

# THE BRITISH MUSEUM



## The Body Beautiful in Ancient Greece

A TOURING EXHIBITION FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

# The Body Beautiful in Ancient Greece

Selected from the world-famous Greek and Roman collection of the British Museum, this major exhibition offers a visually stunning and thought-provoking exploration of the human condition seen through ancient Greek eyes.

## Overview

For over 2,000 years the Greeks experimented with representing the human body in works that range from prehistoric abstract simplicity to the full-blown realism of the age of Alexander the Great. The ancient Greeks invented the modern idea of the human body in art as an object of sensory delight and as an expression of the intelligent mind. Greek craftsmen gave form to thought in a rich harvest of artworks through which the human condition was explored and interpreted.

By exploring this idea of representation, the exhibition invites visitors to engage with artworks that have shaped the way we think about ourselves.

The exhibition features over 100 artworks spanning over 2 millennia, including 10 pieces of free-standing sculpture, the most famous of which is the celebrated marble statue of Discobolos (the discus-thrower), one of the highlights of the British Museum's collection, which had never been on loan before this tour.



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## Content

The exhibition offers a diverse selection of key artworks from the British Museum's Greek and Roman collection, ranging from free-standing marble sculptures and gold objects to exquisite terracotta pieces and magnificent vases, including:

- Discobolos, marble Roman copy of the famous sculpture made by Nyron in 5th century BC
- Marble cyclodique figurine, 2800–2300 BC
- Bronze figure of Jupiter, 1st–2nd century AD
- Marble head from a colossal statue of Hercules, AD 117–118
- Marble statue of the Westmacott Athlete, 1st century AD
- Marble statue of Socrates, 200 BC–AD 100

The exhibition is structured in 10 sections:

- The male body beautiful
- Aphrodite and the female body
- The divine body
- Herakles, Superman
- Athletes
- Birth, marriage and death
- Sex and desire
- Outsiders
- Character and realism
- The human face

1. Marble sphinx, from Monte Cagnolo outside Laruium, near Rome, Italy. Roman c. AD 120–140. 2. Black-figured Panathenaic amphora depicting athletes. Attributed to the Euphiletos Painter. Found at Vulci, Italy. Made in Athens, Greece, c. 530–520 BC. 3. Bronze vessel in the form of the head of a young African woman, 2nd–1st century BC, Lanuvium. 4. The Westmacott Athlete, marble statue of a boy athlete. Roman copy of a Greek bronze original of c. 440 BC. Roman, 1st century AD. 5. Marble head from a statue of the philosopher Chrysippos. Roman copy of a Greek original of c. 200 BC. Roman, 1st century AD.

## Further information

### Curator

Dr Ian Jenkins is responsible for the ancient Greek collection in the British Museum and is a world authority on Greek architecture, sculpture and ancient Greek social history. He worked on this project with assistant curator Victoria Turner, with whom he recently published *The Greek Body* (British Museum Press, 2009).

### Size

- Over 100 objects, including 10 pieces of free-standing sculpture
- Space requirements: approximately 800–1000m<sup>2</sup>

### Further details of this exhibition

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[www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours](http://www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours)

*Note: A confirmed exhibition object list will be provided at a later date.*



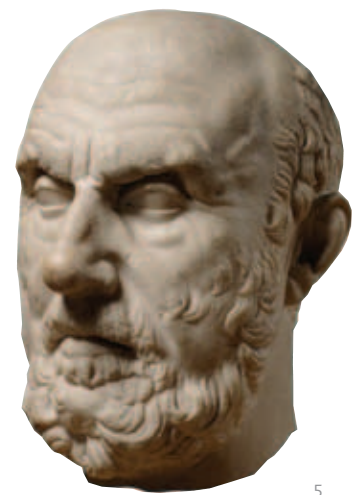
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*'An historical presentation of art  
and thoughts in ancient Greece'*

Las Provincias

*'The display of the famous  
Discobolos from the British Museum  
has transformed the Alicante  
Museum of Archaeology (MARQ)  
into the most visited archaeological  
centre in Spain'*

El Mundo

*'Unique and exceptional'*

Information

*'The Alicante Museum of  
Archaeology (MARQ) broke its  
historical records of visitors with  
the display of the Discobolos'*

Information



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COVER: Discobolus (discus-thrower), Roman copy of a bronze original  
of the 5th century BC. From Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, Lazio, Italy.  
ABOVE: Bronze figure of Jupiter holding a sceptre and a thunderbolt.  
From Hungary. Roman, 1st–2nd century AD.