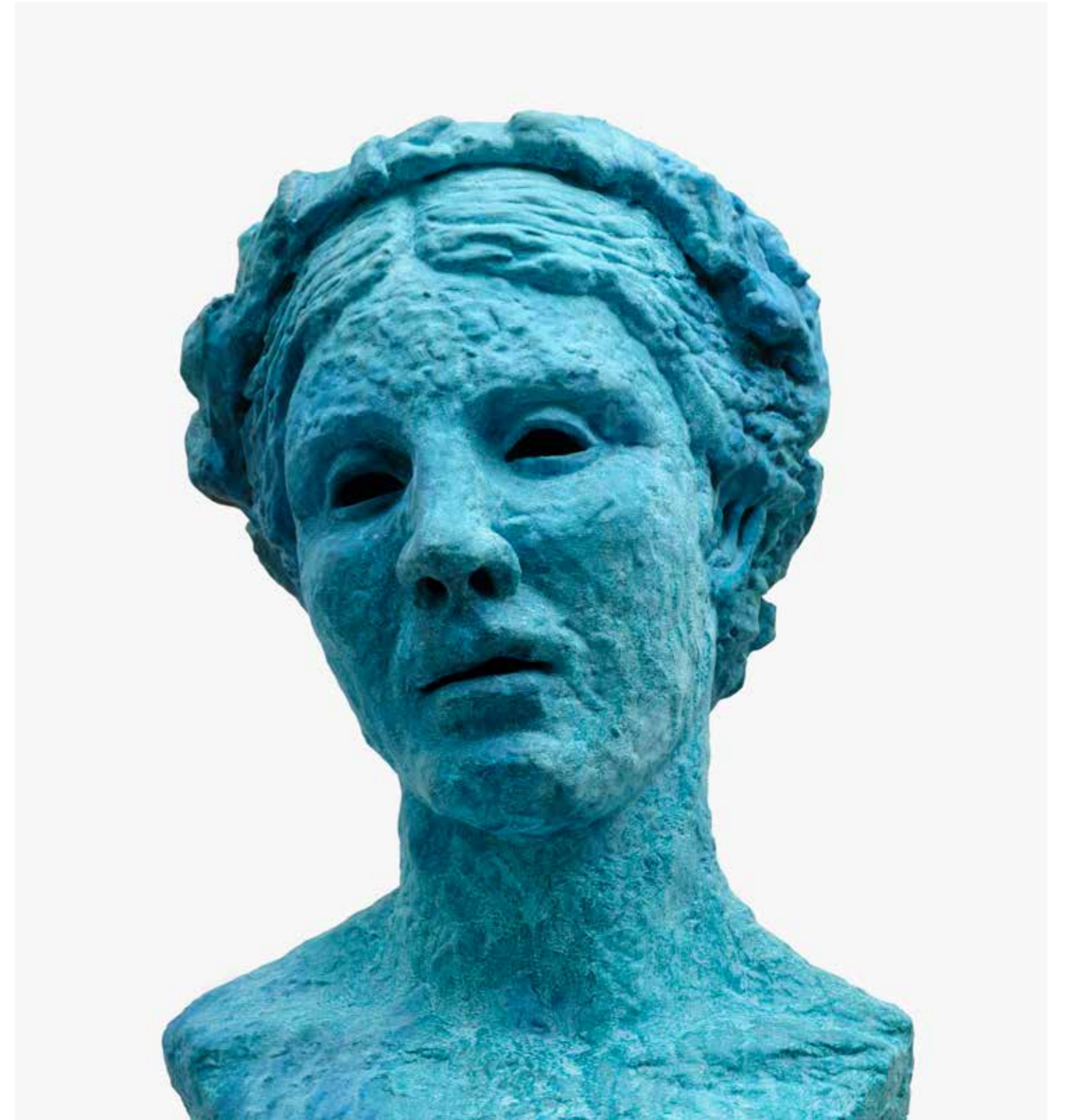
84

Historical Period	Classical Greece (510 BC - 323 BC)
Sculpture Completed	2024, version III
Sculpture Medium	Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled PETG plastic, epoxy clay, gound metal applied with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)
Sculpture Dimensions	86 cm height x 55 cm diameter 33.9 inch height x 21.7 inch diameter
Model	Panayota Papaioannou (maiden name)
Petrides' relationship	Mother from B/W photos around 18 years old, Pireus, Greece
Petrides seeks to convey	Inspiration, thoughtfulness, classical beauty
Sculptural Precedent	<i>Thalia Muse of Comedy</i> Roman copy of Greek original of Classical Period
Precedent Work Held By	Vatican Museums, Rome



*"As I worked on the piece, the only thing that remained was the hairstyle and the crown around the hairstyle, but the features of the face changed to resemble my mother at that age."*







HISTORICAL  
PERIOD

**BYZANTINE  
EMPIRE**

330 – 1453

ESTABLISHING  
CHRISTIANITY

# BYZANTINE EMPIRE

330 – 1453

94



1

95 Byzantine Empire

The Byzantine Empire lasted for over 1,100 years from 330 to 1453. The Byzantine Empire was the continuation of the Roman Empire in its Eastern regions after the fall of that empire. The moment of its greatest extent and strength was in the early days. However, it survived in some form until the fall of the capital city, Constantinople, currently called Istanbul, to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. Though its citizens referred to themselves as Romans, it was heavily influenced by Greek culture and Greek, rather than Latin, was the official language.

The land on which modern Greece stands was an essential component of the Byzantine Empire: "Greece remained part of

1  
*Hagia Eirene*, first church commissioned by Constantine in Constantinople.

2  
*Hagios Demetrios*, is Thessaloniki's most important church. Devoted to the patron saint of the city, the five-aisled basilica was built in 629-634 on the site of an older church dating to the 4th c.



2



3

3  
Marble portrait bust of a woman with a scroll, late 4th - early 5th c. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



4

4  
Early byzantine shell cross.



5

5  
The Antioch chalice, ca. 500-550. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



6

6  
The Attarouthi Treasure - Chalice, Byzantine silver cup, ca. 500-650. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



7

7  
Terracotta oil lamp, 4th-5th c.



8  
The Byzantine empire in 555 under Justinian the Great, at its greatest extent since the fall of the Western Roman Empire (its vassals in pink).

the relatively unified eastern half of the empire. Contrary to outdated visions of late antiquity, the Greek peninsula was most likely one of the most prosperous regions of the Roman and later the Eastern Roman/Byzantine Empire. Older scenarios of poverty, depopulation, barbarian destruction and civil decay have been revised in light of recent archaeological discoveries... This view of extreme prosperity is widely accepted today, and it is assumed between the 4th and 7th centuries, Greece may have been one of the most economically active regions in the eastern Mediterranean. Following the loss of Alexandria and Antioch to the Arabs, Thessaloniki became the Byzantine Empire's second largest city, called the *co-regent*, second only to Constantinople.”<sup>1</sup>

Art of the Byzantine era is markedly different from that of ancient Greece: “Surviving Byzantine art is mostly religious and with exceptions at certain periods is highly conventionalised, following traditional models that translate carefully controlled church theology into artistic terms. Painting in fresco, illuminated manuscripts and on wood panel and, especially in earlier periods, mosaic were the main media, and figurative sculpture very rare except for small carved ivories. Manuscript painting

1. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, May 11). Byzantine Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:33, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Byzantine\\_Greece&oldid=1154269983](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Byzantine_Greece&oldid=1154269983)



9  
*The presentation in the Temple*,  
 Byzantine painter (15th c.).  
 The Metropolitan Museum  
 of Art, New York.

preserved to the end some of the classical realist tradition that was missing in larger works. Byzantine art was highly prestigious and sought-after in Western Europe, where it maintained a continuous influence on medieval art until near the end of the period. This was especially so in Italy, where Byzantine styles persisted in modified form through the 12th century, and became formative influences on Italian Renaissance art. But few incoming influences affected the Byzantine style. With the expansion of the Eastern Orthodox church, Byzantine forms and styles spread throughout the Orthodox world and beyond.

“Influences from Byzantine architecture, particularly in religious buildings, can be found in diverse regions from Egypt and Arabia to Russia and Romania. Byzantine architecture is known for the use of domes, and pendentive architecture was invented in the Byzantine Empire. It also often featured marble columns, coffered ceilings and sumptuous decoration, including the extensive use of mosaics with golden backgrounds. The building material used by Byzantine architects was no longer marble, which was very appreciated by the Ancient Greeks. They used mostly stone and brick, and also thin alabaster sheets for windows.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 15). Byzantine Empire. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:37, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Byzantine\\_Empire&oldid=1185253001](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Byzantine_Empire&oldid=1185253001)



10  
*Constantine the Great*,  
 mosaic in Hagia Sophia,  
 Istanbul (detail).

## Constantine the Great

The reign of Constantine the Great marks the beginning of the Byzantine Empire and a major turning point in the history of the empire.

From Wikipedia: “Upon his ascension to emperor, Constantine enacted numerous reforms to strengthen the empire. He restructured the government, separating civil and military authorities. To combat inflation, he introduced the solidus, a new gold coin that became the standard for Byzantine and European currencies for more than a thousand years. The Roman army was reorganized to consist of mobile units (comitatenses) and garrison troops (limitanei), which were capable of countering internal threats and barbarian invasions. Constantine pursued successful campaigns against the tribes on the Roman frontiers—such as the Franks, the Alamanni, the Goths and the Sarmatians—and resettled territories abandoned by his predecessors during the Crisis of the Third Century with citizens of Roman culture.”<sup>3</sup>

3. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 13). Constantine the Great. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:47, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Constantine\\_the\\_Great&oldid=1184998659](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Constantine_the_Great&oldid=1184998659)



Though he remains a controversial figure, Constantine has often been lauded for these achievements, both before and after his death: "During Constantine's lifetime, Praxagoras of Athens and Libanius, pagan authors, showered Constantine with praise, presenting him as a paragon of virtue...During the Middle Ages, European and Near-East Byzantine writers presented Constantine as an ideal ruler, the standard against which any king or emperor could be measured."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps his most lasting legacy is that Constantine legalized Christianity and removed the penalties under which many Christians had been previously martyred. "According to Christian writers, Constantine was over 40 when he finally declared himself a Christian, making it clear that he owed his successes to the protection of the Christian High God alone. Despite these declarations of being a Christian, he waited to be baptized on his deathbed, believing that the baptism would release him of any sins he committed in the course of carrying out his policies while emperor. He supported the Church financially, built basilicas, granted privileges to clergy (such as exemption from certain taxes), promoted Christians to high office, and returned property confiscated during the long period of persecution. His most famous building projects include the Church of the Holy

4. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 13). Constantine the Great. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:47, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Constantine\\_the\\_Great&oldid=1184998659](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Constantine_the_Great&oldid=1184998659)

11  
*Constantine's vision and the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in a 9th c. Byzantine manuscript.*



13  
*Statue of Helena, mother of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. Capitoline Museums, Rome.*



12  
*A gold multiple of "Unconquered Constantine" with Sol Invictus, struck in 313.*

Sepulchre and Old St. Peter's Basilica. In constructing the Old St. Peter's Basilica, Constantine went to great lengths to erect the basilica on top of St. Peter's resting place, so much so that it even affected the design of the basilica, including the challenge of erecting it on the hill where St. Peter rested, making its complete construction time over 30 years from the date Constantine ordered it to be built."<sup>5</sup>

Christianity was preached on the Greek peninsula in the first century (by Saint Paul and others), but it was not until the era of Constantine that Christianity spread rapidly throughout what is now modern-day Greece. Under Constantine, Christianity evolved from being a fringe sect to being the central religion of the empire, and Eastern Orthodoxy is still by far the dominant religion of Greece. Up to 90% of Greek citizens identify as Christian, and the church is a major force in the cultural landscape, seen in traditions like holidays and name days. Salaries of Orthodox clergy are paid for by the state.

Though contemporary historians debate how Constantine individually felt about Christianity over the course of his life, the medieval Christian church held him up as an example of extreme virtue, and even today, the Eastern Orthodox Church considers Constantine a saint and an equal of the apostles.

5. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 13). Constantine the Great. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:47, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Constantine\\_the\\_Great&oldid=1184998659](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Constantine_the_Great&oldid=1184998659)

# SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

102



14



15



16

14, 15  
*Colossal head  
of Constantine the Great  
(ca. 313-324). Capitoline  
Museums, Rome.*

16  
*Marble portrait head of the  
Emperor Constantine,  
(ca. 325-370). The  
Metropolitan Museum  
of Art, New York.*

103 Byzantine Empire

For the Byzantine Empire, I found two heads, colossal heads of Constantine. The first of the heads is from the Colossus of Constantine, the surviving fragments of which are now housed by the Capitoline Museums in Rome. The remaining pieces were carved from white marble, while the rest of the body was made of brick and wood and possibly gilded with bronze, which was subsequently pillaged. According to Michael Grant: "Here was the man at whose court...writers felt it appropriate to speak of the 'Divine Face' and 'Sacred Countenance'. The sculptor has conceived this countenance as a holy mask, an overpowering cult object resembling, though on a far greater scale, the icons of future Byzantium: an idol animated with the divine presence, and with the power to repel the demons lurking in pagan images."<sup>6</sup> The fragments include two different right hands, and according to Wikipedia, it is thought "that the statue was re-worked at some time late in Constantine's reign and a hand holding a sceptre was replaced by a hand holding a Christian symbol."<sup>7</sup> The 8-foot tall head was perhaps meant to convey the other-worldly nature of the Emperor, notable in its enormous eyes which gaze toward eternity from the more typically rendered stiff face.

Another, smaller marble head is held by the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and probably also originated in Rome. According to the Met website, "the long face, neatly arranged hairstyle, and the clean-shaven appearance of this portrait head are a deliberate attempt to evoke memories of earlier rulers such as Trajan, who in the later third and fourth centuries was seen as an ideal example of a Roman emperor. Certainly, by the time that the head was set up, as part of either a bust or, more probably, an over life-sized statue, Constantine had adopted an official image that was intended to set him apart from his immediate predecessors."<sup>8</sup> As I worked on my version of the sculpture, I found that it took on characteristics of my father. The name, Archon, could be said to be a leader or a noble person and that is how I think of my father's character. Sadly, he passed away in 2017, but I've captured, I think, some of his qualities in this work.

6. Grant, Michael (1970), *The Roman Forum*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; Photos by Werner Forman, p. 161.

7. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 21). Colossus of Constantine. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:07, July 24, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Colossus\\_of\\_Constantine&oldid=1099616216](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Colossus_of_Constantine&oldid=1099616216)

8. Retrieved July 24, 2022, from [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).

# HELLENIC HEAD

## ARCHON: ESTABLISHING CHRISTIANITY

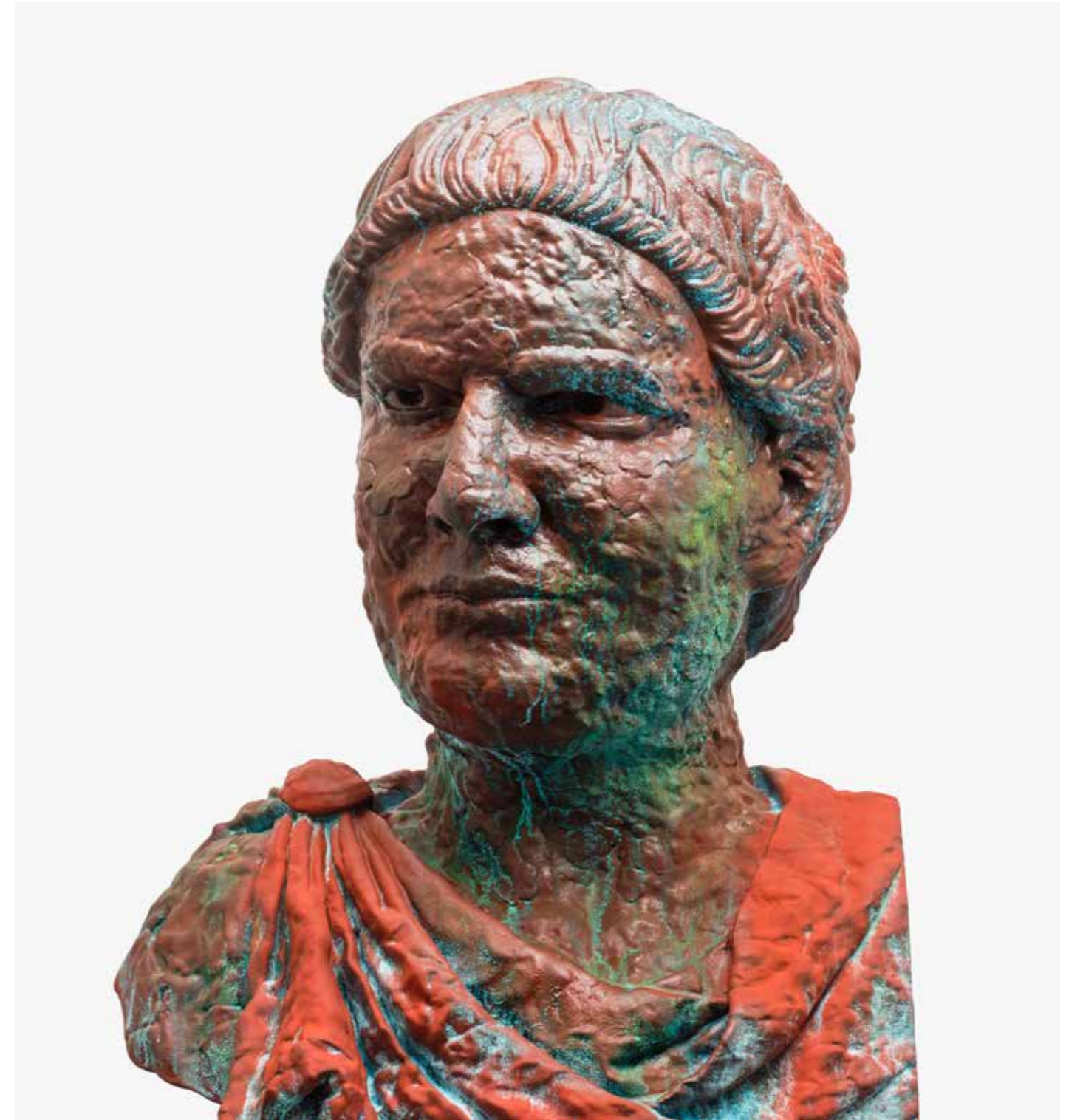
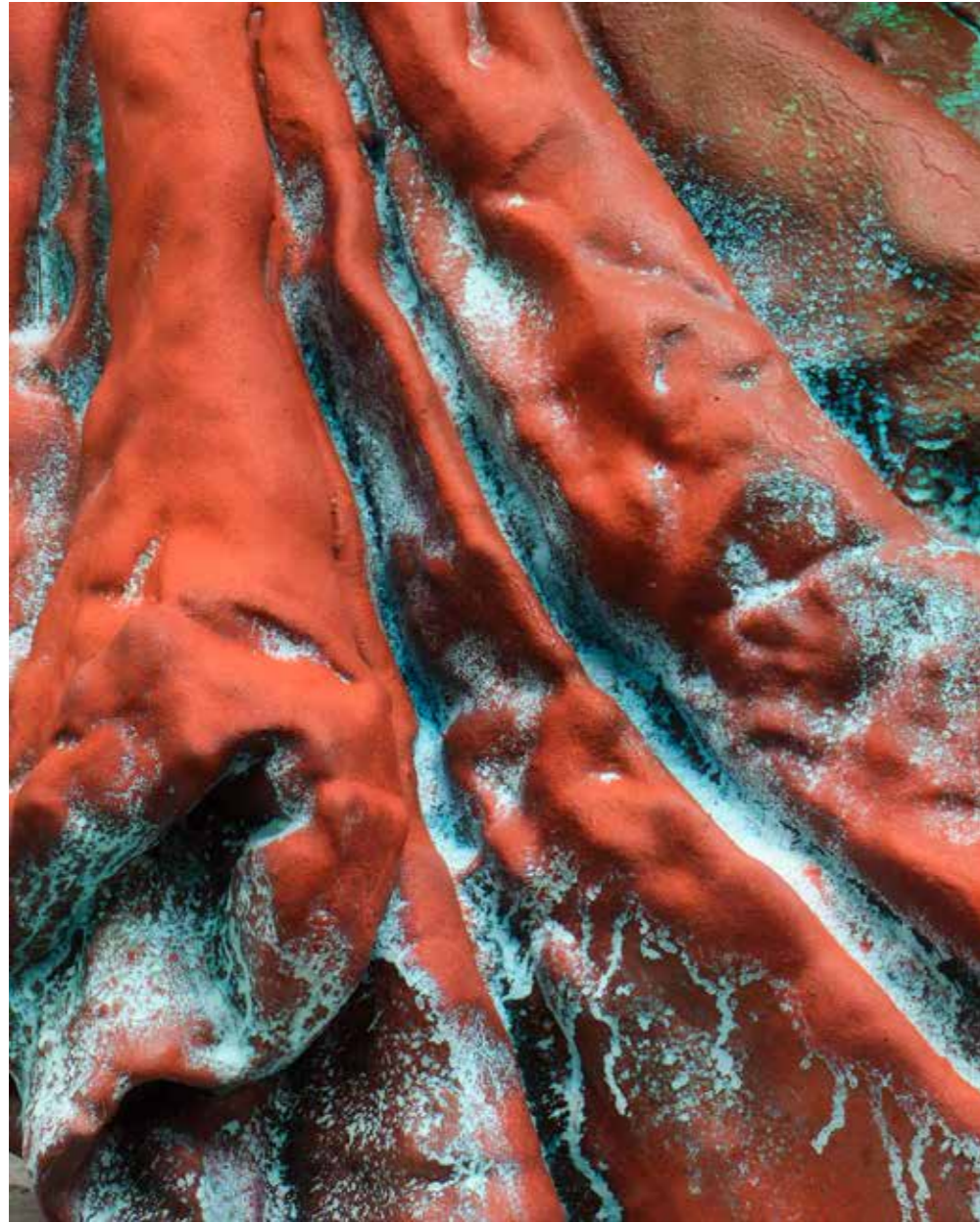
104

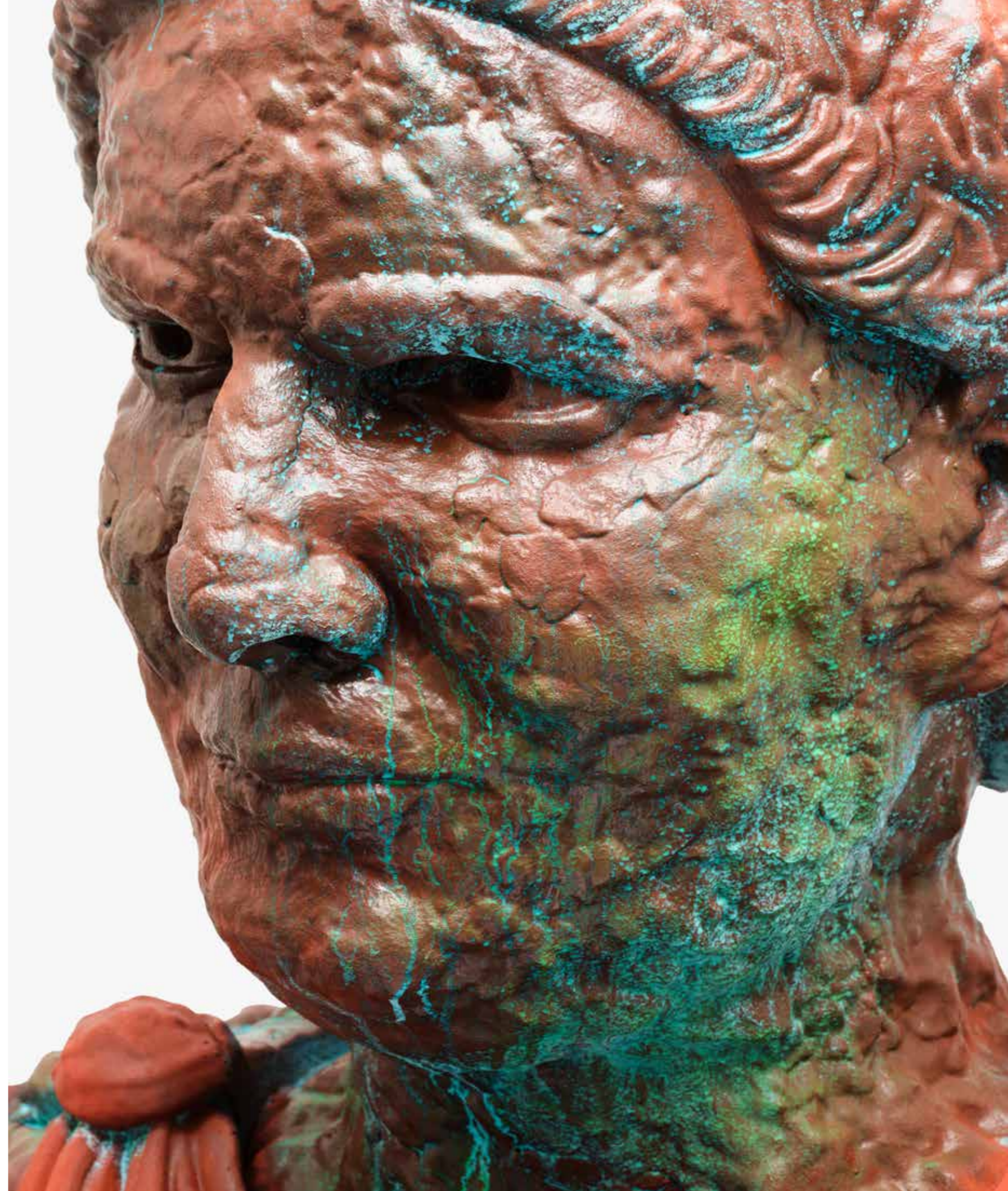
Historical Period	Byzantine Empire (330-1453)
Sculpture Completed	2024, version II
Sculpture Medium	Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled PETG plastic, epoxy clay, gound metal applied with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)
Sculpture Dimensions	89 cm height x 60 cm diameter 35.2 inch height x 23.6 inch diameter
Model	Capt. Christos Petrides
Petrides' relationship	Father from photos as sea captain, around age 40
Petrides seeks to convey	Leadership, clear vision ahead
Sculptural Precedent	Colossal head of Constantine the Great (313-324)
Precedent Work Held By	Capitoline Museums, Rome The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





*"As I worked on my version of the sculpture, I found that it took on characteristics of my father. The name, Archon, could be said to be a leader or a noble person and that is how I think of my father's character. Sadly, he passed away in 2017, but I've captured, I think, some of his qualities in this work."*





HISTORICAL  
PERIOD

**GREEK WAR OF  
INDEPENDENCE**

1821 – 1829

FEMALE  
LEADERSHIP

# GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

1821–1829

114



1

115 Greek War of Independence



2

1  
*The Naval Battle of Navarino*, oil painting on canvas. Copy of the painting by Louis Ambroise Garneray (France, 1827). National Historical Museum, Athens, Greece.

2  
*Greece Expressing Gratitude*, oil painting by Theodoros Vryzakis, 1858. National Gallery - Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Greece.

The Greek War of Independence, known to 19th century Greeks simply as “the Struggle,” was a war of independence by Greek revolutionaries against the Ottoman Empire. Greece had been under Ottoman control for close to four centuries, since the fall of Constantinople, and all previous attempts at independence were unsuccessful.

According to Wikipedia, “in 1814, a secret organization called Filiki Eteria (Society of Friends) was founded with the aim of liberating Greece, encouraged by the revolutionary fervor gripping Europe in that period. The Filiki Eteria planned to launch revolts in the Peloponnese, the Danubian Principalities, and Constantinople itself...The first revolt began on 6 March/21 February 1821 in the Danubian Principalities, but it was soon put down by the Ottomans. The events in the north urged the Greeks in the Peloponnese (Morea) into action and on 17 March 1821, the Maniots were first to declare war. In September 1821, the Greeks under the leadership of Theodoros Kolokotronis captured Tripolitsa. Revolts in Crete, Macedonia, and Central Greece broke out, but were eventually suppressed. Meanwhile, makeshift Greek fleets achieved success against the Ottoman navy in the Aegean Sea and prevented Ottoman reinforcements from arriving by sea.

“Tensions soon developed among different Greek factions, leading to two consecutive civil wars. The Ottoman Sultan called in his vassal Muhammad Ali of Egypt, who agreed to send his son Ibrahim Pasha to Greece with an army to suppress the



3  
*Statue of Theodoros Kolokotronis* by Lazaros Sochos, 1902.

revolt in return for territorial gains. Ibrahim landed in the Peloponnese in February 1825 and brought most of the peninsula under Egyptian control by the end of that year. The town of Missolonghi fell in April 1826 after a year-long siege by the Turks. Despite a failed invasion of Mani, Athens also fell and the revolution looked all but lost.

“At that point, the three Great powers—Russia, Britain, and France—decided to intervene, sending their naval squadrons to Greece in 1827. Following news that the combined Ottoman–Egyptian fleet was going to attack the island of Hydra, the allied European fleets intercepted the Ottoman navy at Navarino. After a tense week-long standoff, the Battle of Navarino led to the destruction of the Ottoman–Egyptian fleet and turned the tide in favor of the revolutionaries.

“The final major engagement of the war was the Battle of Petra in 1829, which occurred north of Attica. Greek forces under Demetrius Ypsilantis, for the first time trained to fight as a regular European army rather than as guerrilla bands, advanced against Aslan Bey’s forces and defeated them. The Turks surrendered all lands from Livadeia to the Spercheios River in exchange for safe passage out of Central Greece.”<sup>1</sup>

The war, which raged for nine years, ultimately led to the formation of modern Greece, and the victory is celebrated by Greeks around the world as Independence Day on March 25.

1. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 15). Greek War of Independence. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 13:32, November 19, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek\\_War\\_of\\_Independence&oldid=1185236634](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_War_of_Independence&oldid=1185236634)



4  
*Seal of Philiki Etaireia.*

5  
*Bishop Germanos of Patra raises the flag of revolution at the Monastery of Hagia Lavra, near Kalavryta.*

6  
*Greece on the ruins of Missolonghi*, oil painting by Eugène Delacroix, 1826. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux, France.



6



5

The establishment of the Greek state would have vast implications: “The outcome of the Greek Revolution was the pivotal point on which the whole geopolitical map of Europe tilted, away from the 18th-century model of multi-ethnic, autocratically ruled empires and towards the 20th-century model of the self-determination of nation-states.”<sup>2</sup> This trend would continue throughout the 20th century, including the formation of the United Nations. Historian Mark Mazower would call it “Europe’s first successful national revolution, ultimately forcing kings and diplomats to change their entire approach to the management of the European peace.”<sup>3</sup>

### Female Leaders in “The Struggle”

I was fascinated by three women who had leadership roles in the Greek revolution. These women were not merely figureheads, but active participants on the frontlines.

Laskarina Bouboulina was a Greek naval commander, and perhaps the most well-known of the war heroines. Her childhood might hold some explanation of why she would one day become a force for Greek Independence: “Bouboulina was born

2. Beaton, Roderick. (January 2021.) “The significance of the 1821 Revolution for Greece and the World.” In *Ekathimerini*. Retrieved December 6, 2023 from <https://www.ekathimerini.com/culture/261016/the-significance-of-the-1821-revolution-for-greece-and-the-world/>.

3. Mazower, M. (2021). *The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe*. Allen Lane.

in 1771 in Constantinople...She was the daughter of Stavrianos Pinotsis, a captain from Hydra island...The Ottomans had imprisoned Pinotsis for his part in the failed Orlov revolt of 1769–1770 against the Ottoman rule shortly after the birth of his daughter. Her father died soon afterward and the mother and child returned to Hydra.”<sup>4</sup>

She would eventually survive two husbands, the latter a wealthy captain and shipowner. She risked her fortune from her second husband to aid the cause of Greek Independence: “She later allegedly joined the Filiki Eteria secret society which sought to achieve Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire, being among the few women to do so. Following the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence she commanded a fleet of Spetsiot ships which contributed to several campaigns, most notably the siege of Nafplion.

“Following the defeat of her faction in the Greek civil war in 1824, Bouboulina was briefly imprisoned and expelled to Spetses. She was killed on 22 May 1825, during the course of a family feud...A few days after her death, a Russian delegation presented her with the honorary rank of Admiral of the Russian Navy granted by Tsar Alexander I of Russia, making her perhaps the first woman in world naval history to hold this title. In 2018 she was granted the title of Rear Admiral in the Hellenic Navy.”<sup>5</sup>

Manto Mavrogenous, another naval heroine, was a beautiful woman of aristocratic lineage, but her genteel background did not prevent her from leaping into action when necessary. “When the struggle began, she went to Mykonos, the island of her origin, and invited the leaders of Mykonos to join the revolution. She equipped, manned and “privateered” at her own expense, two ships with which she pursued the pirates who attacked Mykonos and other islands of Cyclades. On 22 October 1822, the Mykonians repulsed the Ottoman Turks, who had debarked on the island, under her leadership.”<sup>6</sup> She also equipped

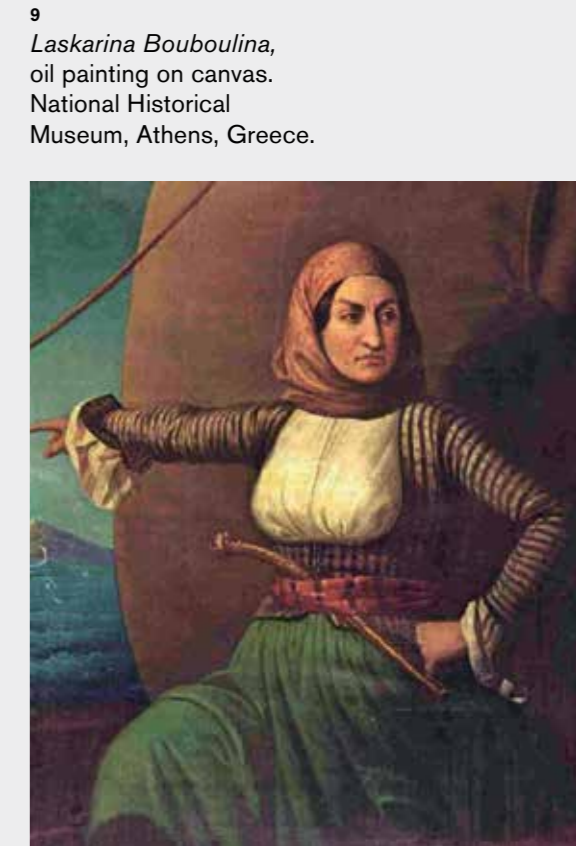
4. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 25). Laskarina Bouboulina. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 17:45, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laskarina\\_Bouboulina&oldid=1176950334](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laskarina_Bouboulina&oldid=1176950334)  
 5. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 25). Laskarina Bouboulina. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 17:45, November 15, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laskarina\\_Bouboulina&oldid=1176950334](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laskarina_Bouboulina&oldid=1176950334)  
 6. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, October 18). Manto Mavrogenous. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 13:38, November 19, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manto\\_Mavrogenous&oldid=1180786138](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manto_Mavrogenous&oldid=1180786138)



7  
*Episode of the Siege of Missolonghi*, oil painting by François Émile de Lansac, 1827. History and Art Museum of Messolonghi, Greece.



8  
*The Battle of the Acropolis*, oil painting by Gosse Nicolas-Louis-Francois, 1827. National Gallery - Alexandros Soutsos Museum, Nafplion Anex, Greece.



9  
*Laskarina Bouboulina*, oil painting on canvas. National Historical Museum, Athens, Greece.



10  
*The Heroine of Mykonos, Manto Mavrogenous*, oil painting on wood by F. Zonaras, 1901. National Historical Museum, Athens, Greece.



11  
*The dance of Zalongos, or The Souliotisses*, oil painting by Claude Pinet, 1803. Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece.

150 men to campaign in the Peloponnese and sent forces and financial support to Samos when the island was threatened by the Turks.

Her actions eventually made her a respected figure in European circles: "Mavrogenous led enlightenment expeditions in Europe and addressed an appeal to the women of Paris, to side up with the Greeks. She moved to Nafplio in 1823, in order to be in the core of the struggle...When the war ended Ioannis Kapodistrias awarded her the rank of the Lieutenant General and granted her a dwelling in Nafplio, where she moved."<sup>7</sup>

Domna Visvizi was a noblewoman of Thrace who, in the wake of her husband's death in battle, immediately assumed command of their warship. "Visvizi took over command of the Kalomoira and its crew and continued to fight in the war. Visvizi was reportedly a skilled and respected naval commander and her ship instilled fear among the Ottoman fleet. The Kalomoira not only partook in battles but also at times transported food and ammunition, for instance supplying soldiers on Skiathos and the forces of Odysseas Androutsos on the mainland.

7. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, October 18). Manto Mavrogenous. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 13:38, November 19, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manto\\_Mavrogenous&oldid=1180786138](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manto_Mavrogenous&oldid=1180786138)



12  
*Women from Souli*, oil painting by Georgios Miniatis, second half of the 19th c. Municipal Gallery of Corfu, Greece.

Androutsos later wrote that his forces would have perished without Visvizi's aid."<sup>8</sup>

She is said to have proclaimed: "We do not regret spending money, since it will be used to build the golden palace of liberty." However, she struggled under extreme financial hardship after the war and was repeatedly denied financial aid from the government. "In 1845, Visvizi moved to Piraeus in Athens, where she lived in a small hut next to the sea. She died in poverty in 1850 at the age of 67."<sup>9</sup>

For decades, historians underestimated the importance of all three of these war heroines. More recent reexaminations, however, have resulted in a better understanding of their pivotal roles in the war.

8. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, June 1). Domna Visvizi. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 13:47, November 19, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Domna\\_Visvizi&oldid=1158049230](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Domna_Visvizi&oldid=1158049230)

9. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, June 1). Domna Visvizi. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 13:53, November 19, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Domna\\_Visvizi&oldid=1158049230](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Domna_Visvizi&oldid=1158049230)

# SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT



13  
The statue of *Laskarina Bouboulina* in Spetses, by Natalia Mela-Konstantinidou. Photo by Lefteris Papoulakis / Dreamstime.com

14  
The statue of *Manto Mavrogenous* in Mykonos.



15  
The statue of *Domna Visvizi* in Alexandroupolis.



I looked for some Sculptural Precedents of those three women, and there are a few. There is the famous statue of Manto in Mykonos right off of the old harbor, near where she fought. There are other statues around Greece. The most well-known sculptures of Bouboulina include “a statue of Bouboulina sculpted by Natalia Mela-Konstantinidou...located at Spetses” and “a bust of Bouboulina created by Lazaros Lameris...located in Tinos while a copy of it is hosted in the Pedion tou Areos.”<sup>10</sup> There’s one of Domna in Alexandroupolis. However, as I studied them, none of the statues inspired me. I also found some engravings of that era, but they looked generic, and I didn’t get a sense of their personalities.

I decided instead to focus on their strength and resilience and intelligence, their ability to fight and still have femininity and beauty. I found someone close to me, whose name is Eleftheria, which in Greek means Freedom, which I took to a sign that this was the right model for a fighter in a war of independence. This piece is not specifically one of the three leaders, but is meant to embody the characteristics of these women.

10. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 18). Laskarina Bouboulina. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 19:08, July 24, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laskarina\\_Bouboulina&oldid=1098935246](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laskarina_Bouboulina&oldid=1098935246)

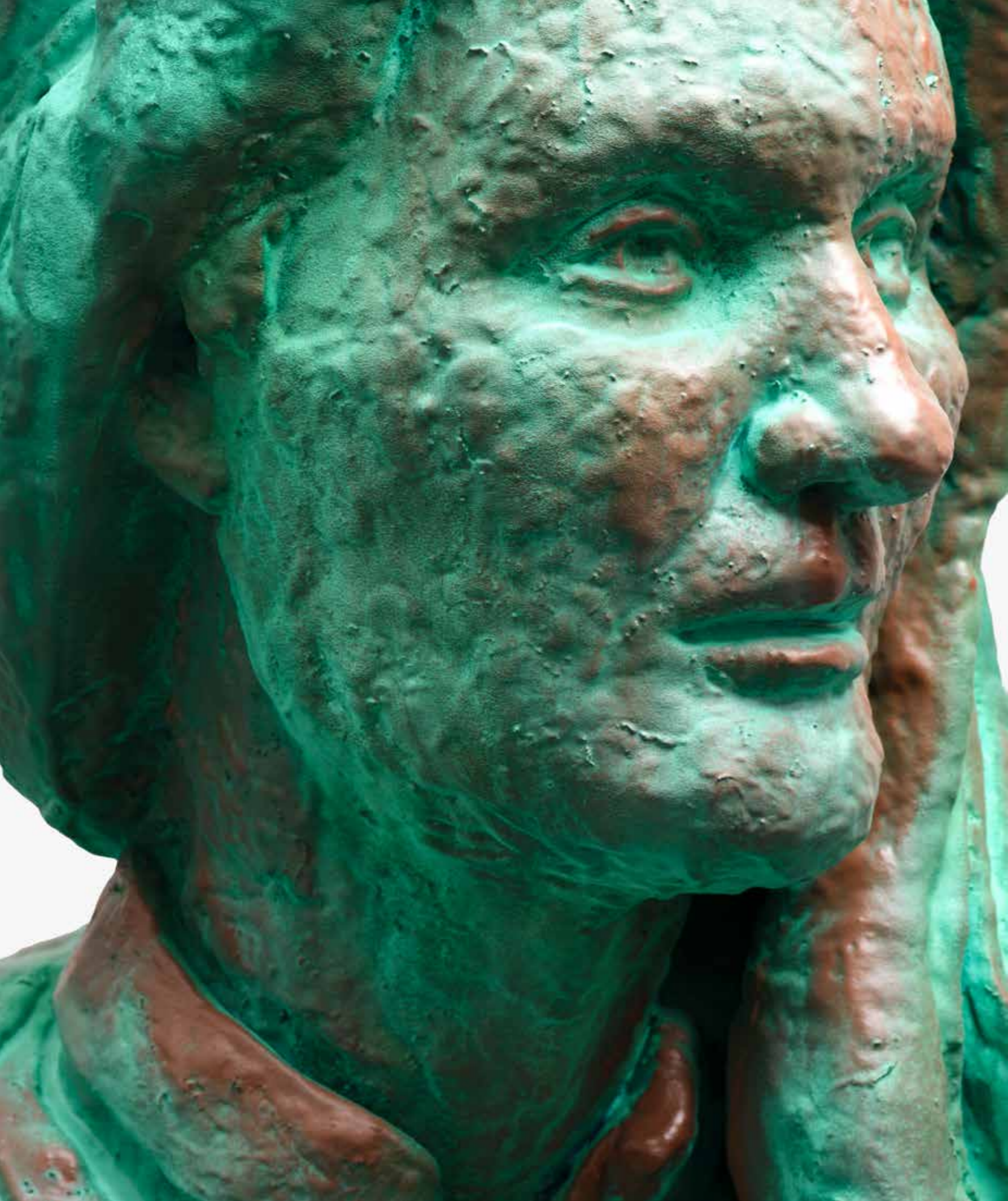
# HELLENIC HEAD

## HEROINES OF 1821: FEMALE LEADERSHIP

124

Historical Period	Greek War of Independence (1821-1829)
Sculpture Completed	2024, version II
Sculpture Medium	Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled PETG plastic, epoxy clay, gound metal applied with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)
Sculpture Dimensions	88 cm height x 55 cm diameter 34.6 inch height x 21.7 inch diameter
Model	Eleftheria ("Liberty") Gkoufa
Petrides' relationship	Colleague, posed 2021
Petrides seeks to convey	Strength, resilience, defiance
Sculptural Precedent	Misc. statues of the Heroines throughout Greece
Precedent Work Held By	Public squares around Greece





*"I found someone close to me, whose name is Eleftheria, which in Greek means Freedom, which I took to a sign that this was the right model for a fighter in a war of independence. This piece is not specifically one of the three leaders, but is meant to embody the characteristics of these women."*





HISTORICAL  
PERIOD  
**BURNING  
OF SMYRNA**  
1922

TO LOSE  
AND TO REBUILD

# BURNING OF SMYRNA

1922

134



<sup>1</sup>  
*Smyrna before the  
Destruction.*

135 Burning of Smyrna

The early 1920s brought a major influx of refugees to Greece, the majority of them from Asia Minor. The region was in upheaval as the Ottoman Empire came to an end and modern Türkiye was established.

A major factor in this refugee crisis was the destruction of the city Smyrna, which effectively ended the Greco-Turkish War. Prior to the fire, Smyrna was home to more Greek citizens than even Athens, the capital of Greece. It was, according to most accounts, a jewel of a city: “Smyrna was a city of a unique cosmopolitan character, full of European travelers and traders, especially during the last decades of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Turks, Greeks, Jews and Armenians lived together in peace. The Greek community of the city was the largest in population and its members were highly esteemed professionals, working as bankers, traders, lawyers and doctors. Smyrna’s schools where the Greek language and history were taught were particularly important...Smyrna’s cultural significance was always highly praised. For example, the city had its own distinct musical tradition, such as the ‘tsifteteli’, ‘karsilama’ and ‘rebetiko’ music genres.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Europeana Blog contributors. (2022, September 14) The Asia Minor Catastrophe. In *Europeana*. Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://www.europeana.eu/en/blog/the-asia-minor-catastrophe>

But the city, as it existed in 1922, would not survive the war. As the city burned, tens of thousands of Greek and Armenian refugees crammed the waterfront to escape from the fire. They were forced to remain there under harsh conditions for nearly two weeks. The number of casualties from the fire is not precisely known; there are differing estimates, some of which place the number of Greeks and Armenians killed as high as 125,000.

Many firsthand accounts of the disaster survive, like this one from British Lieutenant A. S. Merrill: "All morning the glow and then the flames of burning Smyrna could be seen. We arrived about an hour before dawn and the scene was indescribable. The entire city was ablaze and the harbor was light as day. Thousands of homeless refugees were surging back and forth on the blistering quay—panic-stricken to the point of insanity. The heartrending shrieks of women and children were painful to hear. In a frenzy they would throw themselves into the water and some would reach the ship. To attempt to land a boat would have been disastrous. Several boats tried and were immediately stopped by the mad rush of a howling mob...The crowds along the quay beyond the fire were so thick and tried so desperately to close abreast the men-of-war anchorage that the masses in the stifling center could not escape except by sea. Fortunately there was a sea breeze and the quay wall never got hot enough to roast these unfortunate people alive, but the heat must have been terrific to have been felt in the ship 200 yards away. To add to the confusion, the packs belonging to these refugees – consisting mostly of carpets and clothing – caught fire, creating a chain of bonfires the length of the street."<sup>2</sup>

Escaping these perilous conditions proved near impossible: "Although there were numerous ships from various Allied powers in the harbor of Smyrna, the vast majority of them cited neutrality and did not pick up Greeks and Armenians...Other scholars give a different account of the events; they argue that the Turks first forbade foreign ships in the harbor to pick up the survivors, but, under pressure especially from Britain, France, and the United States, they allowed the rescue of all the Christians except males 17 to 45 years old."<sup>3</sup>

2. Naimark, Norman M. *Fires Of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing In 20th Century Europe*. (Harvard, 2001). p. 50.

3. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 11). Burning of Smyrna. In *Wikipedia, The*



2  
*City after the fire, 1922.*



3  
*Damage to orthodox church, 1922.*



4  
*Refugees at the port of Smyrna, 1922.*

Eventually, an American missionary, Asa Kent Jennings, organized an evacuation of many of the refugees: "As a result of his tuberculosis, [Jennings] stood not much taller than 5 foot and with a noticeable hunch back. In 1922, he commanded the evacuation of 350,000 helpless Christian refugees from the shores of Smyrna following the Great Fire of Smyrna. For his work, Greece awarded Jennings its highest civilian honor, the Order of the Redeemer, and the highest war honor, the medal of Military Merit."<sup>4</sup>

The fire completely destroyed the Greek and Armenian quarters of the city, leading to thousands of people fleeing to Greece to seek safety and a new life. The famed Onassis family were among the refugees as was the family of my maternal grandmother.

*Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:58, November 19, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Burning\\_of\\_Smyrna&oldid=1184572393](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Burning_of_Smyrna&oldid=1184572393)

4. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, December 29). Asa Jennings. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 17:02, January 10, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Asa\\_Jennings&oldid=1192407840](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Asa_Jennings&oldid=1192407840)



5  
Refugees gathered for the distribution of food by the Red Cross. P. Poulidis / ERT archive.

### Rebuilding a Life in Greece

Even those who managed to survive the journey to mainland Greece had a very difficult road ahead of them. People who had enjoyed life in a cosmopolitan city were suddenly displaced. After the destruction of Smyrna, Greece was bearing a massive load of refugees from Asia Minor, and an agreed-upon population exchange between Greece and Türkiye in 1923 would further exacerbate issues of resettlement: "The deportations brought significant challenges: social, such as forcibly being removed from one's place of living, and more practical such as abandoning a well-developed family business...Regardless if they settled in urban or rural areas, the vast majority of the refugees arrived in Greece impoverished and often sickly, placing enormous demands on the Greek health care system."<sup>5</sup> During this period of upheaval, the death rate in refugee communities was four times that of the birth rate.

The United States was instrumental in providing aid to the refugees: "The lives of hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees from Asia Minor, Pontus, and Eastern Thrace were saved thanks to the humanitarian initiatives of American charitable organizations, mainly the American Red Cross and the Near East Relief. These two organizations practically single-handedly

5. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, December 20). Population exchange between Greece and Turkey. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:27, December 20, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Population\\_exchange\\_between\\_Greece\\_and\\_Turkey&oldid=1190894850](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Population_exchange_between_Greece_and_Turkey&oldid=1190894850)

6  
Refugees in front of the Temple of Theseus in Athens, 1922. Library of Congress, digital archive.



7  
Fundraising poster for Near East Relief. William B. King (1880-1927).

undertook the extremely difficult task of providing aid on the spot to Greek refugees who otherwise would have likely been condemned to death by diseases, malnutrition, and other hardships. The gravity of the situation demanded immediate and effective action and the United States was by far the first to respond to the Greek appeals for help. Sometimes the numbers speak for themselves even though they cannot always describe the splendor of philanthropy. The total cost of the relief work undertaken by the American Red Cross for the period from October 1922 to 30 June 1923 amounted to the astonishing \$2,605,696.09.<sup>6</sup>

6. Klapsis, Antonis. (2011, April). Research Note: American Initiatives for the Relief of



8  
Grocery store in Kaisariani.  
Center for Asia Minor Culture  
of Kaisariani.

Despite the initial hurdles, the refugee community would eventually bring much to the economy of Greece by their presence there: “The arrival of the Asia Minor Greeks resulted in the rise of the agricultural production of the state by 400%. The arable land increased by 55%. The Nikolaos Plastiras Government decided on February 14, 1923 to further divide the arable land of Greece, in order for the refugees and their descendants to be the owners of their own land...New industries were established in short time by the skilled refugee population (e.g. carpet industries). In addition, many of them later became successful ship-owners (e.g. Aristotle Onassis).”<sup>7</sup>

Beyond economics, the refugees enriched the cultural landscape of Greece: “New liberal ideas arrived along with the refugees, especially those coming from the cosmopolitan city of Smyrna. The influence of the refugees was particularly important in the cultural field.”<sup>8</sup> From the blending of the already existing Greek population with the population of refugees, a new Greek culture was forged, which is still familiar to us today. Important elements of Greek cultural identity like iconic dances (zeibekiko and haspiko) and a cuisine rich in eggplants, tomatoes and spices have their roots in Asia Minor.

Greek Refugees, 1922–1923. From *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, Volume 6, Issue 1, Article 13.

7. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, December 26). Greek refugees. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:43, January 10, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek\\_refugees&oldid=1191833573](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_refugees&oldid=1191833573)

8. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, December 26). Greek refugees. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:43, January 10, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek\\_refugees&oldid=1191833573](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_refugees&oldid=1191833573)



9  
*The AEK basketball team, 1928. "Ioannis Fokianos"*  
National Sports Museum,  
Dimitrios Bondikoulis  
Collection - Benaki Museum.

Notably, the nation’s most popular sport, soccer, landed in Greece largely because of the refugee population. Some football clubs, like Apollon Smyrnis and Panionios (Greece’s oldest F.C) were transplanted directly from their original homes in Asia Minor. Others, like the popular AEK in Athens and PAOK in Thessaloniki were originally founded by former members of Pera in Constantinople.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the scale of the tragedy (over 1.2 million people would eventually migrate from Asia Minor to Greece) almost every contemporary Greek family has some historical connection to what many still call The Catastrophe. The Greek writer Dimitris Pentzopoulos wrote, “It is no exaggeration to call the year 1922 the most calamitous in modern Hellenic history.”<sup>10</sup> The disaster looms large in the recounting of Greek history and has been commemorated in multiple books and films. Many writers, including Robert Byron, Ernest Hemingway, and Jeffrey Eugenides, have included accounts of the events in Smyrna in works of both nonfiction and fiction. September 2022 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the destruction of Smyrna.

9. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 21). Football in Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:07, January 17, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Football\\_in\\_Greece&oldid=1186245844](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Football_in_Greece&oldid=1186245844)

10. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, June 26). Burning of Smyrna. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:14, July 20, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Burning\\_of\\_Smyrna&oldid=1095063033](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Burning_of_Smyrna&oldid=1095063033)

10  
*Musicians at the Katsikas family carnival festivities, 1923.* Center for Asia Minor Studies.



# SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

142



<sup>11</sup>  
*Pietà (Bandini Pietà)*,  
Michelangelo, Opera del  
Duomo, Florence,  
1547-1555.

143 Burning of Smyrna



<sup>12</sup>  
*Habakkuk*, Donatello,  
Florence, 1423-1425.

In August 2021, completing an exhibition in Monaco, I decided to drive back through Italy to Athens. I stopped in Florence and visited the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo where I saw three works that amazed me: Habakkuk and Mary Magdalene by Donatello and The Deposition (The Florentine Pietà) by Michelangelo. The last of these served as the main reference for my piece, the Refugee.

According to Wikipedia, "the sculpture, on which Michelangelo worked between 1547 and 1555, depicts four figures: the dead body of Jesus Christ, newly taken down from the Cross, Nicodemus (or possibly Joseph of Arimathea), Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary. The sculptor originally intended to make the piece for his own tomb, and in fact, "the face of Nicodemus under the hood is considered to be a self-portrait of Michelangelo himself." However, "One night in 1555, Michelangelo attacked the group in a moment of frustration in an attempt to completely destroy it...Some experts believe it was because the marble was flawed and the sculpture could not be completed without the addition of a piece of marble from another block."<sup>11</sup> After the attempted destruction, it was eventually sold to Francesco Bandini.

Unlike the three earlier periods, for this one I was also able to use surviving photos, footage and firsthand accounts of the event. I had personal knowledge from my grandmother who escaped Smyrna and recreated her life in Greece. Her brother was a soldier in the Greek-Turkish War, and his diary has actually been published so that was a source for me as well.

<sup>11</sup> Wikipedia contributors. (2022, April 21). *The Deposition (Michelangelo)*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:31, July 24, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The\\_Deposition\\_\(Michelangelo\)&oldid=1083857830](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Deposition_(Michelangelo)&oldid=1083857830)

# HELLENIC HEAD

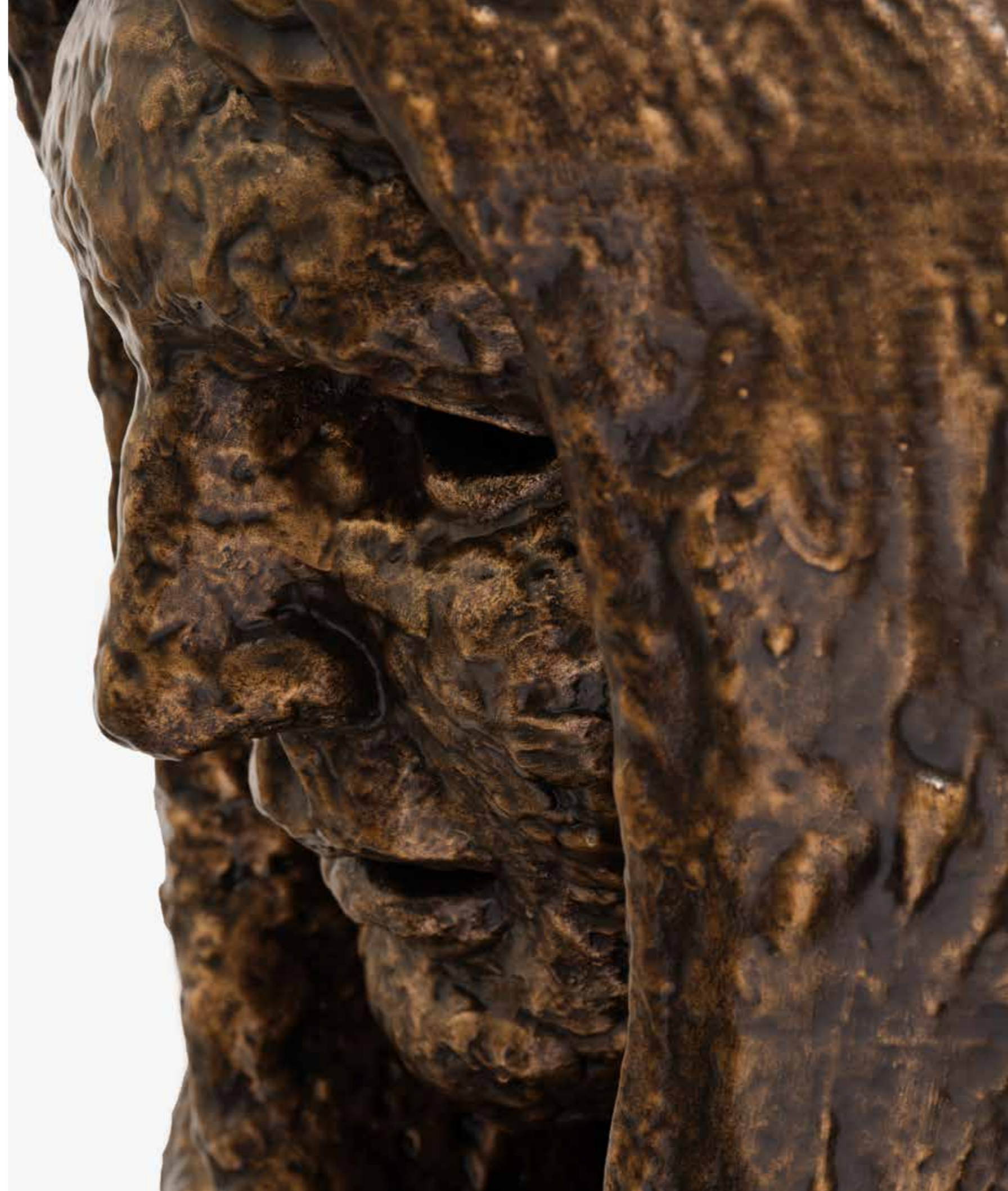
## THE REFUGEE: TO LOSE AND TO REBUILD

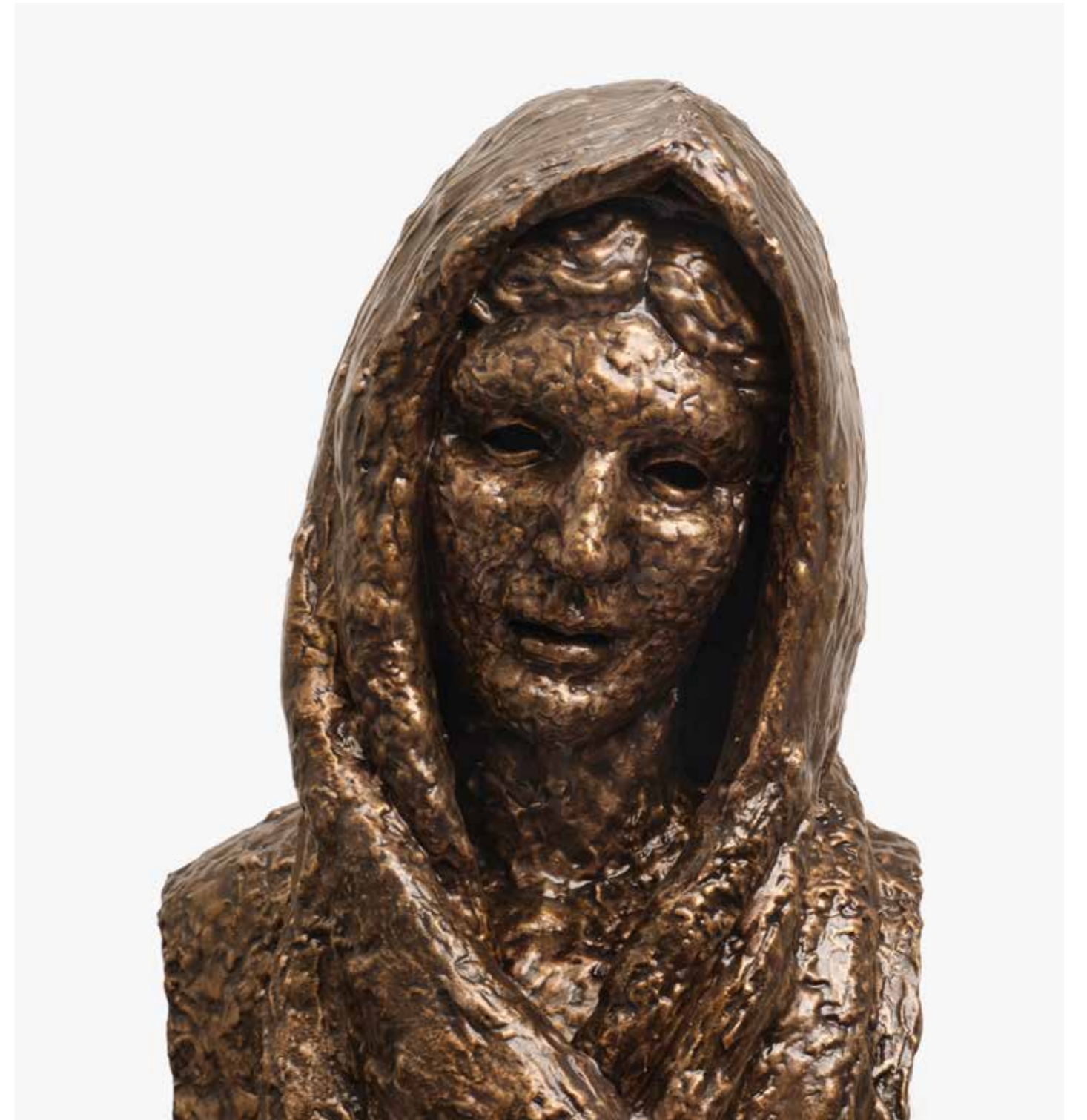
144

Historical Period	Burning of Smyrna (1922)
Sculpture Completed	2024, version III
Sculpture Medium	Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled PETG plastic, epoxy clay, ground metal applied with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)
Sculpture Dimensions	82 cm height x 55 cm diameter 32.3 inch height x 21.7 inch diameter
Model	Maria Blizioti (maiden name)
Petrides' relationship	Grandmother, imagined at age 19 arriving in Pireus, Greece from Smyrna
Petrides seeks to convey	Shock of losing her world, dignity in accepting and rebuilding
Sculptural Precedent	<i>The Florentine Pieta</i> (1555) by Michelangelo <i>Habakkuk</i> (1423-1425) by Donatello
Precedent Work Held By	Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence



*"Unlike the three earlier periods, for this one I was also able to use surviving photos, footage and firsthand accounts of the event. I had personal knowledge from my grandmother who escaped Smyrna and recreated her life in Greece. Her brother was a soldier in the Greek-Turkish War, and his diary has actually been published so that was a source for me as well."*







HISTORICAL  
PERIOD

**THE 1940S:  
NAZI  
OCCUPATION  
AND GREEK  
CIVIL WAR**

THE GREEK  
AND THE JEW

# THE 1940S: NAZI OCCUPATION AND GREEK CIVIL WAR



1  
Nazi invasion,  
the Germans raise the  
swastika flag on the  
Acropolis, April 1941,  
Athens, Greece.

2  
Meal distribution in Athens.  
Petros Poulidis / ERT archive.



3  
Life magazine,  
article 11-44.



## Greece during Wartime

### The Nazi Occupation

The Nazis invaded Greece on April 6th, 1941 and overran the country within a month. According to Wikipedia: "Fascist Italy had initially declared war and invaded Greece in October 1940, but the Hellenic Army managed to push back the invading forces into neighboring Albania, then an Italian protectorate. Nazi Germany intervened on its ally's behalf in southern Europe. While most of the Hellenic Army was dislocated on the Albanian front to fend off the relentless Italian counter-attacks, a rapid German Blitzkrieg campaign commenced in April 1941, and by June (with the conquest of Crete) Greece was defeated and occupied. The Greek government went into exile, and an Axis collaborationist puppet government was established in the country...

"The occupation ruined the Greek economy and brought terrible hardships to the Greek civilian population. Much of Greece was subjected to destruction of its industry (80% of which was destroyed), infrastructure (28% destroyed), ports, roads, railways and bridges (90%), forests and other natural resources (25%) and loss of civilian life (7.02–11.17% of its citizens)...Groups of economic advisers, businessmen, engineers and factory managers came from Germany with the task of seizing anything they deemed of economic value, with involvement from both Germany's Economic Ministry and its Foreign Office involved in the

operation. These groups saw themselves as in competition with the Italians to plunder the country, and also with each other.”<sup>1</sup>

The life of the common person in Nazi-occupied Greece was typically one of extreme deprivation. The plundering of the country by Axis Powers resulted in mass starvation, often referred to as the Great Famine. According to Wikipedia, “over 40,000 civilians died in Athens alone from starvation.”<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the fatalities were not limited to those caused by deprivation. Though there are a few localized examples of collaboration with the Nazis, the vast majority of Greek citizens opposed the occupation and many actively resisted it, and there are lasting stories of heroism that sprang from the resistance.

One of the strongest pockets of resistance was in Crete: “The Cretan resistance lasted from 20 May 1941, when the German Wehrmacht invaded the island in the Battle of Crete, until the spring of 1945 when they surrendered to the British. For the first time during World War II, attacking German forces faced in Crete a substantial resistance from the local population. In the Battle of Crete, Cretan civilians picked off paratroopers or attacked them with knives, axes, scythes or even bare hands. As a result, many casualties were inflicted upon the invading German paratroopers during the battle.”<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere, especially in the mountainous areas of Greece where they could find shelter, larger and more organized resistance groups began to develop. Of course, any form of resistance against the Nazis was incredibly dangerous: “Increasing attacks by partisans in the latter years of the occupation resulted in a number of executions and wholesale slaughter of civilians in reprisal. In total, the Germans executed some 21,000 Greeks, the Bulgarians executed some 40,000 and the Italians executed some 9,000.”<sup>4</sup>



4  
*Youth Platoon, Second Division of The Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS), which was the largest of the military organizations of Greek resistance against the Nazis during WWII. Second from right is Salvador Bakolas, a Jew. Photo from October 1944. Jewish Museum of Greece.*

5  
*Asylum for homeless children during the occupation. Photography Kostas Paraschos.*



6  
*Athens celebrates the end of occupation, 1945.*

### *The Greek Civil War*

Though liberated from the Nazis in 1944, the troubles of Greece were far from over. The resistance groups that had worked so hard to fight against the Nazi occupation were now suffering from dangerous rifts: “By late 1943 the resistance groups began to fight amongst themselves. At the end of occupation of the mainland in October 1944, Greece was in a state of political polarization, which soon led to the outbreak of the Greek Civil War.”<sup>5</sup> War erupted between the foreign-sponsored conservative government and leftist guerrillas, supported by the Soviets. According to Wikipedia, “The struggle was the first proxy war of the Cold War and represents the first example of Cold War postwar involvement on the part of the Allies in the internal affairs of a foreign country.”<sup>6</sup>

The consequences for the average Greek civilian were brutal. Many survivors of the conflict describe the wartime conditions as even more dire than those of the Nazi occupation, and it was emotionally ravaging as well, as it pitted Greek citizens against Greek citizens. “Rural peasants were caught in the crossfire. When DSE partisans (communist fighters) entered a

1. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 15). Axis occupation of Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:29, July 20, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis\\_occupation\\_of\\_Greece&oldid=1098344700](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis_occupation_of_Greece&oldid=1098344700)

2. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 15). Axis occupation of Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:29, July 20, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis\\_occupation\\_of\\_Greece&oldid=1098344700](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis_occupation_of_Greece&oldid=1098344700)

3. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, May 25). Cretan resistance. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:24, January 10, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cretan\\_resistance&oldid=1156982791](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cretan_resistance&oldid=1156982791)

4. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 6). Axis occupation of Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:50, November 8, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis\\_occupation\\_of\\_Greece&oldid=1183763212](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis_occupation_of_Greece&oldid=1183763212)

5. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, November 6). Axis occupation of Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:42, November 8, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis\\_occupation\\_of\\_Greece&oldid=1183763212](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Axis_occupation_of_Greece&oldid=1183763212)

6. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 18). Greek Civil War. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 16:36, July 20, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek\\_Civil\\_War&oldid=1098933214](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_Civil_War&oldid=1098933214)



7  
*Special Forces of the Hellenic Army (of the Kingdom of Greece) in central Greece, equipped with British headwear and American military jackets. Photo 22 May 1948.*

village asking for supplies, citizens were supportive or did not resist. When government troops arrived at the same village, citizens who had supplied the partisans were immediately denounced as communist sympathizers and usually imprisoned or exiled. In rural areas, the government also used a strategy, which had been advised by US advisers, of evacuating villages under the pretext that they were under direct threat of communist attack. That would deprive the partisans of supplies and recruits and simultaneously raise antipathy towards them.”<sup>7</sup>

It would be years before the conflict came to an uneasy end. “Despite some setbacks that the government forces suffered from 1946 to 1948, they eventually won, largely due to increased American aid, the failure of the DSE (the military branch of the Communist Party of Greece) to attract sufficient recruits, and the side-effects of the Tito–Stalin split of 1948. The final victory of the western-allied government forces led to Greece’s membership in NATO (1952) and helped to define the ideological balance of power in the Aegean Sea for the entire Cold War.”<sup>8</sup>

During the Greek Civil War, an already traumatized civilian population suffered thousands more deaths due to violence, disease, and starvation. The extreme daily trials of the 1940s divided the Greek people for ensuing decades with both sides vilifying their opponents.

7. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, October 30). Greek Civil War. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 16:32, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek\\_Civil\\_War&oldid=1182630185](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_Civil_War&oldid=1182630185)

8. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, July 18). Greek Civil War. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 16:36, July 20, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek\\_Civil\\_War&oldid=1098933214](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_Civil_War&oldid=1098933214)



8  
*Orphans of civil war near Promahi. Photography David Seymour, 1948. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*



9  
*Fifth Lower School of Kerkyra (known as the Jewish School) 1938-1939. Lina Menacham Cohen is standing far right. Jewish Museum of Greece.*

10  
*Jewish children of Ioannina dressed for Purim, 1930s. Jewish Museum of Greece.*



## The Holocaust of Greek Jews

### *Jewish Life before the Nazis*

Prior to World War II, some 77,000 Jews lived in 27 communities in Greece. The sheer variety of separate Jewish communities, all of which had their unique culture, customs and prayer books, was singular amongst European nations during that time period. The story of all these distinct communities is obviously complex, but the breadth of experiences and their ultimate fates later in the decade can be seen by looking at two groups: the Romaniote community and the Sephardic community.

The Romaniotes were part of the oldest Greek culture in Europe. With a lineage that stretches back over 2,300 years, the Romaniotes have been entwined with Greek history since the time of Alexander the Great. “Their distinct language was Yevanic, a Greek dialect that contained Hebrew along with some Aramaic and Turkish words...The Romaniote rites represent those of the Greek-speaking Jews of the Byzantine (or former Byzantine) Empire”<sup>9</sup>

The Sephardim were the largest Jewish population in the years before WWII and had a history in Greece separate from that of the Romaniotes. The Sephardim are also referred to as

9. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 5). Romaniote Jews. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 14:27, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Romaniote\\_Jews&oldid=1173939387](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Romaniote_Jews&oldid=1173939387)

Iberian peninsula Jews, because they prospered in that area for centuries; later, however, under the reign of Catholic monarchs, both Spain and Portugal forced both Jews and Muslims to either convert or leave the region. “Waves of Sephardi Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492; many settled in Ottoman-ruled Greece. They spoke a separate language, Ladino. Thessaloniki had one of the largest (mostly Sephardi) Jewish communities in the world and a solid rabbinical tradition.”<sup>10</sup>

Through sheer force of numbers, many Romaniotes in Thessaloniki assimilated with the Sephardic community, but elsewhere in Greece, they remained as two distinct groups.

### The Holocaust of Greek Jews

The arrival of Nazis in Greece was utterly devastating to its Jewish communities. Though there were numerous resistance groups operating, the Nazi government had been collecting information on the Jewish population of Thessaloniki since 1937 and were able to nearly eradicate them. By 1945, nearly 90% of Jews in Greece had been murdered, one of the highest proportions in Europe...

The losses were especially dire in Corfu, Rhodes, and Thessaloniki: “On July 11, 1942, the Jews of Thessaloniki were rounded up in preparation for slave labor. The community paid a fee of 2 billion drachmas for their freedom. Yet 50,000 people were sent to Auschwitz, and most of their 60 synagogues and schools were destroyed, along with the old Jewish cemetery in the center of the city.”<sup>11</sup>

Though all Jewish communities were nearly wiped out, “the Romaniotes’ ability to speak Greek enabled them to hide better from German deportations than Sephardi Jews who spoke Ladino.”<sup>12</sup> Nazis were often unable to distinguish Romaniotes from any other Greek-speaking citizen.

There are inspiring stories about the larger Greek population sheltering their Jewish communities. One of the most significant

10. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 5). Romaniote Jews. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 14:27, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Romaniote\\_Jews&oldid=1173939387](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Romaniote_Jews&oldid=1173939387)  
 11. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 20). History of the Jews in Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:05, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Greece&oldid=1176264156](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Greece&oldid=1176264156)  
 12. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 5). Romaniote Jews. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:09, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Romaniote\\_Jews&oldid=1173939387](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Romaniote_Jews&oldid=1173939387)

11  
 Moses Cohen, standing left, with his son Elias, sitting far left, in front of their leather goods store in Volos, 1930s. Jewish Museum of Greece.



12  
 Assembly of Jews in Ioannina by Nazis to a staging area before transportation to concentration camps. 25 March 1944. Jewish Museum of Greece.

involves the Archbishop of Athens at the time, Damaskinos Papandreou, who repeatedly stood up to the occupying German authorities to protect both his own Eastern Orthodox congregation, but also the Jewish population of Greece. “Referring to the deportation of the Jews of Thessaloniki to the Auschwitz death camp which already began earlier in March 1943, Damaskinos wrote that he and others in the Orthodox faith followed the words of St. Paul that “There is neither Jew nor Greek”...The churches under his jurisdiction were also ordered quietly by Damaskinos to distribute Christian baptismal certificates to Jews fleeing the Nazis, thus saving thousands of Romaniote Jews in and around Athens. Damaskinos advised his priests to do everything they could to help the Jews and to hide those for whom it was not possible to forge baptismal certificates.”<sup>13</sup>

13. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, August 13). Damaskinos of Athens. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:20, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Damaskinos\\_of\\_Athens&oldid=1170180442](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Damaskinos_of_Athens&oldid=1170180442)



<sup>13</sup>  
*Four men in a Nazi staging area in Thessaloniki. Photo from April 1943. Of the four shown, only one, David Zion, survived.*  
 Jewish Museum of Greece.

Many clergy followed the Archbishop's call to protect this most vulnerable group of Greek citizens. One of the most memorable stories comes from the isle of Zakynthos: "On 9 September 1943, six days after Italy's surrender, the Germans took possession of the island. The Nazis began making plans to deport Jews from the island, who had survived the Holocaust so far. They asked the mayor Loukas Carrer to give them a list of the Jews residing on the island to proceed to the deportation. [Local bishop Chrysostomos] Dimitriou asked Loukas Carrer to burn the list and went to the German governor, Lüth. He told him that the Jews on the island were "part of his flock" and that he could not give him the list, then wrote his name on a piece of paper and said "Here is the list." After warning the Jewish community, which hid in the mountains of the island, he promised them that the Greek islanders would protect them."<sup>14</sup> Reportedly, all of the Jews of Zakynthos survived the war.

The Jews who were rounded up from Thessaloniki later played a significant role in the singular prisoner uprising at Auschwitz:

<sup>14</sup>. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, December 28). Chrysostomos Dimitriou. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:08, January 10, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chrysostomos\\_Dimitriou&oldid=1192257276](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chrysostomos_Dimitriou&oldid=1192257276)



<sup>14</sup>  
*More than 9,000 Jewish men were ordered by the Nazis to gather at Eleftheria Square in Thessaloniki. There they were forced to stand for hours in the intense July sun while being beaten and forced to perform "exercises." Many died and the rest were sent to concentration camps. Photo from July 11, 1942. Jewish Museum of Greece.*

"They attacked German forces with other Greek Jews, storming the crematoria and killing about twenty guards. A bomb was thrown into the furnace of the crematorium III, destroying the building. Before being massacred by the Germans, insurgents sang a song of the Greek partisan movement and the Greek national anthem."<sup>15</sup> Primo Levi, one of the most well-known survivors and chroniclers of the Holocaust, later attributed the ability of a small number of Greek Jews to survive the atrocities to their cohesion and sense of Greek nationalism.<sup>16</sup>

After the war, a small minority population of Jews remained in Greece, but the majority of survivors relocated to Israel and the United States, most of them now living in Tel Aviv and New York City. Of the 55,000 Thessaloniki Jews deported to extermination camps in 1943, fewer than 5,000 survived.

<sup>15</sup>. Wikipedia contributors. (2023, September 20). History of the Jews in Greece. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 15:51, November 1, 2023, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Greece&oldid=1176264156](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Greece&oldid=1176264156)

<sup>16</sup>. Primo Levi. *If This Is a Man*, Julliard, 2007, pp. 121–122 (Chapter: Because of good and evil).

# SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

164



<sup>15</sup>  
*Pierre de Wiessant*,  
Bronze sculpture part  
of sculptural group "The  
Burghers of Calais", 1887  
by Auguste Rodin.

165 The 1940s



<sup>16</sup>  
*Head of Pierre de  
Wiessant*, Bronze,  
by Auguste Rodin.

Rodin being one of my favorite sculptors, I have studied his work ever since my days at Stanford in the early 1990s. I was well acquainted with *The Burghers of Calais*, and for this project, I focused on the *Head of Pierre de Wiessant*.

According to Wikipedia, "In 1346, England's Edward III, after a victory in the Battle of Crécy, laid siege to Calais, while Philip VI of France ordered the city to hold out at all costs. Philip failed to lift the siege, and starvation eventually forced the city to parley for surrender".

"The contemporary chronicler Jean Froissart (ca. 1337 – ca. 1405) tells a story of what happened next: Edward offered to spare the people of the city if six of its leaders would surrender themselves to him, presumably to be executed. Edward demanded that they walk out wearing nooses around their necks, and carrying the keys to the city and castle. One of the wealthiest of the town leaders, Eustache de Saint Pierre, volunteered first, and five other burghers joined him. Saint Pierre led this envoy of volunteers to the city gates. It was this moment, and this poignant mix of defeat, heroic self-sacrifice, and willingness to face imminent death that Rodin captured in his sculpture, scaled somewhat larger than life."<sup>17</sup> Rodin made "two models and one study of Pierre de Wiessant before the final sculpture. The first model shows the young man pointing to himself with the right hand, as if questioning his final destination. In the nude study he is no longer pointing to himself, but using his arm in a defensive manner."<sup>18</sup>

I also drew on tales I had heard from my parents, who were teenagers in the 1940s in Greece, as well as my own reading about the period. I wanted to capture not the official headlines of the generals and the battles but rather the experience of the everyday Greek civilian: The privation, the famine, and the horror of that decade, played out in personal history.

<sup>17</sup>. Wikipedia contributors. (2022, April 12). *The Burghers of Calais*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:50, July 24, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The\\_Burghers\\_of\\_Calais&oldid=1082274422](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Burghers_of_Calais&oldid=1082274422)

<sup>18</sup>. Wikipedia contributors. (2021, September 26). *Pierre de Wiessant*. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:49, July 24, 2022, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pierre\\_de\\_Wiessant&oldid=1046670685](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pierre_de_Wiessant&oldid=1046670685)

# HELLENIC HEAD

## MAN OF TWO WARS: THE GREEK AND THE JEW

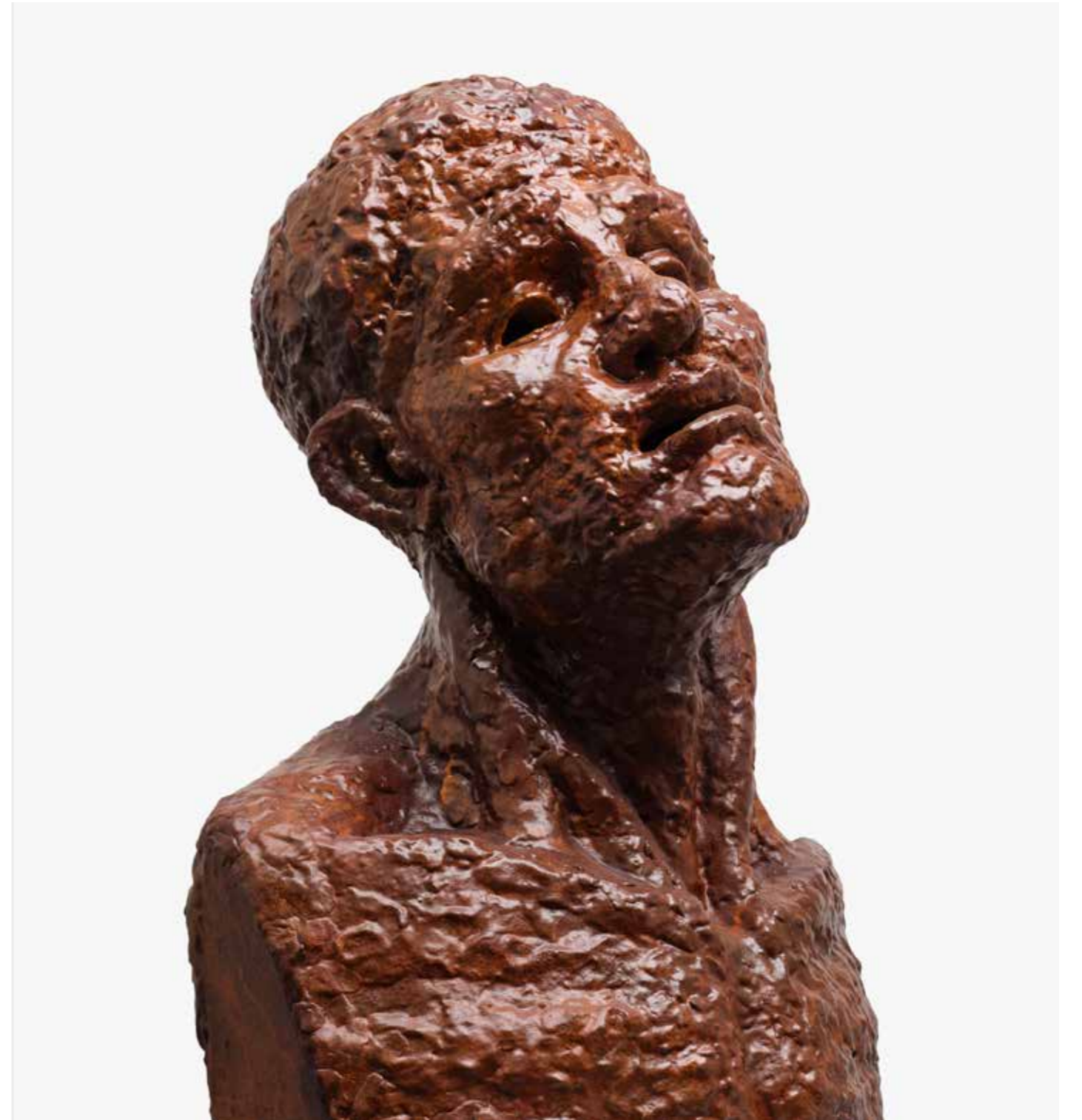
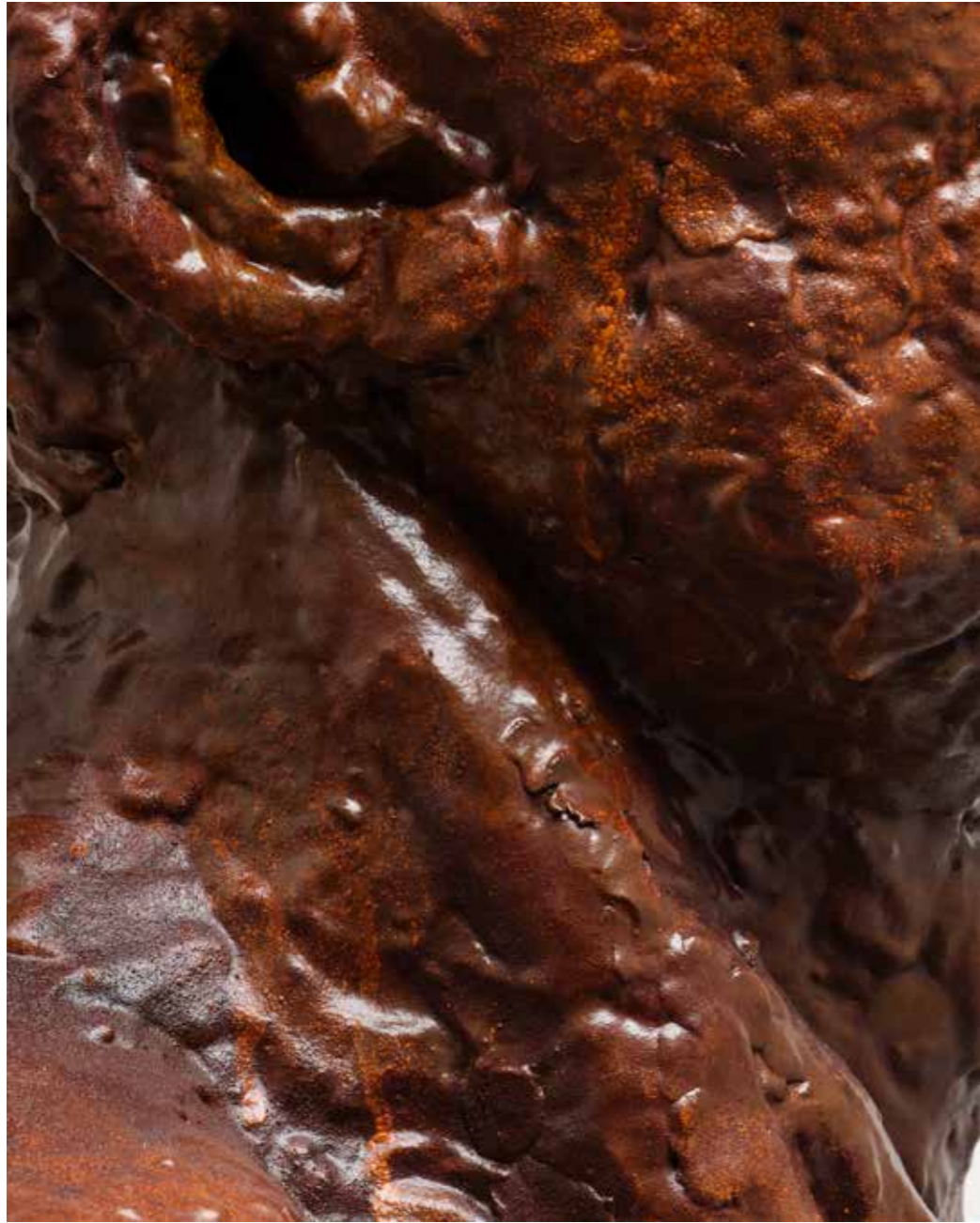
166

Historical Period	WWII - Nazi Occupation of Greece Greek Civil War (1941-1949)
Sculpture Completed	2024, version II
Sculpture Medium	Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled PETG plastic, epoxy clay, gound metal applied with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)
Sculpture Dimensions	91 cm height x 55 cm diameter 35.8 inch height x 21.7 inch diameter
Model	George Petrides
Petrides' relationship	Self-portrait
Petrides seeks to convey	Greek Jew under the Nazis; common Greek during the Greek Civil War
Sculptural Precedent	<i>Pierre de Wiessant</i> (1887) one of the six Burghers of Calais by Auguste Rodin
Precedent Work Held By	Many museums throughout the world





*"I also drew on tales I had heard from my parents, who were teenagers in the 1940s in Greece, as well as my own reading about the period. I wanted to capture not the official headlines of the generals and the battles but rather the experience of the everyday Greek civilian: The privation, the famine, and the horror of that decade, played out in personal history."*





HISTORICAL  
PERIOD

**THE PRESENT  
LOOKING TO  
THE FUTURE**

OUR HOPES  
FOR OUR  
CHILDREN

# SCULPTURAL PRECEDENT

176



<sup>1</sup>  
*Louise Brongniart (1777)*, by Jean-Antoine Houdon, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

177 The Present Looking to the Future

When I was at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I came across a work of one of my favorite sculptors, Jean Antoine Houdon. According to the Metropolitan Museum website, “Among the numerous busts Houdon showed at the Salon of 1777 were a pair of Louise Brongniart and her brother Alexandre, both children of the distinguished Neoclassical architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart (1739–1813). The originals, now believed to be the terracottas in the Louvre, were among the sculptor’s most popular creations and that of the five-year-old Louise, in particular, was reproduced well into the twentieth century. The Museum’s marble, with a kerchief headdress elaborating the knotted scarf that binds Louise’s hairdo in the original, is now thought to be one of numerous later variants. Also unique to this example is the ruffled fichu that emphasizes the little girl’s simply truncated exposed chest.”<sup>1</sup> The sculpture conveys to me a liveliness and an optimism that inspired me to ask my daughter to pose.

My daughter patiently posed over the course of more than a year from age 10 through 12. This version is from January of 2022. It was delightful to see her face and to some extent personality change from that of a child to that of a (soon to be) young woman. I hope this piece conveys the optimism and character that a young girl may feel for her future and a country and people may feel for theirs.

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1. Retrieved July 24, 2022, from [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).

# HELLENIC HEAD

## KORE: OUR HOPES FOR OUR CHILDREN

178

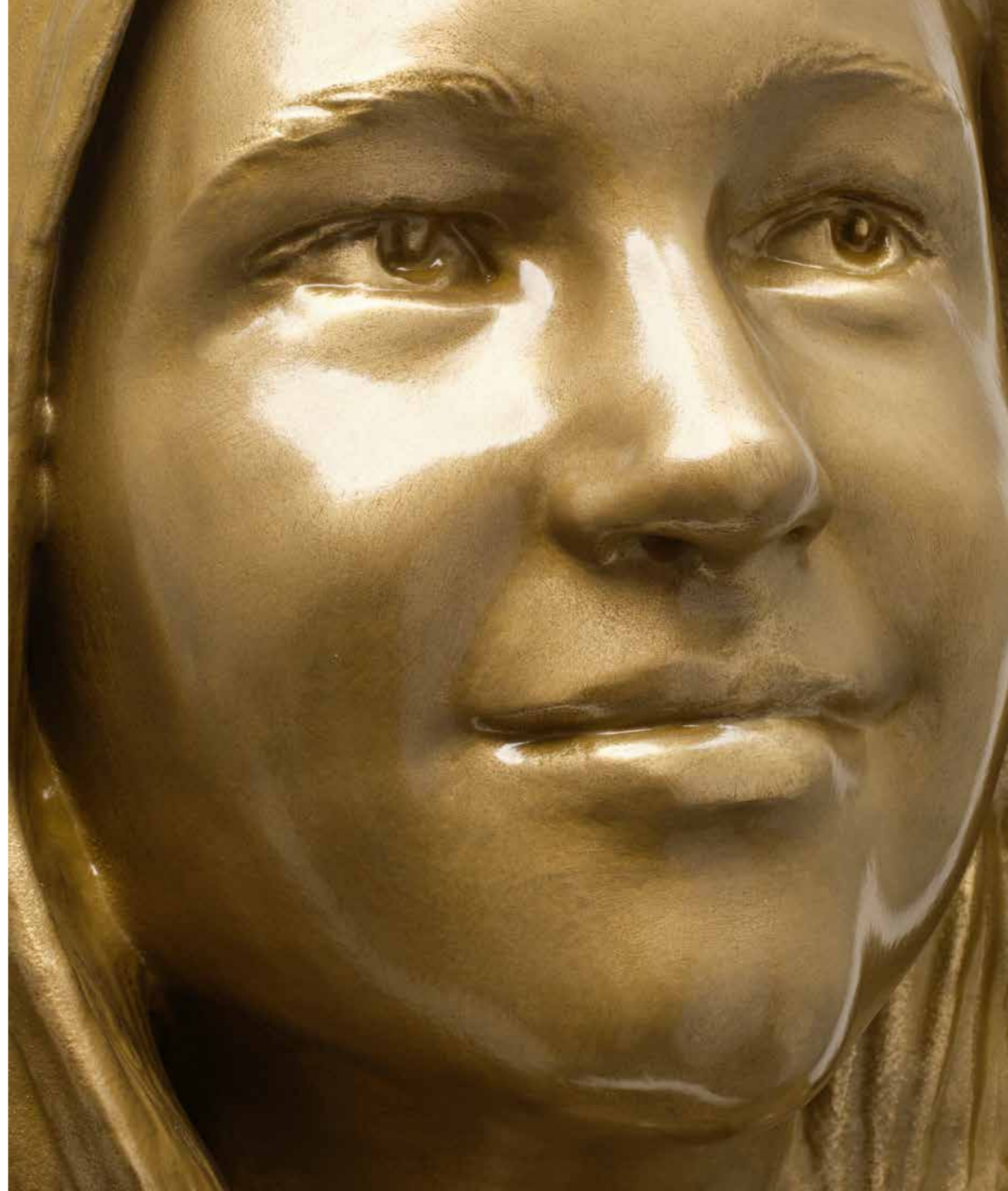
Historical Period	The Present Looking to the Future
Sculpture Completed	2024, version II
Sculpture Medium	Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled PETG plastic, epoxy clay, gound metal applied with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)
Sculpture Dimensions	75 cm height x 57 cm diameter 29.5 inch height x 22.4 inch diameter
Model	Sofia Petrides
Petrides' relationship	Daughter, posed 2022 (age 12)
Petrides seeks to convey	Optimism, innocence
Sculptural Precedent	<i>Louise Brongniart</i> (1777) by Jean-Antoine Houdon
Precedent Work Held By	Many examples including The Louvre, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC





*"I was interested after exploring these dark periods of a nation's history and a people's history as to how they might be metabolized into something positive and include some optimism for the future."*





# ABOUT GEORGE PETRIDES



**GEORGE PETRIDES**, who lives and works in New York City and Athens, Greece, creates a diverse range of sculpture, including both figurative and abstract pieces, ranging in size from handheld to large public works. Born in Athens in 1964 and raised there and in New York, he is steeped in ancient Greek sculpture and the works that were influenced by it (ancient Roman sculpture, Renaissance sculptors such as Donatello, Michelangelo, later sculptors such as Rodin and Maillol, and contemporary sculptors such as Ray and Bhabha.) His creative process is of his own invention, combining ancient and contemporary methods, including traditional clay modeling by hand, 3D scanning, digital sculpting software, 3D printing using recycled materials and in some cases bronze-casting in the manner of the ancient Greeks.

After growing up in a family of artists and businesspeople, Petrides' first career was on New York's Wall Street, rising to Managing Director at the investment bank Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette. Over more than two decades, he studied and made art part-time, taking drawing, painting and sculpture classes at the New York Studio School (from which he received a Certificate in Sculpture) with classes at the The Art Students League in New York and L'Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris. He was drawn there in order to study in the same rooms where some of his sculptural masters once studied: Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Alberto Giacometti, Isamu Noguchi, others. (His non-art education includes a BA from Harvard College and two masters degrees from Stanford University).

After more than two decades of studies and making art- part time, in 2017 he committed to being a professional working artist with an emphasis on sculpture. From then, he has been in demand for solo exhibitions around the world, including creating large public sculptures. He is honored to be presenting his Hellenic Heads, at their fifth venue in the courtyard of the Church of San Giorgio dei Greci. From there they will travel to Istanbul, then London and Berlin, completing eight venues around the world over five years.

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

**2024-2025** Seismanoglio Megaro, Istanbul, Türkiye  
**2024** San Giorgio dei Greci, Venice, Italy  
**2024** Art on Paper, New York, NY USA  
**2023-24** National Hellenic Museum, Chicago, IL  
**2023** Hamptons Fine Art, Southampton NY USA  
**2022-23** Maliotis Cultural Center-Hellenic College Holy Cross, Brookline, MA  
**2022** Muses Cultural Center, Southampton, NY  
**2022** Embassy of Greece to the USA, Washington DC  
**2021-22** *Figure and Form: George Petrides and Nassos Daphnis* (two Greek-American artists in dialogue), New York, NY  
**2021** Dubai Design Week, Dubai, UAE  
**2021** Monaco 3f Art, Fontvieille, Monaco  
**2021** Mykonos KDEPPAM, Mykonos, Greece  
**2020** Mykonos KDEPPAM, Mykonos, Greece

#### MONOGRAPHS AND EXHIBITION CATALOGS

**2024** *Hellenic Heads: George Petrides; A Personal Exploration of Greek History and Culture over 2,500 years.*  
**2023** *Figure and Form: George Petrides and Nassos Daphnis*  
**2022** *George Petrides: Recent Work: 2019-2021* (English/French language)  
**2021** *George Petrides: Recent Work: 2019-2021* (Greek language)  
**2020** *George Petrides: The Beauty of Imperfection.*

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Tiffany & Co.** "Head of Thalia II by George Petrides" The Landmark, Assouline 2024  
**Paul Laster.** "George Petrides' Personal Engagement With Hellenic History." *Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art.* July 2023  
**Natasha Gural.** "Globally Renowned Sculptor George

Petrides Carves A Matriarchal Gaze Into Greek History And Heritage." *Forbes.* July 2022

**S. David.** "George Petrides: Hellenic Heads." *Brooklyn Rail.* June 2022

**M. Charlene Stevens.** "Contemporary Artifacts" *Arcade Project.* February 2022

**Kathleen Cullen.** "The Muse of Classic Greek Sculpture." *Culture Catch.* January 2022

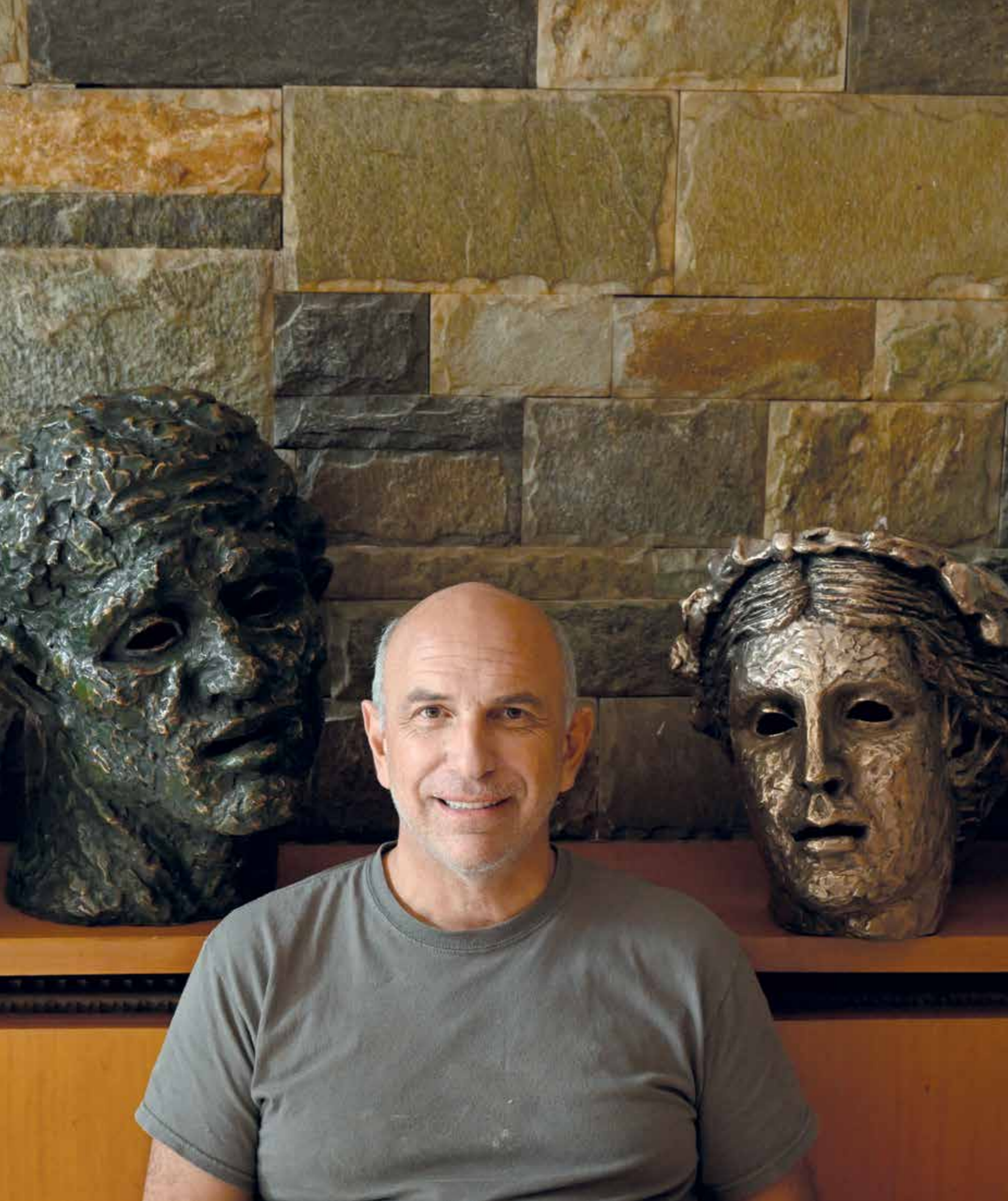
**Katy Diamond Hamer.** "The Past Made Contemporary; How artist George Petrides confronts time." *Eyes towards the Dove.* 2022

**Paul Laster.** "Figure and Form: The Making of an Exhibition." *Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art.* December 2021

#### Extensive Greek language bibliography.

#### PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Agiou Georgiou Square, Neo Psychiko Athens, Greece  
 Consulate General of Greece to Izmir, Türkiye  
 Consulate General of Greece to New York, NY USA  
 Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church, Southampton, NY USA  
 Embassy of Greece to the Republic of Italy, Rome, Italy  
 Embassy of Greece to the USA, Washington DC  
 Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, Venice, Italy  
 Hudson River Museum Yonkers, NY  
 Jewish Museum of Greece, Athens, Greece  
 Maliotis Cultural Center - Hellenic College Holy Cross, Brookline, MA  
 Aretaieion University Hospital, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece  
 Nightingale - Bamford School, New York, NY  
 Simonopetra Monastery, Mt Athos, Greece  
 Tiffany & Co. Multiple Locations



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Publishing 2024 (6th edition)  
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**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
of the artwork Daniel Kim  
p. 2, 7, 12-13, 28-29, 36-37, 42-43, 50,  
51, 55, 56-57 by Matteo Deletto  
p. 14-15 by Robert Cadena  
p. 17, 20-21 by Greg Staley  
p. 18-19, 23, 24, 25 by Guillaume Ziccarelli  
p. 45, 46-47, 62, 70-71, 190 by Christos Simatos

With thanks to the Jewish Museum of Greece (Athens)  
for photographs on pages (156, [4], 159 [9, 10],  
160 [11], 161 [12], 162 [13], 163 [14]).

**IMAGE PROCESSING**  
Christos Simatos (ps design)

**CATALOGUE DESIGN**  
Marianna Poga (ps design)

**PRINTING & BINDING**  
Macart

**COVER ARTWORK**  
**Thalia**, 2024, vesion III  
Mixed media (body 3D-printed using recycled  
PETG plastic, epoxy clay, gound metal applied  
with resin/catalyst, pigments, acids, topcoat)  
86 cm height × 55 cm diameter  
33.9 inch height × 21.7 inch diameter



# HELLENIC HEADS

## GEORGE PETRIDES

A PERSONAL EXPLORATION OF GREEK  
HISTORY AND CULTURE OVER 2,500 YEARS

### A TRAVELLING EXHIBITION TO 10 CITIES OVER 5 YEARS

**2022** Washington DC, USA, Embassy of Greece to the USA

**2022** Southampton, New York, USA, The Muses Cultural Center

**2022-2023** Brookline, MA USA, Maliotis Cultural Center-Hellenic College Holy Cross

**2023-2024** Chicago IL, USA, National Hellenic Museum

**2024** Venice, Italy, Courtyard of San Giorgio dei Greci

**2024-2025** Constantinople / Istanbul, Türkiye, Sismanogleio Mansion

**2025-2026** Selected European Cities: Berlin, London, Paris, Venues to be announced

**2026-2027** Selected Far East Cities: Hong Kong, Singapore, Venues to be announced