

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF THESSALONIKI | PRESS RELEASE
Opening of a Temporary Exhibition
SEEING THE UNSEEN | Six Stone "Panels" of an Ancient Painting
Thursday, 19 November 2026, 18:00, free admission

How can we see what time has rendered invisible? And what can modern science reveal about images created more than two thousand years ago?

The Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki opens its new temporary exhibition, **"Seeing the Unseen: Six Stone 'Panels' of an Ancient Painting"**, on **Thursday, 19 November 2026, at 18:00**, presenting six rare surviving examples of ancient painting from Thessaloniki, together with new evidence brought to light by their recent study by an **international interdisciplinary research team**.

The "unseen" takes on multiple meanings in the exhibition: from the ancient works themselves, **presented to the public for the first time, 102 years after their discovery**, to the figures and details revealed through the "digital eye" of scientific research. The exhibition also brings the research process itself, usually hidden from public view, into the foreground, presenting its findings, interpretative hypotheses, and unanswered questions. Through a multisensory experience combining sight, touch, and hearing, it calls into question the primacy of vision, recognising the significance of different ways of perceiving and understanding ancient works of art. At the same time, it invites visitors to reflect on the limits of our knowledge of the past.

At the heart of the exhibition are six painted stone blocks that once formed part of an ancient frieze and were discovered in Thessaloniki in 1924, immediately to the north of the Ancient Agora. A century later, the application of innovative non-invasive imaging and analytical techniques has enabled a more detailed examination of the paintings, the identification of iconographic elements, and the detection of pigments preserved on their weathered surfaces. These new findings have led researchers to propose that the scenes may be associated with episodes from the Trojan mythological cycle, particularly the fall of Troy.

To develop the exhibition, the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki worked closely with the international interdisciplinary research team, which is responsible for the scientific documentation of the exhibition content. This collaboration takes place within the framework of a Memorandum of Cultural Cooperation between the Museum and the research institutions with which the team members are affiliated.

The research team includes Dr Myrina Kalaitzi, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Historical Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation; Dr Maria Stamatopoulou, Professor in Classical Art and Archaeology at the University of Oxford; Dr Giovanni Verri, Conservation Scientist in the Department of Conservation and Science at the Art Institute of Chicago; and Dr Maria Kokkori, Associate Professor and Senior Scientist at the Center for Scientific Studies in the Arts at Northwestern University, with the collaboration of Dr Hortense de La Codre, Dr Andreas Karydas, PhD Candidate Kalliopi Tsampa, Dr Konogan Beaufay, and Dr Manolis Petrakis.

The exhibition is an initiative of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. Dr Styliana Galiniki, archaeologist and Head of the Directorate of Collections and Exhibitions, conceived the exhibition concept and developed its museological rationale, and was also responsible for its museological curation and the writing of the exhibition texts. George Tsekmes, architectural engineer, was responsible for the exhibition design and implementation, while Dr Angeliki Moneda, Head of the Department of Digital Governance, oversaw the technical implementation of the digital installations and created an animation using artificial intelligence tools.

Graphic design and communications were undertaken by Melachrini Chatzi, and lighting design by Tryfon Avramikas. Technical support was provided by Stelios Karampikas, Christos Tzotzis, Andreas Pougioudoglou, Christos Pliakos, and Christos Antoniadis, while conservators Dimitris Karolidis (Head of the Department of Conservation) and Panagiota Balafa contributed to the care of the exhibits. The contribution of Thomas Liolios (Head of the Directorate of Administrative, Financial and Technical Support) and Dimitra Seretidou (Head of the Department of Financial Management) was particularly significant.

As part of the museological design, Off Stream, in collaboration with the Museum team and the interdisciplinary research team, undertook the development of accessible interpretative materials. Drawing on the Creative Access methodology, it produced tactile representations, audio descriptions, and videos in Greek Sign Language and International Sign, expanding opportunities for access and participation in the exhibition experience for diverse audiences.

The exhibition opening takes place during the **13th International Round Table on Polychromy in Ancient Sculpture and Architecture**, co-organised by the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki and the National Hellenic Research Foundation and hosted in the Museum's "Manolis Andronikos" Lecture Hall from 18 to 21 November 2026. The exhibition engages with this year's conference theme, **"Polychromy and the Senses: Integrating Scientific, Cognitive, and Aesthetic Perspectives on Ancient Colour"**, connecting scientific research into ancient colour with the multisensory perception of ancient works of art.

Accessibility Information
The exhibition adopts a multisensory and inclusive approach, offering different ways of perceiving and experiencing its content to ensure **equitable access for visitors with and without disabilities**.

Exhibition Space

The exhibition space (Temporary Hall A), located on the Museum's lower level, can be accessed by stairs or lift from the ground-floor foyer. Seating is available throughout the exhibition space, which is free of obstacles, with passageways wider than 1.5 metres. The lighting in the exhibition space is low. The Museum's main entrance is equipped with an access ramp, and accessible toilet facilities are

available. Guide dogs and assistance dogs, accompanied by their handlers, are welcome in all areas of the Museum.

Further information about the Museum's accessibility facilities is available at: https://www.amth.gr/visit/accessibility

Exhibition Content
Tactile representations and audio descriptions are provided for all the objects on display. The exhibition content is also available in digital format in Greek and English, in Greek Sign Language, and in International Sign. The digital content is compatible with screen readers.

Greek Sign Language interpretation will be provided during the exhibition opening (courtesy of the Association of Friends of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki).

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