

CHISEL AND MEMORY--the Contribution of Marble Craftsmanship to the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments” photography exhibition

Dear Vice Mayor Mr. Niu Qingbao, Dear Officials of the Chengdu Municipal Government, Dear Friends,

I feel particularly honored for being invited today to address the opening of the CHISEL AND MEMORY--the Contribution of Marble Craftsmanship to the Restoration of the Acropolis Monuments” photography exhibition, in this beautiful Museum. And this honor is particularly important for many reasons. Please allow me to highlight two of them:

Firstly, this exhibition presents the long, arduous and meticulous efforts in the restoration of the most important Greek monument and possibly the most emblematic architectural treasure of the Western civilization. The exhibition is presented for the first time, not just in Chengdu or in China, but possibly in all Asia. Moreover, the event takes place in the city of Chengdu, where a Consulate General of Greece will open, hopefully soon, with the intention to bringing Greece and China even closer in the political, economic, cultural and technological fields. The 2021 Greece-China Year of Culture and Tourism, the Ancient Civilizations Forum, the organization of the next Universidad in 2021 in Chengdu and the 2022 Beijing Winter Games, provide ample opportunities for closer cooperation over the next 18 months.

Secondly, this is an exhibition that invites all of us to engage with the photographs presented, not just with our minds, but, most importantly, with our hearts! This exhibition centers on the emotions that inspired the work of marble craftsmen on the Acropolis for almost a century. Self-denial, pride, zeal, companionship and the spirit of cooperation in moments of difficult and hard labor have inspired this exhibition. It has been often said that Photography as an Art embodies time and space and brings to the spectator an “awareness of having-been-there”: if so, nothing can testify to this concept better than the true emotions we all experience by looking at these photos. The Greek marble

craftsmen, through their hard efforts, talent and love of beauty, have condensed spatial and temporal distances and served the most important monument of the Ancient Greek World, the Acropolis of Athens. In doing so, these Modern Greek craftsmen demonstrated to us all the way to serve Art and the World, or “Cosmos”, which denoted in Greek “order and beauty” together!

With these thoughts, I would like to thank the Chengdu Municipal Government and its FAO, the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Culture, Broadcast-TV and Tourism, the Chengdu Museum, the Committee for the Conservation of the Acropolis Monuments (ESMA), the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA) under the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, and all those who contributed to the realization of this exhibition. I do sincerely hope that it will mark the beginning of an ever closer cultural cooperation with Chengdu and more broadly between our countries and peoples.

Thank you!

Georgios Iliopoulos
Ambassador