

PRESS RELEASE

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International Award to the Acropolis Museum and FORTH for the laser cleaning of Caryatids



The Acropolis Museum and the Institute of Electronic Structure and Lasers (IESL) of the Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH) have been awarded the biennial Keck Award by the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) for their common project regarding **“Laser rejuvenation of Caryatids opens to the public at the Acropolis Museum: A link between ancient and modern Greece”**. The award was given jointly to the team of the Acropolis Museum / the Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas and for their contribution “towards the promotion of public understanding and appreciation of the accomplishments of the conservation profession”. The ceremony took place on Friday 14th of September 2012, at the closing session of the biennial IIC congress in Vienna, which attracted 350 delegates.

The IIC Council announced the establishment of the IIC Keck Award in 1994, generously endowed by Sheldon and Caroline Keck to commemorate their achievements in conservation. The 2012 award was given to the Acropolis Museum/FORTH for setting up an advanced open to the public laser laboratory on the visitors’ floor where the Caryatids are exhibited at the Acropolis Museum. Through this arrangement brings the visitors of the Museum in contact with the conservation interventions that until now took place sometimes only inside restricted access laboratory environments. Over 2 million of visitors had the chance to follow “live” the laser-assisted removal of pollution accumulations from the Caryatids surface.



The surface cleaning of the ancient masterpieces is achieved by means of a custom made, innovative laser system developed by IESL-FORTH in Heraklion, Crete. The laser is capable of operating at two wavelengths simultaneously (Infrared at 1064nm and Ultraviolet at 355nm) and is able to remove thick pollution accumulations in a controlled and safe way for both the object and the operator. The combination of the two wavelengths ensures that no discoloration or damaging phenomena occur on the original substrate, while revealing its unique surface. This application has been the outcome of a long standing collaborative effort between IESL-FORTH, the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA), the 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Athens and the Acropolis Museum. It involved a thorough and detailed comparative study of all existing cleaning techniques, followed by trials on selected sections of the Acropolis monuments and Museum sculptures. The first assemblage from the Acropolis to benefit from the laser cleaning methodology was the West Frieze of the Parthenon (2002-2005).

This award highlights the collaborative effort of the Acropolis Museum and FORTH to preserve and to rejuvenate the unique cultural Heritage of Greece while demonstrating to the public how culture and technology can be combined in a symbolic union between ancient and modern Greece.

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More links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwCNfQh8Woo&list=UU012zDsiS4ojkzerKQZeng&index=3&feature=plcp>

<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/default.php?pname=News&la=1>

<http://www.iiconservation.org/about/awards/keck>