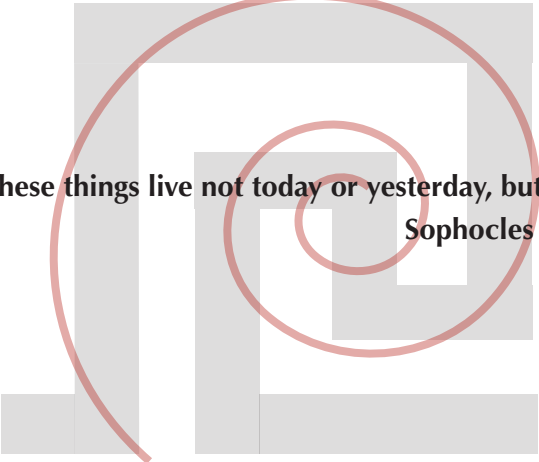


HACCM COLLECTION AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Welcome to HACCM!

The Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum is dedicated to the history of Greek Americans in the Pacific Northwest. The museum traces the cultural development of Greece from antiquity to the late 20th century and into the present day, including how Greek culture is lived and shared in Oregon and Southwest Washington. This guide tells the stories behind the HACCM collection. It is intended to both supplement the information throughout the museum as well as connect you to additional resources.

What does “Hellenic” mean? The country we call Greece is officially known as the Hellenic Republic. The term "Hellenic" comes from the Ancient Greek Ἑλλάς (pronounced "Hellas"); the term "Greece" comes from the Latin word "Graecia". While "Hellenic" and "Greek" are often used interchangeably, we use the term "Hellenic" to describe a broader historical and cultural context—from ancient to modern times.



“For these things live not today or yesterday, but for all time.”
Sophocles

Ancient Greece ~ A Starting Point

Ancient Greece encompasses a broad period of about 1,000 years following the Greek Dark Ages, and includes the late Geometric, Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods. Prior to the Dark Ages, early civilizations in Greece included the Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean. The several centuries of Ancient Greece cover significant historical events (Persian Wars, Peloponnesian War, rule of Alexander the Great), cultural developments (Homer's writings, democracy, the Olympics), and artistic innovations (vase painting techniques, lifelike representations in sculpture, and monumental architecture). Ancient Greece is where the journey through the HACCM collection begins.

Pottery is a large part of the archaeological record of ancient Greece. Little survives of ancient Greek painting except for what is found on earthenware, which helps paint a portrait of the world of Ancient Greece. HACCM's collection includes pieces of pottery that illustrate its many different uses: drinking water (kantharos), drinking wine (kylix), holding oil or perfume (aryballos, lekythos), ladles (kyathos), and others.



Chehak Vases

By the seventh century BCE, the Corinthians developed the black figure painting technique. On top of an iron-rich clay that turned reddish-orange when fired, the painters created an outline of a design and then filled it with more clay. The piece would be fired (around 800 degrees Celsius!), oxidized, then fired at an even higher heat. Throughout this process, different levels of oxygen were allowed to enter the kiln, which ultimately led to a final product that was reddish-orange with black figures.

It was the Athenian painters who introduced red-figure vase painting, which lent itself to narrative scenes of battles, mythology and legends. The process is the direct opposite of the black-figure method—the figures maintained the color of the clay while the background turned black during firing—and this allowed for greater detail to come through on the pottery.

Sculpture (what little of it remains) is another way historians and archaeologists can glimpse into Ancient Greece. During this period there was an increasing interest in representing the human figure, though the approach to this representation transformed overtime. In the earlier periods of Ancient Greece (roughly 6th century BCE), a kouros or freestanding figure of a male youth, was not necessarily meant to depict an individual, but rather an archetype, and was often used to mark graves. Drawing on Ancient Egyptian art, these figures were often made of marble and would have been painted. In the reproduction in the HACCM collection, note the geometric patterns of the hair and the faint smile (sometimes known as the “archaic smile”) – a facial feature with many possible interpretations, but all of which suggest an attempt to capture lifelike qualities.



Kouros Reproduction

Examples of Ancient Greek art ask us to consider: How did the Ancient Greeks relate to one another? How did they share their customs and practices with each other and how did those get passed down across generations? While the examples in the HACCM collection might not have all the answers, we can think of this period as the start of “recorded history” and therefore it plays an important role in setting the stage for the rest of HACCM’s collection.

As the period we refer to as “Ancient Greece” came to an end, Roman rule expanded to include the Greek mainland—overlapping the Hellenistic period and into the 4th century. The Romans admired Hellenistic art, and many Greek artists worked in Rome, including during the Roman Imperial period.

Byzantine Period (330 - 1453) and The Orthodox Church

Byzantium (a term that was not actually used until the 18th century) refers to the continuation of the Roman Empire in its Christian form. Its history started with the establishment of Constantinople as the New Rome in 330 under Constantine the Great and ended 1,123 years later with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Byzantium went from superpower to weak city-state, but its culture and Orthodox Christianity continue to influence millions of people around the world today. At the core of the Byzantine worldview was Jesus Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church. Every aspect of a Byzantine’s life was marked by Christian ceremony and symbolism. Images of Christ dominated coinage, public places, palaces, churches, documents, clothing, ceremonials, literature, history and philosophy.

Many traditions of the Orthodox Church that emerged during the Byzantine Empire persist today. One clear example of this is the vestments that Orthodox priests wear. While early Christian vestments originally developed from the style of everyday dress common in the Roman Empire, the Byzantine period saw the development of differentiation in dress between the clergy and lay people. The strong relationship of church and state was such that clergy dress was similar to imperial dress – an idea underscored by the continued tradition of Orthodox bishops’ crowns, said to have been passed directly from the Emperor to the Patriarch at the fall of Constantinople.



Vestments

The overall style of Orthodox vestments has not changed significantly since this period. The purple robes on display were Father Elias Stephanopoulos', the priest who served at Holy Trinity for 19 years in Portland, and are an example of vestments that are commonly worn during the period of Lent.

Icons take their name from the Greek word *eikon*, which means "image," and are not restricted to a specific medium. Icons hold a central role in the religious practice of Eastern Orthodox Christians.

Unlike Renaissance paintings, Orthodox icons are often flattened and do not attempt to show figures within an illusionistic space. Beyond this, in the Orthodox tradition one typically refers to an icon as being "written" rather than "painted". The style of Byzantine iconography continues to be practiced, over 1,500 years after the first images were created! However, icons were threatened during the period of Iconoclasm (726-843). In a series of intense and often violent debates, critics attacked the role of the icon in Orthodox religious practice, arguing that icon veneration equated to idol worship. The Orthodox faith views icons as a visual Gospel. In other words, icons were intended to create reverence in worship and to serve as an existential link between God and the worshipper. Icons have been called prayers, hymns, sermons in form and color.

When Greeks first came to Portland, the Greek Orthodox Church is what unified immigrants who came from different parts of Greece. Originally located on SE Taggart Street, Holy Trinity was established in 1907 and the current location on NE Glisan Street was built in 1952 and consecrated in 1956. The icon photographed here relates to this



Icon of the Virgin Stratilatissa

history, as the inscription on it describes how it was commissioned to protect the Portland Greek Orthodox community.

This icon of the Virgin Mary (*Panagia* or *Theotokos*) with Jesus Christ depicts the Mother of God as *stratilatissa* or army commander, as the writing on the icon describes: “the one who leads the faithful to confront victoriously the difficulties of life at the ends of the world”. The term *stratilatissa* is one that also ties the icon (in addition to its style and symbolism) to the Byzantine period, for the term *stratelates* was used as an honorary title in the empire.

One of the oldest pieces on display in the museum is the copper



baptismal font, purchased in Athens and blessed at the St. Kyriaki Church in Achladokambos. This font was used in the religious sacrament of infant baptism. Copper was readily found in Greece and used for a variety of religious objects as this baptismal font.

Greece Under Ottoman Rule

Baptismal Font

Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453, and soon after the Ottoman Turks entered Greece. Most of Greece was under Ottoman rule until the early 1800s when the Greeks fought for their independence.

During the Ottoman Empire, copper was also used for everyday objects, like those on display in the museum. The word “copper” is derived from Kupros, which is the Greek name for Cyprus. Copper production in Cyprus has existed since roughly 4,000 BCE, though the pieces on display in the museum represent more modern production, roughly 17th-19th century and are representative of daily household objects. The platter photographed includes decorative motifs such as leaves, pitchers, and at the center—the Star of David. Romaniote



Copper Platter

Jews have lived in Greece since the third or fourth century BCE, and Sephardic Jews settled in Greece in the 15th century, after being expelled from Spain. Prior to the Holocaust, over 70,000 Jews lived in Greece. Tragically, about 80% of this population was killed in the Holocaust. This platter may have at one time been owned by a Jewish family in Greece.



To learn more about the history of Sephardic Jews in Greece, you can view a recording of “A Concert Celebrating the Jews of Greece” performed at HACCM in 2023.

Greek War of Independence (1821-1829)

As the period of Enlightenment and political revolutions emerged across Europe and the Americas, the desire for Greek independence grew. This was also aided by a growing feeling of philhellenism, a love of Greek culture. Despite the early rebellions of the war being crushed by Ottoman forces, the Greeks gained recognition by the Ottoman Empire as autonomous in 1829 and as an independent nation in 1832.

Greece in the Modern Era

The century and a half that followed Greek Independence was not without turbulence. In addition to the two World Wars, the Balkan Wars, Asia Minor Catastrophe, and Greek Civil War all placed great strain on a newly independent but struggling nation.

One effort to address Greece’s challenges was instigated by Queen Frederica through “Vasiliki Pronia” or The Queen’s Fund/Her Majesty’s Fund in the 1950s. The effort was designed to promote Greek handicrafts and raise the standard of living in the rural areas of Greece by providing the raw material, adequate training and facilities to enable the villagers to pursue their crafts. While there are some pieces in the HACCM collection



Pillow Case

from this effort, there are also textiles in the collection created by local Greek Americans reflective of these traditions and history.

The modern country of Greece, not unlike the city-states of Ancient Greece, is diverse in terms of geography and culture. One of the clearest illustrations of regional distinctions is traditional dress. Since Greek independence, these traditional styles have fallen out of fashion, but they still reflect the differences in climate, geography, and economic status across the country.



Macedonian Dress

The mannequin dressed in a woolen outfit is representative of the traditional dress of Macedonia in northern Greece. This dress highlights the women's contribution to the struggle against the Ottomans, as the headdress was inspired by the look of warriors helmets. This dress stands in contrast to the dress of more metropolitan areas of Greece, which would have been made from materials like silk and velvet, and signaled an orientation towards Western European fashions.

This period is also marked by a growing interest to define what Greek nationhood looked like, and the 20th century artists in our collection show people who grappled with the question of Greek history and statehood. Nikos Sofialakis (1914-2002) was a master of classical realism who drew heavily from Greek mythology. Nikos Hadzikyairkos - Ghikas (1906-1994) studied ancient and Byzantine art as well as folk art and is commonly recognized as the leading Greek cubist. Ioannis Tsarouchis (1910-1989) was strongly influenced by Greek folk arts.

The Hellenes Come to the Pacific Northwest

The next chapter in our story is about Hellenes in the Pacific Northwest: The Greek Americans in Oregon and Southwest Washington. While the Greek American community often uses 1907 as the year it was established (aligning with the establishment of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church), there is some record of Greeks who had immigrated to the Pacific Northwest by the late 1800s. The Orthodox Church was central to Greek American identity through the twentieth century and remains important in the present day.

HACCM has several interviews of Greek Americans from the Oregon and SW Washington community. To learn more about the oral history program, scan the QR code here.



Stefana

For many of the early immigrants, marriage is what firmly situated them in their new country. Many of the Greek immigrants to the Pacific Northwest worked on the railroads, in the timber industry, or on the coast as fisherman. When they first arrived, most of the other Greek immigrants were single men.

Gradually, Greek women also came to the West Coast, often to marry. The stefana or wedding crowns on display here are a representation of two individuals becoming one through marriage.

The wedding scrapbook adjacent to this display was lovingly put together by a community member and brings together the many stories of Greek marriages in the Portland community.



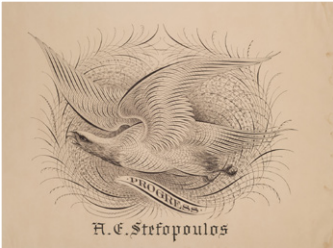
Wedding Gown

The Eye of the Beholder:

Artists depict Greece, America, and the Greek American experience

In addition to the 20th century Greek artists in the HACCM collection, there are other artists whose work we can use to further interpret the Greek American experience in the Pacific Northwest.

Tom Stefopoulos (1882-1971)



Progress

As a train watchman stationed at the Lovejoy Ramp of the Broadway Bridge in Portland, Tom painted illustrations on the Lovejoy Columns, depicting Greek mythology, Biblical imagery, and Americana.

Born in Lamia, Greece, Tom moved to the United States at the start of the twentieth century and opened an art studio in Seattle in 1920. World War II forced him to close his business and change careers, moving to Portland to work on the shipyards and ultimately the railroads.

To learn more about Tom Stefopoulos, check out the HACCM's online interactive exhibit, where you can trace the artist's journey from Greece to Portland.



Bill Papas (1927-2000)

Originally born in South Africa to Greek parents, Bill spent much of his career as a political cartoonist in London. After a cross country road trip through the United States, Bill and his wife came to Portland. The artist became known in this city for his distinct style of portraiture, and was often commissioned by local businesses. The lively painting of four dancers used to hang in a Greek restaurant in downtown Portland.



Hasapiko



Towards Autumn

Marguerite Frances Sylvia (1928-1973)

While Marguerite (“Peggy”) was not of Greek heritage, she spent several years living in the small village of Molivos, in Lesvos, Greece. Her paintings are an intimate portrayal of village life, family and relationships, cultural traditions, and religious occasions.

Vasiliki Vlahakis (1931-2021)

Vasiliki (“Vasi”) was born in Portland, Oregon to Greek parents. A student of art at Lewis and Clark College, Vasi was very connected to her Hellenic heritage. Her painting on display in the museum “Greeks in Portland: Hellenic Heritage in the City” was originally commissioned for a Greek American – owned hair salon in Portland, and illustrates the artist’s ties to both Hellenic culture and the city of Portland.



Greeks in Portland, Heritage in the City

HACCM also has copies of past exhibition catalogs if there are topics you would like to learn more about. Please inquire at the front desk.

Hope you enjoyed your visit to the Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum of Oregon and SW Washington. Thank you.

CITATIONS AND WHERE TO LEARN MORE:

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

“Ancient Greece, 1000 B.C.–1 A.D.” <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/?period=04®ion=eus> (October 2000)

“Ancient Greece, 1–500 A.D.” <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/?period=05®ion=eusb> (October 2000)

Brooks, Sarah. “Byzantium (ca. 330–1453).” In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/byza/hd_byza.htm (originally published October 2001, last revised October 2009)

Byington, Quinn, William McClelland, and Zachary Quint. “That Greece Might Still Be Free’: Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence from an International Perspective. University of Michigan Library. <https://apps.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/200th-anniversary-greek-war>

Chrysostomos, Archimandrite. Orthodox Liturgical Dress. Holy Cross Orthodox Press. 1981.

Doulis, Thomas. A Surge to the Sea: The Greeks in Oregon. Jack Lockie & Associates. 1977.

Doulis, Thomas. Landmarks of Our Past: The First 75 Years of the Greek Orthodox Community of Oregon. Gann Publishing Company. 1983.

Gardner, Helen, 1878-1946. Art through the ages Gardner's art through the ages / Fred S. Kleiner, Christin J. Mamiya. 12th ed. Belmont, CA : Thomson/Wadsworth, c2005.

Acknowledgements

The catalogue has been written and prepared by:

Maria Phourtidis Carter - Executive Director Joan Liapes - HACCM Exhibition Committee

Georgia Liapes - HACCM Exhibition Committee Lena Brice - Graphic Artist

This project is funded by grants from:

The Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

The Regional Arts & Culture Council and the Arts Access Fund



“All Things Greek: The HACCM Podcast” on Spotify has several episodes dedicated to the topics in this guide.



Come find us on YouTube, Instagram & Facebook “Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum”



of Oregon and SW Washington

Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum
Fr. Elias Stephanopoulos Center, 2nd Floor
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral
3131 NE Glisan St, Portland, OR 97232