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Kyiv Enters a Hopeful Spring After War's Darkest Winter

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Anastasiia Malenko

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KYIV—It was the middle of January when the cold and lack of electricity forced Olha Kosova and her baby to flee their Kyiv apartment to her parents' place in the suburbs.

Now, spring is here, the electricity is working and Kosova and 1-year-old Lisa are back home in their sun-drenched apartment. "I don't even remember this winter," Kosova said. "It fades from the memory so quickly as if it never happened."

Kyiv and its residents are bouncing back from the darkest winter of the war. Russia struck Ukraine's energy infrastructure more than 1,400 times with missiles and drones dating to last July, according to an official Ukrainian tally.

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North Korea's New War Museum Glorifies Its 'Noble Sacrifices' for Russia

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Dasl Yoon

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

SEOUL—Bloodstained letters from North Korean soldiers. An American tank supposedly captured at war. A munitions shell containing soil from the battlefield. These are some of the items featured in a new memorial in Pyongyang dedicated to North Korea's participation in Russia's war against Ukraine. The museum-cum-shrine blends propaganda exalting the regime of leader Kim Jong Un with a message of fealty to Russia, a vitality that is increasingly vital to North Korea's security and economic well-being.

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The Elgin Marbles, a collection of Greek sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens on display at the British Museum, London, United Kingdom.

TO BHMA International edition

Youth Take up the Cause to Reunite the Parthenon Marbles

By Cheryl Novak

For decades, the campaign to reunify the Parthenon Marbles has been carried by governments, seasoned archaeologists, lawyers, museum profes-

sionals, diaspora organizations and cultural figures. Greece says the sculptures are inseparable parts of a monument conceived as a whole, while the British Museum has long defended their display in London as part of a global collection. Despite efforts from both

sides, the dispute remains unresolved.

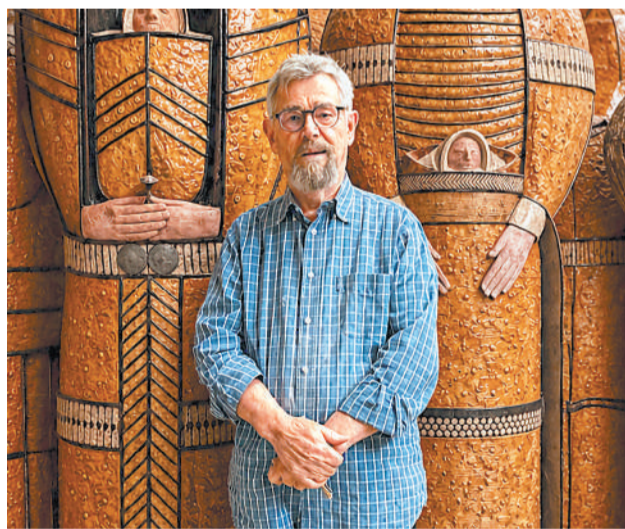
Now, Remarkle Greece is trying to bring younger generations into the debate.

Founded by Thanos Georgountzos, the youth-led initiative works through education programs at schools, research projects,

public events and international conferences. It says more than 500 young people have joined its ambassador network, part of an effort to recast a long-running cultural dispute as a contemporary question of heritage, justice, identity and civic responsibility.

The test for Remarkle Greece is whether it can make the Parthenon Marbles matter to young people whose immediate concerns are often elsewhere: the cost of living, climate change, AI, and geopolitical instability.

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Theodoros Papagiannis, sculptor and professor at the Athens School of Fine Arts, in front of his creations.

TO BHMA International edition

The Enchanter of Materials and Art's Quiet 'Arrow' Against Barbarism


By Panos Kougiass

Theodoros Papagiannis is one of the last Don Quixotes—those artists who uphold an entire cultural continuity with their work and assume a profound historical and moral responsibility towards a land that has shaped humanity's concept of beauty like few others.

This is exactly the ethos that runs through "In Praise of Sculpture", the show currently on at the Sianti Gallery. A tribute exhibition with works by eighteen artists, all graduates of the 1st Sculpture Workshop of the Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA), staged in honor of their teacher. Papagiannis returns constantly to the concept of memory in his touch-


ingly tender discourse. To the memory of materials, of the Greek earth, of public art, of teaching—even of the public's everyday interactions with the art-work. In our "culturally fragmented" world, Papagiannis persists in seeking those principles that can still converse with the present. This may well be the most essential aspect of his approach.

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One with the future

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un walks next to memorial stones during the opening ceremony of the Memorial Museum of Combat Feats at the Overseas Military Operations honoring North Korean troops killed while fighting for Russia in the war against Ukraine, in Pyongyang, North Korea, April 26.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks during the opening ceremony of the Memorial Museum of Combat Feats at the Overseas Military Operations honoring North Korean troops killed while fighting for Russia in the war against Ukraine, in Pyongyang, North Korea, April 26.

North Korea's New War Museum Glorifies Its 'Noble Sacrifices' for Russia

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Pyongyang brandishes purported war trophies and soldiers' bloodstained letters as it extols role in Ukraine conflict

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Kim personally opened the museum—dubbed the Memorial Museum of Combat Feats at Overseas Military Operations—late last month. It marked the first anniversary of the expulsion of Ukrainian troops from Kursk, a region in southern Russia. That operation relied on some of the 15,000 North Korean soldiers Kim has sent to help Russia in the Ukraine war since late 2024.

North Korea has emerged as a crucial ally in Russian President Vladimir Putin's war, which has burned through enormous quantities of munitions and has left hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers injured or dead. In addition to troops, Pyongyang has supplied Moscow with artillery shells, short-range ballistic missiles and antitank missiles.

In return, Moscow has given Pyongyang cash, advanced air-defense equipment and diplomatic support by blocking additional United Nations sanctions.

The museum sends the message that Kim "intends to continue strengthening relations with Russia, and in turn, Russia must not forget what North Korea has done for them," said Shin Beom-chul, a former South Korean vice defense minister who is now a senior analyst at the Sejong Institute think tank.

The memorial, which also contains the graves of hundreds of fallen North Korean soldiers, is a testament to what Kim and Putin have cast as the unbreakable bond between Russia and North Korea, an alliance that poses deep concern to the U.S. and its allies in Europe and Asia. Over the weekend, around 120 North Korean troops from the country's infantry, air force and navy marched at Moscow's an-



PHOTOS BY KCNA/REUTERS

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un honors members of the North Korean troops killed while fighting for Russia in the war against Ukraine during the opening ceremony of the Memorial Museum of Combat Feats at the Overseas Military Operations, in Pyongyang, North Korea, April 26, 2026

nual Victory Day parade for the first time, goose-stepping through Red Square.

To publicize the new memorial, North Korea's state broadcaster aired a 90-minute special featuring Kim's visit last month and highlighting the contents. A voice-over described the memorial as a "monument breathing eternal vitality" into Russia-North Korea relations.

The narrator recalled the story of a soldier who shouted "Long live Pyongyang!" before dying in a "magnificent explosion of self-detonation." A young male visitor at the memorial, who said he was joining the North Korean army in a few days, told the broadcaster that he was "determined to carry on the noble spirit of the fallen heroes."

In the courtyard of the

museum, a large bronze statue depicts Russian and North Korean soldiers in uniform, charging into battle clutching their national flags and rifles.

A life-size diorama attempts to bring the battlefield to life. A mural shows a war-torn village where gray smoke billows into the sky; soldiers kneel in the dirt and fire assault rifles. On the floor in front of the mural, broken bricks and concrete slabs are piled up. A statue of a soldier stands on a column rising from the rubble, hoisting a Russian flag.

The museum features what it bills as captured Western military equipment, in an apparent effort to mock the U.S. and its allies. Glass displays feature dozens of Western rifles and drones, purported trophies from the

battlefield. A German Leopard 2A4 battle tank sits in an outdoor space, supposedly retrieved from the Kursk battlefield in February 2025. An American Abrams tank is also seen in the distance.

North Korean and Russian troops thwarted "the United States and the West's hegemonic ambitions," said Kim in a speech at the memorial's inauguration.

The memorial also extols the soldiers killed in the conflict—a move analysts say is aimed at buttressing popular support for the deployment. Analysts and South Korean officials suspect that, by lionizing the fallen soldiers, Kim could be preparing North Koreans for the possibility of future deployments to support Putin's war.

About 2,000 North Kore-

ans have been killed in combat according to the South Korean spy agency.

Outside the museum, the graves of nearly 300 soldiers fan out in neat rows. Inside the memorial is a crypt containing the remains of more than 1,000 other soldiers. In the footage broadcast by state media, women wept over the graves; some carried photos of the deceased.

At the ceremony inaugurating the museum, Kim, who was accompanied by Russian officials, praised his troops' "noble sacrifices and heroic military feats." The state media broadcast featured the 42-year-old dictator paying homage to the deceased, scattering dirt over one tomb and laying a white rose on another.

Diaries of fallen soldiers have shown that the young

North Korean fighters carried letters for their loved ones as well as copies of Kim's speeches urging troops to fight bravely.

Visitors to the museum viewed handwritten letters stained in blood and displayed in glass cases. Some of the letters appear to be applications for membership in the ruling Workers' Party—a ticket to better jobs and a higher social standing, had the soldiers survived the war and returned home.

Western officials, military analysts and documents retrieved from the battlefield suggest a more chaotic reality than the museum portrays. North Korean units were initially sent to near-certain death in frontal assaults against Ukrainian forces. They also suffered communication breakdowns with the Russians. North Korean forces are now providing more skilled assistance, including operating surveillance drones and executing artillery strikes, according to Ukrainian officials.

The new war museum will likely become a major destination for university and school visits in Pyongyang, according to Chris Monday, an associate professor at South Korea's Dongseo University who studies Russia and North Korea. It could echo the display of the USS Pueblo, an American warship captured by North Korea in 1968 and displayed at its Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum.

The museum will encourage young North Korean soldiers to think of foreign military operations as a path to "adventure, glory and a nice new apartment for their family," Monday said.

"The complex also highlights the solid ties Kim has made with Putin," he said. "It's saying that North Korea is no longer isolated."

Kyiv Enters a Hopeful Spring After Surviving the War's Darkest Winter

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Warm weather and battlefield success have infused Ukraine's capital city with optimism, even as bombs fall

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The attacks plunged cities into darkness and cut heat, leaving Kyiv residents such as Kosova and others in her apartment block on Tychyna Avenue freezing and miserable.

Residents survived by wrapping up indoors, turning their balconies into refrigerators and, when possible, staying with relatives.

The arrival of warmer spring weather has brought a dash of optimism back to Kyiv. Repairs have brought electricity back, and shops have stored away their diesel-powered generators. Bar terraces are buzzing with activity into late evenings again as people try to soak in every bit of sun after the long winter. Kyiv residents are flocking to parks and riverside beaches for picnics even before the summer heat has time to set in.

Camping gear used for cooking is packed up, with electric stoves back in action. Menus also are changing accordingly, as households plan ahead with reliable electricity powering their fridges. Lisa now toddles around in a summer dress. The elevator is working again to carry her stroller to the fourth floor. A hot shower is no longer a



JUSTINA MIENIEWICZ FOR WSJ

Olha Kosova and her 1-year-old daughter, who left dark and freezing Kyiv for the suburbs during the winter, have returned to Ukraine's capital city. Now, a handheld fan is ready for use during what might be a scorching summer.

luxury: Boilers are working again, saving residents the trouble of warming up pots of water before bathing.

The situation on the front lines has also improved, with Russian assaults largely repelled in most areas. Troops are now readying for the challenges that the scorching summer might bring, but any worries over their families without heat and light in civilian cities have dissipated.

One thing hasn't changed, though: Russian

air raids launched with missiles and explosive drones that menace Kyiv's residents.

After a brief cease-fire that coincided with Victory Day in Russia, Moscow struck energy infrastructure again last week. Over 24 hours that began Wednesday morning, Russia launched 1,428 drones and 56 missiles in one of the largest attacks of the four-year-old war.

The assault killed 24 people, including three children, when a missile struck

an apartment building in the capital, Ukrainian authorities said. It also damaged gas production and energy infrastructure, temporarily cutting power to some residents in almost half of Ukraine, the energy ministry said.

Kosova's 80-year-old neighbor on Tychyna Avenue, Nila Molchaniuk, said her family puts up with such threats in the knowledge that things are much tougher on the front line.

"If stuff was not flying

over our heads, it would be fine," she said, sitting at the bench by her apartment building, which was struck by a drone last year.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Ukraine needs more missile interceptors to protect its cities. Continued supplies will be crucial in shielding the repair work of energy workers around the country from additional Russian assaults in months to come.

Serhiy Motsak, a shift director at one of Ukraine's thermal-power plants, spent this past winter knocking ice from the equipment and carrying around torches to heat it.

"Every time there is a hit, it is a fraction of your work that is destroyed. The part you contributed into the restoration has evaporated in a day. It all adds up, and it really hit hard this winter," he said. "But in spite of it all, we get back up on our feet."

DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company and the plant's owner, plans to carry out nearly \$350 million of repairs across its facilities ahead of next winter.

On the second Monday in May, Motsak's shift ended with a sunrise as he restarted one of the pieces of equipment at 5 a.m. To him, longer spring days "mean we have

more time, that we can do more."

Ahead of next winter, more work is needed to improve the coordination between central and local governments and to scale up the process of obtaining spare parts and systems, energy executives and analysts said.

"We have six months to prevent next winter from becoming even harder," said Olena Pavlenko, who leads Kyiv-based think tank DiXi Group, which specializes in energy issues. "We need to mobilize more human resources, because we cannot prepare for winter with just a few dozen enthusiasts."

For now, 80-year-old Molchaniuk from Tychyna Avenue is grateful that spring finally arrived and holds the promise of a new sowing season at her dacha's vegetable patch.

"The tomatoes are begging me to go, it's time," she laughed, planning to leave Kyiv at the weekend. But the summer home's location next to a thermal plant attacked by Russia won't make for a relaxing getaway from the air raids.

When drones fly overhead, her husband looks on from the outside, while she sticks to the terrace.

"We live on hope," she said.

Trump's Latest White House Renovation Plan: A Helipad on the South Lawn

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Helipad would prevent powerful new Marine One helicopters from damaging the South Lawn

By Meridith McGraw and Marcus Weisgerber
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

President Trump is discussing plans to install a helipad at the White House to prevent powerful new Marine One helicopters from damaging the South Lawn, according to people familiar with the plans.

The helipad would be the latest renovation to the historic White House grounds since Trump began his second term.

The president has paved over the Rose Garden, installed a black granite walkway along the West Wing Colonnade, redesigned the Oval Office, placed two large American flagpoles at the front and back of the White House and demolished the

East Wing to make way for his 90,000 square-foot ballroom.

Trump, a former real-estate developer, has been involved in every detail of his construction and renovation projects, and has discussed the design of the helipad with associates.

The helipad would prevent damage to the South Lawn's grass, the people said, noting that the new VH-92A Patriot is much more powerful than decades-old VH-3D Sea King it is replacing. Both helicopters are made by Lockheed Martin's Sikorsky. It is unclear when the installation would take place.

The White House didn't respond to a request for comment.

Officials have known since at least 2018 that the VH-92A engines and auxiliary power unit could damage



Marine One taking off from the South Lawn of the White House, April 11, 2026.

the lawn. The VH-3D lands on small boards placed underneath its wheels shortly before touching down.

The exhaust on the new helicopters can burn up the ground, especially in hot and dry conditions, the people

said. The VH-92A can carry 6,200 pounds more than the VH-3D.

Despite making its public debut at Trump's 2019 Independence Day military parade, the VH-92A didn't fly a president until August

2024 when it transported then-President Joe Biden while he was in Chicago for the Democratic National Convention. The helicopter has flown Trump numerous times during trips outside of the Washington area. But neither Trump nor Biden have flown on the helicopter to or from the South Lawn.

The decision to build the helipad comes after years of unsuccessfully looking for other ways to modify the VH-92A to land at the White House. Once the VH-92A can fly all of the presidential missions, the Marine Corps will be able to retire its fleet of VH-3D helicopters that has flown every U.S. president since Gerald Ford.

The delay in being able to use the VH-92A to fly the president to and from the White House has forced the Marine Corps to fly the VH-

3D longer than planned. The Marine Corps had planned on retiring the VH-3D this year, according to Pentagon budget documents, but now plans to continue flying it through at least 2027.

The decision to exclusively use the VH-92A will be "an event-driven goal, not a time-driven one," a Marine Corps spokesman said.

Trump is expected to have a helipad installed at his Mar-a-Lago residence this summer while the club is closed for the season.

The Palm Beach, Fla., town council is considering a proposal that would allow the helipad to stay beyond Trump's presidency following a request from the U.S. Secret Service, which argued that it should remain in place for as long as a protectee resides there for security purposes.

TO BHMA International edition

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His deep conviction that art cannot bring itself up-to-date by cutting off its roots; that is has to go back to them instead, though with a new perspective.

Listening to him talk about sculpture meetings in the countryside, about children learning to look at a work of art without fear, but also about his dogged efforts to keep art a living, public experience, one thing becomes crystal clear: that after thousands of experiments with the most unlikely materials in this world, his real material has always been people.

The exhibition is entitled “In Praise of Sculpture”. Tell us more.

Sculpture has never been a random thing in Greece. It is an artform that has shown Greece in an elevated light and even contributed meaningfully to its liberation. Three years before the 1821 Revolution, the Elgin Marbles were put on show in London and made a huge impression. Ten years earlier, Greek sculptures had been exhibited at the Louvre, where they also proved massively influential. Art helped Greece free itself, and we sculptors owe it a lot. We bear a very heavy burden—at least those among us who sense this and understand it. Because there are also a lot of people who haven't really grasped where they are or what they're meant to be doing.

Lately, I have been studying these twenty-five volumes on Greece's archaeological museums. I've been flipping through them for months and drawing whatever catches my eye. I've made about two hundred drawings in all, and I'm preparing to publish them; in fact, we've already started work on the volume. I was discussing the project recently with my friend, the poet Vangelis Chronis, and he was so enthused by it, he volunteered to write a text for the publication.

His love of Greece shines forth from his work. His verses contain some truly beautiful references to the Cyclades...

Yes, and not only the Cyclades. It is clear from his work how deeply he loves Greece. I have to wonder where the artists there found that wisdom—how they managed to achieve such a distillation and arrive at these forms. It's terribly modern and something the whole world admires. But I'm not sure we admire that wisdom as much as we should.

In the catalog, the exhibition's curator,

Theodoros Papagiannis: Reusing Materials For Art's Slow Arrow, As An Antidote To Barbarism

After thousands of experiments with the most unlikely materials in this world, his real material has always been people



PHOTOS BY PANOS KOUGAS TO BHMA INTL EDITION

Theodoros Papagiannis surrounded by decades of personal sketches of his work.

Manos Stefanidis, writes that: “the work of art is a priori an act of love... even more so when it disturbs.” Do you think that today's art remains “disturbing”, or has it overly acclimatized itself to the market and the image?

Manos' phrase carries real weight. Art should be provocative—but before all else,

it should provoke interest. As I see it, it should invite you to love it, not irritate you. Because if you don't love art, you won't go near it.

I see this in the sculpture meetings we organize with colleagues in various towns and cities around Greece. What we try to do with them is put art into the public's everyday lives. At minimal cost, because we know our municipalities

don't really have a budget for art. There's money for pavements and a good deal besides, but art is almost always left out in the cold. That's why they're always asking us to donate works to them—and many of us do.

So those meetings of ours are actually an effort to put people in touch with sculpture, to inject art into their everyday lives. And you see people who were

completely unfamiliar with art until recently coming up and asking you simple, innocent questions: “What is it you're doing in this work?” They haven't even been trained to stand and really observe a work. And you tell them: “Look at it and tell me what you see.” And that sets a dialogue in motion. They're hesitant at first. Afraid of saying something wrong or off the mark.

But then they start to slowly open up and you can really communicate with them, engage with them. It makes sense. How can you love art if you don't see it around you? The great civilizations have all had art embedded in their everyday life. In Ancient Greece, it was everywhere: in the sacred groves and temples, in the forums and public spaces. Art was part of life.

You taught for almost four decades at the ASFA. Tell me, what do you consider the greatest thing an art teacher can achieve?

Look, it's not easy. You could say that, to a great extent, art isn't taught. Of course, there's a lot you can teach: techniques, theory, how to go about forging a career, how to find inspiration. But the truth is that, if the young person who comes to the School of Fine Arts doesn't have the predisposition, meaning the talent, you can't make them into an artist. What happens is that, from the moment someone sets foot in the school, their teacher starts to initiate them into art's secrets.

Today, looking at the works by 18 of your students brought together here, do you recognize elements of your own style?

Listen, we always tried not to pass on our own opinions or personal styles to the students, because we believed that would be rather negative. Instead, we tried to help them discover what they had inside themselves. That's where we focused: on helping students find their own idiom, then seeing where they went with it. I suppose we did influence some of them, albeit subconsciously—it's unavoidable. But they took some principles away with them, which is the most important thing. As a teacher, you have to pass on certain principles to a young artist, and open up ways forward for them.

You've said that a teacher in an art school doesn't only give, they also receive. What have the generations of your students given you over the years?

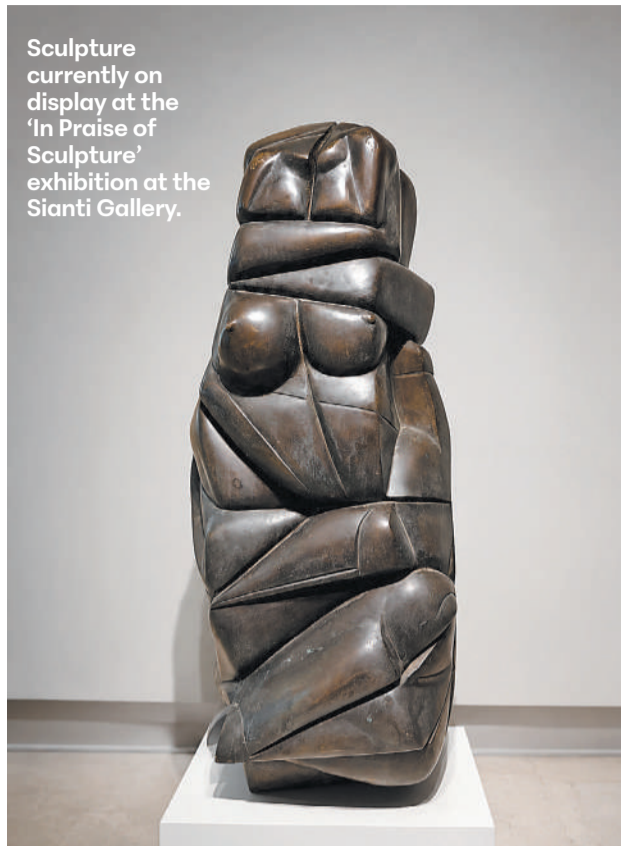
A teacher gets a lot back. We benefit from the freshness of the young people, their ideas. They come from different parts of Greece and each one brings something new, something different with them. When you are an artist yourself and you have reached a point where you can discern what has value from what doesn't—in life as much as in a person—then you get something out of the process.

You're refreshed, renewed. There is a constant creative ferment in the daily life of the school. Education is a constant give and take. It's not a one-way street.

A lot of public sculptures can come across as decorative or "invisible" in the cities of today..

If only they were even that, but often they're not even that. I think that, in Greece, we lack a genuine cultural policy that makes a serious attempt to integrate art into public spaces, a policy with a core vision and cohesive planning. In Spain, France, or Italy, there are policies in place that seek to give sculpture the place it deserves, and to let it serve its rightful role within the city.

Here, we operate in a much more haphazard way. A work may be installed for purely decorative purposes, or because someone has arbitrarily decided it's a good "fit" for a particular site. I remember [Miltiades] Evert saying this about Varotsos' "Runner", when he was Mayor of Athens: "I don't know much about art, but I know I like this." They installed it in Omonia first. But because there were a lot of demonstrations going on, and they were afraid the demonstrators would break the glass panes, they went so far as to bind it with ropes. Later on, it was moved to a site near the National Gal-



Sculpture currently on display at the 'In Praise of Sculpture' exhibition at the Sianti Gallery.

lery and the Hilton, where it worked beautifully. Today, it's a city landmark. One of my sculptures, a commission from the Doukas Schools, is installed a little further down. It's a piece entitled "Monument to a Greek Teacher", and features an aphorism by Dionysios Solomos, our national poet: "Lock Greece into your soul and you will feel every kind of greatness yearn within you." Which also expresses my own take on patriotism.

You have worked with both traditional and modern materials. Is

there any material that you haven't tackled yet?

As students, we worked mainly with clay, then with plaster and, of course, with marble. Over the years we added metal, wood and other materials to our repertoire. Still, I didn't have the opportunity to acquaint myself with a wider variety of materials during my years of study. That's why I later applied for a Greek state scholarship which allowed me to attend a school in Paris, where I was exposed to a host of modern materials and to different techniques.



drawing the works. Which slowly familiarizes them with art.

Fortunately, the museum I set up in Ioannina is visited by young children and schools, too. Melina [Mercuri] did the right thing back then as Culture Minister, when she decided to let children into museums for free. Because someone who is familiar with art will go about their work, whatever it may be, with greater sensitivity. And, later on in life, they'll teach their children to go to museums in their turn. Today, the opposite is often the case: it's often the children who bring their parents to my museum. But that's something, too.

What would you like visitors to take away from this exhibition?

Ideally, I'd like them to really take something home with them. Because that would mean the work has left the artist and entered a space where it will be loved, and where other people will see it. You see, art acquires new dimensions when it's loved by others. And fulfills its reason for existing, which is to spread outward, to live within people's lives."

So, you'd like them "to love art"?

Definitely. Because, as Nietzsche says—and this is a thought I return to often: 'the slow arrow of beauty gradually penetrates our soul, transforming it.'

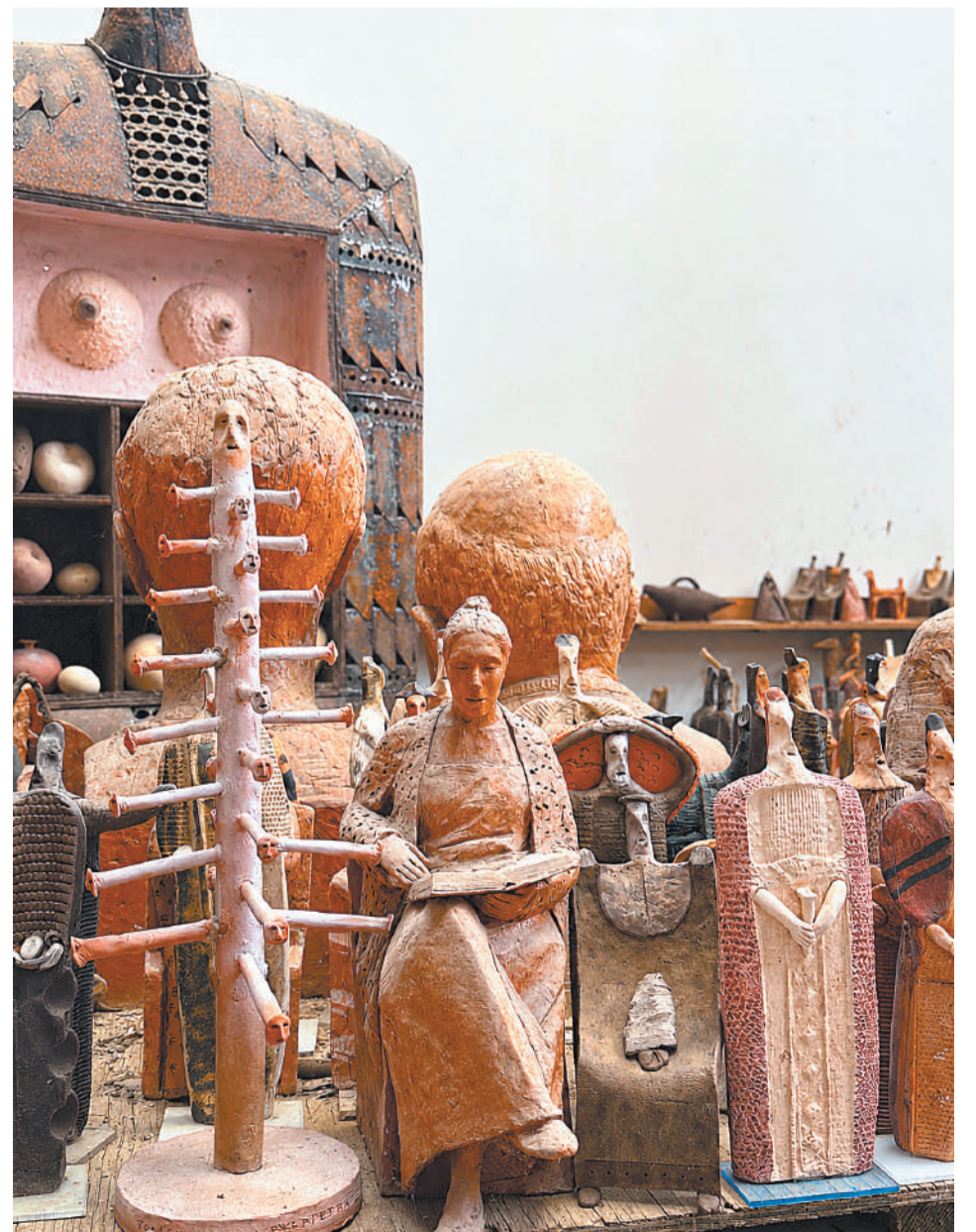
On my return, I began creating sculptures as you see them today. I also worked with the charred remains of the Polytechnic. Later, I added recycled materials, which I find fascinating, because they are discarded materials, but already have a history of their own. When you use them, it's like you're charging your work with memories of a different kind, with the experiences, the lives of others.

I've used cans, decorators' brushes, troughs, car bumpers and exhausts, driftwood, waste cardboard, rope, refrigerator compo-

nents, paper pulp. All these materials have a story of their own—and it's that which draws me to them.

Sculpture requires time, effort, space and physical endurance. Does that mean it's out of step with our times as an artform?

The problem starts with familiarity, as I said. People just aren't acquainted with art. I see what happens in the big museums abroad: at the Louvre, for example, children sit in the rooms with a teacher on hand to help, holding pads and



The interior of Theodoros Papagiannis' art studio is covered floor to ceiling in sculpted creations.

A New Generation Takes up the Cause to Reunite the Parthenon Marbles

Through schools, research and international outreach, Remarble Greece is trying to give younger voices a say in a historic cultural debate



Irimi Stamatoudi, Director UNIC Athens Law School, Professor and Member of the Advisory Board of Remarble Greece.

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In an interview with *TO BHMA International Edition*, Georgountzos discusses how the group is trying to mobilize young people in Greece and abroad, how it fits within the wider reunification movement, and why he believes “history deserves to be united.”

How would you describe the level of youth engagement around the reunification of the Parthenon Marbles today- in Greece and internationally? Where do you see momentum, and where is more work still needed?

Youth engagement around the reunification of the Parthenon Marbles is stronger than ever. Through initiatives such as Remarble Greece we are witnessing a new generation that no longer sees this issue as a distant diplomatic debate, but as a contemporary question of cultural justice, identity and historical integrity. Young people across Greece and abroad

are increasingly participating in educational initiatives, international discussions and advocacy efforts, proving that the movement is entering a new era driven by youth voices.

What is particularly encouraging is that the reunification debate no longer appears only as a temporary

headline. Internationally, there is growing recognition that the Parthenon Marbles are not isolated artworks, but inseparable parts of a monument that can only be fully understood through unity. At the same time, we still need to engage more young people globally and continue building awareness that cultural

heritage is not simply about the past, but also about the values societies choose to defend today.

At a time when young people are focused on climate change, cost of living, artificial intelligence, war and political polarization,

why do you believe cultural heritage, and specifically the Parthenon Marbles, still matters to them?

Because cultural heritage is deeply connected to identity, democracy and collective memory. The Parthenon Marbles are not simply museum objects; they symbolize

the values that shaped Western civilization and continue to inspire the modern world: democracy, knowledge, aesthetics and respect for human creativity. For many young people, the issue reflects broader contemporary questions about justice, ethics and historical responsibility.

In a world marked by uncertainty and polarization, heritage offers continuity and meaning. The reunification of the Marbles reminds us that progress should never come at the expense of historical truth. As we often say at Remarble Greece, history deserves to be united.

What does advocacy look like in practice for a youth-led organization like Remarble Greece? Are you focused on public awareness, education, media campaigns, institutional partnerships, international networking, or direct engagement with decision-makers?

For us, advocacy means transforming awareness into action. Through Remarble



Carolyn B. Maloney, Honorary President of Remarble Greece.

Greece, we combine education, research, international networking, public dialogue and institutional collaboration in order to build a meaningful global movement for the reunification of the Parthenon Marbles. Our work includes conferences, campaigns, school visits, partnerships with academics and cultural institutions, as well as international outreach aimed at mobilizing younger generations worldwide.

A central part of this effort is ParthenonEdu, through which we visit schools across Greece and engage students in discussions about cultural heritage and cultural justice. So far, we have visited schools across the Attica region, including the American College of Greece – Pierce, Arsakeio School of Psychiko, and the General High School of Vrilissia, while also traveling to regional communities and villages across Greece, including schools in the region of Messinia such as the Kalamata Primary School and the Primary School of Aris Messinias.

Our goal is to expand ParthenonEdu nationwide, reaching schools across both urban centers and regional communities, while also building connections with Greek diaspora schools abroad. Through this initiative, we aim to empower the next generation to actively engage with issues of cultural heritage, identity, and cultural justice, ensuring that the message of reunification reaches young Greeks around the world.

At the same time, through the Parthenon Clinic, we promote multidisciplinary research on the historical, legal and diplomatic dimensions of the issue. The findings of our research were presented at a major public event held under the auspices of the Hellenic Parliament and the UNESCO Chair on Threats to Cultural Heritage, bringing together academics, students, institutional rep-



Members of Remarkle Greece community.

resentatives and members of the public. This reflects the grassroots nature of our movement: a youth-led initiative that connects research, public engagement, and civic participation around the shared goal of reunifying the Parthenon Marbles. We believe that young people should not simply inherit history; they should actively help shape it.

Over 500 young people from Greece and abroad have already joined our movement as Ambassadors of Remarkle Greece, forming a growing international youth network for cultural justice. Individuals become Ambassadors by participating in our initiatives and demonstrating a strong commitment to promoting the cause through advocacy, public engagement and awareness-raising activities within their own communities and networks.

The campaign for reunification has been led for decades by governments,

archaeologists, museum professionals, lawyers, scholars, diaspora organizations and cultural figures. Where does Remarkle Greece fit within this broader movement, and how do you work with other actors advocating for reunification?

Remarkle Greece represents the voice of the new generation within a historic international movement. We deeply respect the work carried out over decades by governments, scholars, cultural institutions and diaspora organizations, and we see our role as complementary: bringing youth engagement, fresh energy and international outreach to a cause that transcends borders and generations.

Our movement works closely with academics, legal experts, cultural institutions and international supporters who share the belief

‘We believe that young people should not simply inherit history; they should actively help shape it. Over 500 young people from Greece and abroad have already joined our movement as Ambassadors of Remarkle Greece, forming a growing international youth network for cultural justice.’

‘The way societies respond to historical injustices reflects the values they choose to uphold in the present. The reunification of the Marbles is not simply about returning objects; it is about restoring the unity of a monument created as a whole.’

Thanos Georgountzos, founder of Remarkle Greece

that the Parthenon Marbles are inseparable parts of a universal monument. Significantly, our latest major event was held under the auspices of the Hellenic Parliament and the UNESCO Chair on Threats against Cultural Heritage, bringing together leading political, legal and cultural figures. The support we have received from figures such as former U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney and Congressman Gus Bilirakis demonstrates that this effort is gaining international recognition and momentum far beyond Greece.

Some observers might wonder what tangible role a youth-led group can play in an issue shaped largely by governments, museums and diplomacy. How do you define Remarkle Greece’s practical contribution?

Our contribution is practical because it focuses on educa-

tion, research and international mobilization. Through the Parthenon Clinic, we created a multidisciplinary initiative examining the legal, historical and diplomatic dimensions of the issue with academic rigor. Through ParthenonEdu, we bring these discussions directly into schools and encourage students to engage critically with questions of heritage and cultural justice.

Equally important is our ability to mobilize a new generation internationally. Public opinion and cultural diplomacy are shaped gradually by society itself, and youth movements play a vital role in keeping important issues visible and relevant. We are building a global network of young advocates who understand that the reunification of the Parthenon Marbles is not only a Greek demand, but also a universal cultural imperative.

What would you say to a young person- Greek or non-Greek- who sees the Parthenon Marbles as an important historical issue, but not an urgent contemporary one?

I would say that the Parthenon Marbles are ultimately about the kind of world we want to build today. They raise contemporary questions about justice, identity, historical responsibility and respect for cultural heritage. The way societies respond to historical injustices reflects the values they choose to uphold in the present.

The reunification of the Marbles is not simply about returning objects; it is about restoring the unity of a monument created as a whole. Culture cannot fully fulfill its universal role through fragmentation. This is why the issue concerns not only Greece, but everyone who believes that history, truth and heritage deserve to remain united.



The Elgin Marbles, originally part of Parthenon and Acropolis of Athens. On display in the British Museum in Duveen Gallery. East Pediment depicts the birth of Athena.



Thanos Georgountzos, founder of Remarkle Greece, presents its initiative to a room of dignitaries.



Are Beaches in Greece Actually Public?

The Greece of towels on the sand and long carefree beach days still exists. It's just becoming harder to find

By Maria Paravantes

With summer ahead of us and many of you planning to visit the Greek islands, one question I often get is whether beaches in Greece are actually public and accessible to all.

There is no simple “yes” or “no” answer. But one thing I will say is that gone are the days when Greek beaches were open to everyone.

Welcome to “All About Greece”, part of “TO

BHMA International Edition Travels Greece With You” series. Here, we answer your questions and introduce you to this wonderful country we call home and you call vacation!



Where free beaches still exist

There are definitely dozens of free beaches across Greece, where all you need is your towel, your picnic, and a good mood. You can spend the day soaking up the sun and enjoying the beach vibe. In fact, this is even foreseen by Greek law.

This is the case in places that are not especially popular, or during the winter, on beaches that are hard to get to, or beaches with cliffs, stones and which are overall not very visitor-friendly.

The reality

For those of you, however, dreaming of finding a free beach on super famous islands like Mykonos, Rhodes, and Paros, to name just a few of your favorite places, forget about it.

Nearly all the beachfront space on these islands is now covered with endless rows of loungers and umbrellas or massive sun beds inside private beach zones. Prices for these vary depending on season, beach, island, and month with the most expensive being in July and August.

And it doesn't stop there. Getting to the beach now often requires entering through a beach club, which has basically cut off direct access to the shore. This means you may have to park your car or motorbike in a private parking



area and pay for that too. Then comes the umbrella rental, coffee, food, and everything else that follows.

Should you decide to go on foot, you may still be allowed to enter, even though many places will initially discourage you, but finding an actual free space to place your own towel or umbrella is, in most cases, nearly impossible.

The Towel Movement

Inevitably, the situation got so out of hand that locals on several Greek islands and in seaside areas across the country began reacting after finding it impossible to find a free spot on the beach to place their towel and take a swim.

This led, a few years ago, to the launch, initially on Paros, of the so-called “Towel Movement”.

Frustrated locals demanded that Greek beaches return to the people while bringing into the spotlight hundreds of shoreline-use violations. Since then, they have repeatedly called on the government to take action.

Despite Greece's stringent shoreline-use laws, every summer new violations come to light, including illegal construction in protected areas as seen on Milos, Mykonos, Santorini, Zakynthos, and Halkidiki, as well as more umbrellas and sun beds, the operation of massive beach bars, and violations regarding permitted noise levels. The movement



eventually spread to other islands, including Crete, Corfu, Rhodes, and Halkidiki.

What Greek law actually says

According to Greek law, access to the sea - whether that is to take a walk along the beach, swim, or place your towel - is considered a public good that cannot be privately owned. This even applies to luxury resorts promising exclusivity.

But the reality is very different, and you will quickly see this for yourself. Businesses, including hotels, beach bars, and resorts can lease sections of beach from the state and cover these with sunbeds, umbrellas, food/drink services, and water sports facilities. Under these lease agreements, they are required to leave open public access paths, keep part of the beach free, and avoid blocking the shoreline entirely. In reality, this is almost never the case.

What travelers should know

The ongoing takeover of public beach space in Greece under often vague lease agreements has led to growing public outrage. In response, the government has repeatedly pledged to increase inspections and fines. It even launched the MyCoast app two years ago, where users can



report violations in real time. Unfortunately, the dire situation continues.

That said, under Greek law, no one can deny you access to the beach. If someone attempts to block you from entering, you can ask whether the area is operating under a state-leased concession, look for posted concession boundaries, contact the local port authority (“limenarchio”), or report the issue through on the MyCoast app.

This, of course, is something very few travelers wish to do, and I totally understand. While on vacation, time is precious and not worth wasting on a bureaucratic ordeal.

In this case, the best recommendation I can make is to avoid extremely popular Greek islands if your priority is free and easy beach access. And if you still want to go, then simply be prepared for the reality. Don't expect to find open stretches of free beach everywhere. Instead, plan ahead, understand that sunbed prices can be hefty. One good idea is to visit Greece in the shoulder season.

The truth is that Greece still has incredible beaches. But the experience has changed dramatically in many parts of the country. On some islands, beach culture today is less about simplicity and freedom and more about reservations, minimum spend requirements, and finding parking plus fees. That does not mean travelers should avoid Greece. It simply means you should arrive knowing what to expect.