

## **Olympic Legacy in Public Sculpture from Ancient Models to the Problematics of Modernism the Case of the New Generation of Greek Artists**

**Panagiota Papanikolaou**

Hellenic International University

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**Abstract:** *Linking the Olympic Games to Culture has had a very positive impact on perpetuating humanitarian values and showcasing Art as a basic pillar of the Olympic Movement. This perception was already dominant from the first Olympic Games held in the modern era (1896). Originally, cultural actions were promoted in a competitive framework. Then, Culture became (and remains to this day) an integral part of the Olympic Games acquiring a much longer time dimension. Culture has allowed expressing the Olympic Values with further clarity and in line with the rules of aesthetics, as defined under the classical terms of harmony, beauty, nobleness, balance, etc. Thus, Athleticism becomes a means for exercising both body and spirit. From an ideological point of view, the Ancient Greek legacy has been particularly powerful, not only with regard to the conditions for organising the Games, but also with respect to the modalities for promoting artistic expression. It took a long time for aesthetics to be renewed, mainly through the innovations brought about by Modern Art. These types of influences and changes may be clearly noticed in public sculpture, both in individual open-air works and in Sculpture Olympic Parks. The case study is Greek public sculpture.*

**Keywords:** *Olympic Values, Open-Air Sculpture, Olympic Park, Olympic Art Legacy, Greek Olympic Sculpture*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The achievement of the objective of bringing together Athleticism and Culture has gone through the following three phases: the “Pentathlon of the Muses” (Stockholm 1912 - Helsinki 1952), the “Olympic Arts Festival” (Melbourne 1956 - Seoul 1988) and the “Cultural Olympiad” (Barcelona 1992 - Rio de Janeiro 2016). Each phase had its own particularities. The first one was competitive and it aimed at rewarding artists in the same manner as athletes. Competition concerned five categories of culture: painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry and music. The second phase aimed at promoting the national cultural characteristics without disregarding the importance of the world’s artistic variety. The third phase is a major cultural event extending over a particularly long period of time in line with the model of the Ancient “*panegyris*” (Gold & Gold, 2011).

It is a common belief that the Olympic Values, which make up the Olympic Games’ intellectual dimension and which are part of young people’s education, are promoted through Culture. Furthermore, Art allows developing man’s most creative powers, in the same manner as Athleticism highlights man’s physical abilities. According to the International Olympic Academy (<http://www.ioa.org.gr>), the fundamental humanitarian values are identical to the Olympic ones, including good sportsmanship, fair play, peaceful coexistence, brotherhood, cultural variety, friendship, equity, excellence. Indeed, some values, such as beauty, harmony, nobleness, balance, *eurythmia* are somewhat common with the terminology used in art criticism. In particular, Pierre de Coubertin himself referred to “*eurythmia*” at the historical congress which was held at the Sorbonne in 1894, where he likened the feeling that possessed the participants to the “*ancient eurythmia*”, as cited by Chatziefstathiou (2012: 5). The supreme ideal of Ancient Greeks, the ancient harmony among body, spirit and soul, was revived in a solemn manner in modern Olympic Games by including both Athleticism and Culture on an equal footing (Chatziefstathiou & Henry, 2010).

As expected, this was the spirit that prevailed during the first phase of the Art competitions, which took place on the occasion of the Olympic Games. Originally, the prevailing artistic perception was synonymous with classicism and was modelled after Ancient Greek art. Public sculpture was the primary vehicle for conveying such artistic views. However, this insistence on established vehicles excluded artists with innovative tendencies as well as the proponents of modernism. Nevertheless, it soon became apparent that Art was able to express the Olympic ideals irrespective of the choice of forms and models. This is why we can see, later on, the creation of Olympic Sculpture Parks in various Olympic cities, such as Seoul and Beijing, as well as at the seat of the International Olympic Committee, in Lausanne, showcasing works from various stylistic choices and morphologies. We note that, in these cases, the artists' participation was based on their artistic quality as identified by the organisers and the competent authorities. This has enlarged the spectrum of artistic participation so as to include artists from all tendencies without any typological and stylistic "preconditions".

Greek sculptors, together with other artists, have had the opportunity to present their work in public exhibitions on the occasion of the Olympic Games either in the competition festivals or through donations of their works made by public or private bodies or by being selected to participate in Olympic Parks. We will see below that models have varied from time to time. In any event, they represent another aspect of Greek public sculpture whose features refer, in their own way, to the intertemporal values of Greek culture.

## 2. "ATHLOS" AND "NIKE", TWO FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF OLYMPISM

Exercising both body and soul was closely intertwined with the nature of ancient Greek culture and it reflects man's effort to achieve balanced and harmonious development. This effort required considerable and continuous labour, which Ancient Greeks called "Athlos", a term we can also find in Homer's *Iliad*, its purpose being to conquer victory, "Nike" (Spathari, 2004: 37). It is apparent that these "labours" a man undertook, i.e. the systematic exercise of the body obeying to the mind's orders, materialised in group Competitions, where the prize consisted in a wreath made from wild olive branches and not in some material good, according to Pausanias the Traveller, when referring to Olympic Games in Antiquity (Pausanias, V, 7, 6-8 and Papahatzis, 2002: 228). According to the Ancient Greek lyric poet Pindar, in his famous *Olympian Odes*, "the prize of winning is glory" (Spathari, *ibid*). Through his laborious efforts to dominate his body, man also developed the skills to sharpen his intellect and acquire the relevant moral fortitude, which represented the supreme ideal in Antiquity (*καλός καγαθός*, *kalos kagathos*, meaning a beautiful and virtuous citizen). At the same time, and because of the competition entailed by the pursuit of victory, the values of good sportsmanship, friendship and excellence were born, which have since then acquired permanent and universal recognition and have become fundamental values of Olympism. "Agon" and "Nike" would become statues to honour the great importance of the concepts they embody.

In Ancient Greek literature, from Homer to the tragic poets (Turatsoglou, 2004: 18-19), the term "Agon" means competition in sports games, such as, for example, the Olympic Games. Since then, the term "athlos" refers to "the prize of the competition" and "more generally praise, reward and victory". Both terms have maintained approximately the same meaning and use to this day in Greek.

The purpose of Competition was victory, "Nike", whose statue can be found in many parts of Ancient Olympia. "The goddess Nike personifies the favourable outcome in any competition" (Skaltsas, 2004: 58) and this is why it was honoured by humans. Its representations by means statues, vases and coins are impressively numerous in the Ancient world.

The most famous work from Antiquity is "Nike" by the sculptor Paeonius, which was found in the sanctuary in Ancient Olympia. This famous statue was dedicated to Zeus in Olympia by the Messenians and Naupaktians to commemorate their victory over the Spartans in 424 BC. The sculpture was found in Olympia in 1875 during excavations in the sacred place by the German Archaeological School and has since been one of the most important exhibits at the Archaeological Museum of Ancient Olympia. The statue was made of Parian marble, it was 2.90 m high, and it represents the goddess Nike descending from heaven to earth to convey the message of victory. According to Pausanias (V, 26, 1), it carried in one hand a branch of palm and

in the other hand a wreath of wild olive. It is a work of high aesthetics, considered to be of unparalleled artistic beauty, and it is one of the masterpieces of Classical Greek art. During the revival of the modern Olympic Games, **Paeonius' Nike** became the most important symbol represented on almost all Olympic medals, and it has inspired many artists over time.

The “Nike” of Olympia has brought a new *ethos* to sports, much like *kallos* (beauty) did in art, and it became a vehicle for concepts, such as *good sportsmanship* (in sports) and *harmony* (in art), which evolved into basic values and standards in democratic societies. In art, in particular, *kallos* refers to both physical and intellectual beauty.

The goddess Nike was not only a work of art which morphologically refers to a unique moment in Greek plastic art; from a semantic point of view, Nike is the symbol of Competition, it is the allegory of fate, and this is why it reminds us of the most glorious moments in the Olympic Games. It is the benchmark of the superhuman effort of man to dominate his physical and mental strengths. This is why artists from all over the world have been influenced, in one way or another, by the polysemy of the Ancient Olympia “Nike”.

### **3. OLYMPIC GAMES AND ATHLETIC SCULPTURE**

As indicated in the outset, the International Olympic Committee had already put in place, since the fifth Olympic Games (Stockholm 1912), an Olympic Festival revolving around culture. The relevant decision had been adopted at an international congress held in Paris in 1906. Pierre de Coubertin, who first had the idea for the revival of the Olympic Games, had intended from the very beginning to link sports and culture, a very important dimension, successfully pursued to this day. His major argument had been that the same had also been done in Antiquity. Many poets and artists have proudly presented their works here, in Olympia, like Herodotus, the Father of History, who “recited part of its monumental work” before the temple of Zeus (Turatsoglou, 2004: 24).

The “Pentathlon of the Muses” was a competition festival in Fine Arts. It was the first effort to make the Olympic Games coexist with Culture. However, the artists’ participations were not very representative, given that professional and modern artists were absent. The themes developed had athletic contents and promoted the values of Olympism. In general, this led to creating works modelled after classicism. Judging from the works of art that were awarded prizes, Modernism played no part at all in this phase of the institution.

However, the benefits from this competitive process and from the habit of creating, frequently and on various occasions, works inspired by sports have been considerable. A theme which has produced many works, which in turn have enriched the artists’ stock, was developed internationally. The presence of this type of works is particularly noticeable in public sculpture. At the same time, Olympic values were exalted and the ancient concept of *kallos* (beauty) came in the forefront together with its deeper intellectual meaning. Many of these works have been placed outside Olympic stadiums, in streets, parks or squares.

For Greek art, in particular, the occasion of the Olympic Games, on the one hand, and Ancient tradition, on the other hand, created particularly favourable conditions for the development of the athletic theme. Sculpture, but also painting and miniature, have shown an important development since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This development of the athletic theme reached its apex during the 2004 Olympic Games. A milestone in this development has been the work of **Konstantinos Dimitriadis** (1881-1943), “*The Discus Thrower*”, which was awarded the first prize (gold medal) in the sculpture category at the Paris Olympic Games in 1924. This earned him the moniker of “Olympic Games Winner”, which is unusual for an artist. Dimitriadis is the only Greek artist to have ever been awarded any prize in cultural Olympic Games.

Dimitriadis studied in Paris and has been influenced by the work of Rodin as well as by ancient Greek plastic art. In particular, in his *Discus Thrower*, one may discern the influence of the famous work of Antiquity, Myron’s *Discobolus* (a bronze sculpture dating from 450 BC), known to us from Roman marble copies. The common features are the structure and perfect anatomy of the body, capturing in a unique manner the human effort. With his own work, Dimitriadis renewed a rich theme conferring to it modern spirit. He even went beyond that, since his *Discus Thrower* is distinguished by the intense movement and the relatively dramatic atmosphere. The

sculpture was made of bronze in over-life-size (2.20 m) and has been preserved in four versions. One of them, the best known, has been in Athens, opposite the Panathenaic Stadium, since 1927. The first one has been in Central Park, in New York, since 1925.

#### **4. PUBLIC OLYMPIC SCULPTURES IN OLYMPIC CITIES**

The first Olympic sculpture to be placed in a public space in Greece was the whole-body statue of *Georgios Averoff*, made upon a decision adopted by the International Olympic Committee in 1895, decorating the entrance of the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, where the first modern Olympic Games were held (25 March 1896) (Cashman, 1998: 107). Georgios Averoff (1818-1899) was a wealthy Greek from Alexandria, Egypt, who financed the full cost of the restoration of the Panathenaic Stadium upon the ruins of the ancient stadium dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is an understatement to say that the Panathenaic Stadium is the most important sports and cultural work in the history of modern Olympic Games given its historical and symbolic dimension.

The whole-body statue was made by sculptor **Georgios Vroutos** (1843-1909), an advocate and typical representative of academic classicism, an artistic style that was particularly widespread at that time in Greece.

Numerous similar initiatives have been undertaken since then. For example, the Municipality of Ancient Olympia commissioned, a hundred years later, the representation of the goddess *Nike* in sculptures and donated the works to Olympic cities. The works were made by **Pavlos – Angelos Kougioumtzis** (1945), sculptor, painter and architect with a wide experience in public sculpture (<http://www.pavlosangelos.com>). Works of this type (*Nikes* and other Olympic themes) can be found in many parts of the world and, in particular, in Ancient Olympia since 1996, in Atlanta also since 1996, in Sidney (2000), in Athens (2004), in Beijing (2008), in Vancouver (2010), in London (2012), etc. Kougioumtzis is possibly the only artist who has so systematically dealt with this theme.

From a morphological point of view, his *Nikes* remind us of the famous classical period “*Nike*” of Paeonius, in spite of their semi-abstract appearance and the use of a heavy material such as bronze. Their main characteristic is their oversized built, which generally ranges between three and four meters.

The Olympic Games are symbolised by the work of a younger Greek sculptor, placed in Montreal, Canada, in 2014, as a gift by the Greek community there. It is called *Gaia* and it is made of steel; the artist's name is **Praxitelis Tzanoulinos** (1955). It is a globe bearing the Olympic symbols, the famous five circles, and laurel leaves. The work symbolises the ecumenical nature of the Olympic Games and the peaceful message they convey all over the world.

The Olympic Nike was also a favourite theme for another Greek sculptor, **Kyriakos Kampadakis** (1938-2007). Works of this type can be found in public spaces in Athens and Thessaloniki since the 1990s. Kampadakis was a modern artist and its public sculptures are made of bronze. He was inspired by ancient Greek sculpture and this category of the “*Nikes*”, in particular, preserves some of the typological characteristics of the ancient “*Nikes*”, such as the well-known Nike in Ancient Olympia and the later “*Nike of Samothrace*” (190 BC) currently in the Louvre Museum. Kampadakis' statues are more static, but also dynamic and intensely kinetic, expressing the permanent and continuous endeavour of man.

A considerable increase of Olympic works of art could be noted in Greece in 2004 on the occasion of the Athens Olympic Games. The number of painting and sculpture works made in the beginning of the new millennium is impressively large. The Greek capital city hosted art exhibitions of works inspired by the then upcoming Olympic Games. Their catalogues include the names of some of the greatest Greek artists. Pioneer painters and sculptors have each made their own contribution to a great cause having its origin in myth and history (Kounenaki, 2004)

#### **5. OLYMPIC PARKS OF MODERN OPEN-AIR SCULPTURE**

An interesting initiative taken by some Organising Committees of Olympic cities has been the creation of parks where sculptures representing contemporary and modern tendencies of sculpture are exhibited in open-air. This type of artistic activities is usually part of the Cultural Olympiad, promoted by Olympic cities in any manner possible. These are great cultural activities, because

they leave cities with an extremely rich Olympic legacy. Artists were not selected randomly but based on criteria established by expert scientists. Judging from the final selections, the Olympic Sculpture Parks are open-air museums of modern art including modern and pioneering works. One could say that this practice has been a response to the original design of the Cultural Olympiad, where, as a rule, Classical and Realist artists had been selected.

The first Olympic Park to be created in an Olympic city was that of Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, which hosted the 1988 Olympic Games. The Olympic Museum was created in the same space. It was a great idea by the organisers of the Games and a great challenge to link culture and athleticism in a direct manner, thus substantiating the vision of Baron Pierre de Coubertin. One of the largest exhibitions of open-air sculpture including more than two hundred works by famous artists from all over the world was created in this Asian city.

The Greek participations included sculptors **Theodoros** (1931), **Constantin Byzantios** (1924-2007), **Diohante** (1945) and **Takis** (1925). This is the older generation of Greek artists who all have many international distinctions to show. With their abstract sculptures and constructions, as well as their extremely original compositions, they belong to the Greek artistic avant-garde.

The International Olympic Committee itself implemented a similar cultural action by establishing at its seat, in Lausanne in 1993, an Olympic Museum and the Olympic Sculpture Park. The Park includes works of famous artists, such as Auguste Rodin, Fernando Botero, Alexander Calder, Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, among others (<http://www.olympicsculpturepark>). The choice of the most modern artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose works now decorate the most prominent space of the Olympic Movement, i.e. the gardens of the Olympic Museum next to the city's lake, demonstrates the change of policy in matters of art and culture as compared to the Committee's past choices. These are certainly changes which have marked a type of modernisation in the aesthetic preferences of the actors in the Olympic Movement.

The Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle (WA, USA), created in 2007, has also moved in the direction of promoting modern art in public space. This renowned park includes some of the most famous works of public sculpture made by artists such as Richard Serra, Ellsworth Kelly, Antony Caro, Alexander Calder, Tony Smith, Louise Bourgeois, and many others. These are indeed some of the most celebrated names in contemporary American and European Modernism (<http://www.olympic-sculpture-park>).

In 2008, during the Beijing Olympiad, a very important endeavour was undertaken to create a large Olympic Open-Air Sculpture Park, next to the Olympic Village. The organisers of the Cultural Olympiad had opted for a competitive process, and more than 2,400 artists from 80 countries responded to their invitation. In the end, 50 sculptures were selected by the general public together with a panel of critics. Prizes were also awarded, like they used to during the "Pentathlon of the Muses". Greek artists also participated in this exhibition and some of them were also awarded the relevant prize. In particular, sculptor **Antonis Myrodiias** (1963) won the golden prize for his work "Visioning 5 Nikes", **Aggelika Korovessi** (1952) won the silver prize for her work "Peace", and **Chryssa Vathianaki** won a distinction for her work "Life Circles" (BOCOG, 2008). Their works were inspired by the ideas of Olympism, as required by the competition, but they were made with a modern perception.

Undoubtedly, this multi-ethnic representation of world modern art in Olympic cities also reflects the spirit of international cooperation and interaction between cultures, in line with the principles of the Olympic Charter.

According to Chinese art critic Wu Hongliang: "As globalisation is popular presently, 'Olympic' has become a common sign for the whole world. 'Olympic' has changed from a replacement of a physical activity into an international platform on which national strength could be exhibited, multi-national culture could be amalgamated, and the city image could be established. Therefore, present Olympic is more a PR show that has lasted two months. However, those hundreds of Olympic sculpture that have been set on the Olympic centre, Woods Park and cities of Beijing, as public art, have become the important weight to show its image and exhibit its cultural attitude in the 2008 Olympic series" (Hongliang, 2008: 10-11).

It is a fact that both the Olympic Museums and the Olympic Open-Air Sculpture Parks, created in various Olympic cities in Europe, Asia and the USA, have conferred a new dimension to the so-called Olympic art, introducing innovative and modern elements to it, which have been particularly helpful to its development. The original decision (in 2006) of the International Olympic Committee to link Athleticism with Culture has indeed been very important. As already mentioned, the competitive character imposed on Art, through the “Pentathlon of the Muses” and the award of prizes to the first three winners, in the same manner as in Sports, had resulted in the absence of famous artists and, in particular, those who were proponents of various aspects of modernism. This is precisely why, in the years after World War II, the process for promoting culture during Olympic Games was drastically changed, with the results that we now know and that we have mentioned above.

## **6. OLYMPIC ART IN GREECE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS-THEMED PUBLIC SCULPTURE**

Unquestionably, the award of the gold medal to Konstantinos Dimitriadis at the Paris Olympiad in 1924 made a great impression, and it was felt that he personified the revival of ancient aesthetic values. The Greek monument sculpture has had great moments, and an unexpected and impressive surge of visual representations of the human body, both male and female, was noted. It was not only the effect of the great sculptor Rodin, it was also the art of Greek Antiquity (of the Archaic and Classical periods), which came in the forefront anew on the occasion of the Olympic Games. The generation whose members included Dimitriadis, Thanasis Apartis, Mihalis Tompros, Antonios Sochos, Giannis Pappas, Christos Kapralos and others dealt with a form of art exalting the human body, preferring the figurative and realistic style and promoting traditional form principles.

However, before Konstantinos Dimitriadis, there have been great sculptors who had been strongly influenced by classicism and by the Olympic values, which came in the forefront because of the first Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Some of them, such as Georgos Vitalis (1838-1901), Leonidas Drosis (1834-1882), Georgios Vroutos (1843-1909), Nikolaos Stergiou (1888-1919) and Giannoulis Halepas (1851-1938), would overly exalt the nude human body and present it as the vector of the soul and of the creative human intellect. *Theseus* by Vitalis, *Alexander the Great* and *Penelope* by Drosis, the *Marathon Runner* by Stergiou, and *Satyr and Eros* by Halepas are typical examples of works of this genre (Spathari, 1989).

This category of artists also includes two famous painters of that time, Nikolaos Gyzis and Nikiforos Lytras, who were inspired by the Olympic Games and designed the *Diploma of the Olympic Games* (the former) and the bronze medal of the Olympic Games (the latter).

One might call this type of artistic activity “Olympic Art” for the following reasons: First of all, because of its themes, which were for the most part athletic and referred in one way or another to athletic events, to persons in this particular field and to situations having athletic contents. The second reason is that this form of art obeys rules and principles which may be found in the ideology of Olympism, irrespective of, and aside from, the movement of classicism. It is also clear that, irrespective of how the beholder interprets the particular works of art, there exists a historical and social context which confers to them the character of Olympic works of art.

The creators of these works are first and foremost imbued with classical education and advocates of rationalism, but they are also proponents of a national art since they are inspired by the ideas about a “return to the roots”. This is why they prefer monumentality of form and its projection in free space. They reinforce the strength and vitality of the body as a reflection of the soul and they proceed to identify in a way form and idea, considering that this relationship represents the uppermost expressive ideal. Their works can be found in streets and squares, and they rise under the Attic sun, reminding the beholder of the strength and elegance of the Greek cultural heritage. They aim at creating a national art and some of these works remind us of ancient sculptures, stressing above all physical power as well and mental impetus. Their creators are proponents of the principles of classicism and of the fundamental principle of balanced development of man. It is well known that this principle is the ideal of Olympism. This perception was dominant in art, in particular in public sculpture, throughout the interwar years.

After World War II, things changed. Abstraction and other related artistic movements have influenced Greek artists, resulting in classicism and the Olympic ideal giving way to renovating forms of art with the radical use of materials, the various form symbolisms, and the free expression of the sculpture in space. Therefore, the International Olympic Committee's initiative to replace the competitive festival, the "Pentathlon of the Muses", with the "Olympic Arts Festival" – and later on with the "Cultural Olympiad" – was a move that came naturally, since artistic models had already changed internationally. Initiatives belonged now to the national Olympic Committees and their choices were noted for their independence.

In Greece, the link between art, and in particular sculpture, and the ideals of Olympism has been very tight, since the Olympic Games were often part of current events. Already in the 1980s, when the Greek State had given priority in its agenda to the organisation of the Olympic Games in Athens, exhibitions of this type were quite frequent. Besides, the general public strongly felt that sports could and should coexist with culture, in line with the vision of the person responsible for reviving the Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin. The strongest argument in support of this was that this had also been the practice in Ancient Greece.

Certainly, the bulk of production of "Olympic" works was noted shortly before 2004, when Athens was chosen to host the Games for the second time in their history. Many Greek artists, of all artistic tendencies, have dealt with these themes. Many collections of works of art of this type were created on this occasion. Indeed, the National Olympic Academy has gathered more than 400 works of painting and sculpture and organised a large exhibition at the Zappeion Hall in 2012. These are works of various tendencies, where the basic concept about Olympism lies in polysemy, in symbols and allegories, in archetypal aspects and emblematic forms, including, for example, the sculptures of Theodoros Papagiannis, Kostas Tsoklis, Theodoros, Giannis Psychopaidis, Afroditi Liti, and the paintings of Dimitris Mytaras, Panagiotis Tetsis, Giorgos Golfinos, Nikos Alexiou, Pavlos Samiou, Alekos Fassianos, Mina Valyraki-Papatheodorou and many others.

These are, in general, artists who pursue an interesting tradition which has its origins, as mentioned above, in the first Olympiad in 1896. It was then that poets and musicians, together with painters and sculptors, conveyed the Olympic idea in their creations.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Linking Athleticism and Culture has always been at the heart of the Olympic Spirit. Over time, the Olympic cities, occasionally under the immediate supervision of the International Olympic Committee, have promoted culture in various manners. As far as the case of Greece is concerned, the perpetuation of the principles of the Olympic Spirit can be clearly seen in public sculpture since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the first Olympic Games that were held in Athens in 1896. Furthermore, due to the influence of classicism, this art was idealised to the extreme and it aimed at fully identifying idea and form. The ideology of Olympism, which was prevailing in the intellectual world of that time, has contributed in a decisive manner towards this direction. This artistic expression also lasted during the interwar period and was asserted by the prize awarded to sculptor Konstantinos Dimitriadis in 1924. After World War II and until the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and thereafter, public sculpture in Greece has expressed the same Olympic ideas, but with the different visual means offered by modernism. Symbols and allegories have been dominant together with those concepts which have to do with the needs and prospects of modern societies being part of the modern world of globalisation.

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#### **AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHY**



**Ms Panagiota Papanikolaou** was born in 11/09/1988 in Greece. She has graduated in 2010 from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History and Archaeology (Ptychion grade: 9, 19/10-A). She holds an MA in Arts and Heritage Management from London Metropolitan University. Currently she works as an Executive Assistant in the International Hellenic University (MA in Art, Law and Economy).