May 23, 2011

SSM brings two sides of the Aegean together with new exhibition entitled “Across”.

Sabancı University Sakıp Sabancı Museum (SSM) hosts a very important exhibition under the main sponsorhip of ÇİMSA. The exhibition, entitled “Across - The Cylades and Western Anatolia During The 3rd Millennium BC” is composed of artifacts from various Turkish museums as well as the National Archaeological Museum of Athens and the N. P. Goulandris Foundation Museum of Cycladic Art. The exhibition examines the relations between Cyclades in the Aegean, and the nearby Anatolia that gave rise to reciprocal influence that created two cultures that while similar in many respects, nonetheless maintained distinctive regional characteristics. The exhibition, that also marks the first official cooperation between museums from Turkey and Greece will be open to visits between 24th of May – 28th of August 2011.

The exhibition is the first time that artifacts from museums with extensive collections, such as the National Museum of Archaeology in Athens and the N. P. Goulandris Foundation Cycladic Art Museum, will be shown side by side with findings from Anatolia in Turkish museums. A total of 340 artifacts are displayed in the exhibition, which also carries the message that the Aegean is once again a sea of peace, as it was in the past.

SSM Director, Dr. Nazan Ölçer, provided information about the exhibition, saying, “Sabancı Museum has been engaged in talks with the N.P. Goulandris Foundation thus Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens for the past two years, with a view to holding an exhibition of Cycladic art in Istanbul and to send an exhibition of the Museum's Ottoman calligraphy collection to Athens. We were convinced, however, that an exhibition consisting only of finds from the Cyclades would reflect only one aspect of this distant period of time, and that the other side of the research had to be sought in finds from western Anatolia on the opposite shore. Our desire to seek out the interconnections, the trade and cultural exchanges in this distant past was shared by Prof. Dr. Stampolidis, director of the Museum and as a result the concept of the exhibition was finalised. In presenting the traces of our shared past we want this to be an event which will overcome the residual prejudices of past years and be an invitation to share our pride in this past.”

Nicholas Stampolidis, director of the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens, who has been working closely with Nazan Ölçer for the past few years for this exhibition, said; “The Exhibition “The Cycladic Islands and West Asia Minor” refers to a trip, a voyage in time and space. The best of what scientific archeological research has produced the last hundred years will be exhibited for the first time together. Masterpieces like the white crystalline marble idols of the Cyclades, with their great aesthetical values of simple forms and a kind of abstraction that inspired great artists of the 20 th century like Picasso, Brancusi and others, will be exhibited together with their Asian counterparts, clay tankards and pottery, weapons

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and tools and even jewels that show similarities or differences, will be displayed for the first time in the Sabancı Museum."

Mehmet Hacıkamiloğlu, Chief Executive Officer of ÇİMSA, the head sponsor of the exhibition that is expected to play a major role in improving the relations and friendship between the two states, expressed how happy he was for sponsoring an important exhibition like this, saying; "As one of the leading companies of the sector, we care about the aesthetic of the buildings that are built with our products, as well as their resistance and robustness very much. We, as ÇİMSA, support projects related to culture, arts and education and we are very happy to work with Sakıp Sabancı Museum. We worked together for the Calligraphy Exhibition when it was displayed in Spain as well. We believe supporting "Across" which will bring the historical heritage and centuries old aesthetic of Aegean Civilizations to light, as our social responsibility".

The exhibition will display the interaction between the civilizations in Western Anatolia and Greece that date back to the 3rd Millenium BC, and by doing so, aims to contribute to the intercultural dialogue. The exhibition, in which the 5.000 years old trade and cultural relations between these two sides of the Aegean Sea is brought to light, hosts many pieces from the Early Bronze Age, including examples from the **Cycladic** art, figurines, ceramics and bronze tools.

About the exhibition…

- An 14-meters long exact replica model of the Cyladic ships, stands out as one of the most interesting pieces of the exhibition. The replica shows the impact of the Cycladic ships on the interaction between the two cultures, as the ships were the only way of transportation between the two sides of the Aegean for a long time. The ships are built by Ankara University Research Center for Maritime Archaeology as a part of the "Project for the Re-animation of Cycladic Boat". Cycladic ships are built without any binder materials or nails, by taking advantage of the swelling nature of the wood when goes into contact with water.

- The exhibition has caused a stir on both sides of the Aegean, as it marks the first official cooperation between museums from Turkey and Greece. News about the exhibiton have been allover Greek leading newspapers and TV channels since the exhibition was announced.

- The exhibition is curated by the Director of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum Dr. Nazan Ölçer and Director of Athens Museum of Cycladic Art Nicholas Stampolidis together.

- Two poems will greet the visitors at the exhibition: One, entitled "Of the Aegean" by the famous Greek poet Odisseus Elytis and the other by Melih Cevdet Anday, entitled "The Death of the Vessel".

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- Boris Micka, an award winning architect of Czech origin, who also conceptualized the "From Byzantion to İstanbul – 8000 Years of a Capital" exhibition that was held in SSM last year, also designed "Across - The Cylades and Western Anatolia During The 3rd Millennium BC". Despite its rich scientific content, Micka's design od the venue is also very impressive. Micka used 4 giant projectors to create a water effect in the gallery where the ship is on display, making it appear as if it's sailing.

- ÇİMSA is the head sponsor of the exhibition, the others include Akbank as the sponsor for education, Bergen Fine Arts Logistics and Turkish Airlines for transportation, and Turgut Pharmacy and Monte İda for the catalogue.

- In line with the exhibition, there will be workshops and education programs that focus on Anatolian and Cycladic cultures.

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