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ΚΟΙΝΩΦΕΛΕΣ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ
ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ Σ. ΩΝΑΣΗΣ

ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟ ΜΠΕΝΑΚΗ

EXHIBITION

ARISTOTLE ONASSIS
BEYOND HIS MYTH

Benaki Museum
Pireos Street Annex
October 5 - November 12, 2006









On the occasion of completing 30 years of social contribution, the 'Alexander S. Onassis' Public Benefit Foundation, in collaboration with the Benaki Museum, organizes an exhibition entitled 'Aristotle Onassis: Beyond his Myth', at the new building of the Benaki Museum, at 138, Pireos Street, from October 5 to November 12, 2006.

Having dominated the media reports of the 20th century, Aristotle Onassis enhanced his own myth and enriched it with his chosen way of life. This exhibition aims to reconstruct the story of his life and reinterpret the myth surrounding him. Furthermore, it aims to present the contemporary development of Onassis' will, as expressed by the 'Alexander S. Onassis' Public Benefit Foundation.

The **first part** of the exhibition is concerned with Aristotle Onassis' 'myth'.

Energetic and decisive, clever and perspicacious, Onassis embodied the archetype of the enterprising diaspora Greek, given that even today his name symbolizes successful entrepreneurship and constant pioneering innovations. Moreover, Onassis was universally recognized both for his personal charm and his cosmopolitan lifestyle.

The exhibition takes the visitor from the resourceful Smyrnian's early Argentinean years to his business activities, social associations and women in his life, the luxury yacht 'Christina', the island of















Skorpios, his family and children, mainly intending to describe Aristotle Onassis as a person, until the end of his life.

The exhibits include documents, photographs, personal objects, books, furniture and works of art owned by Aristotle Onassis, which have been taken from the 'Alexander S. Onassis' Foundation Collection. Also included in the exhibition are objects from the Aristotle Onassis Collection of the Hellenic Maritime Museum, private collections, as well as archive material from the National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research at La Trobe University in Melbourne (Victoria), Australia.

The exhibits, not all of which are of great artistic value, were selected on the basis of their 'involvement' in Onassis' life, as items which are indicative of his character, but also according to their exhibition qualities. Special attention was paid to those valuable items that are worth of museum exhibition, such as Onassis' collections of rare travelers' books and works of Oriental Art, which he seemed to have been very fond of. The bone models of sailing ships, constructed by French war prisoners in England (late 18th - early 19th century), are really rare artistic creations.

Aristotle Onassis' most profound wish was to honour the memory of his son Alexander. The fulfillment of his wish, as crystallized in the creation and operation of the 'Alexander S. Onassis' Foundation, paved a way that leads to the consistent attainment of two aims: it keeps Alexander's memory alive and constantly promotes culture.

The **second part** of the exhibition presents the activities of the 'Alexander S. Onassis' Public Benefit Foundation, to which Onassis bequeathed the part of his estate which would have gone to his son Alexander. Over the past 30 years, the successful trajectory and remarkable profitability of the Business part constantly supports the social welfare work done by the Public Benefit Foundation, which has developed various public service activities both in Greece and abroad.

Culture, education, environmental protection, health and social solidarity: such are the principal priorities in the agenda of the Foundation, which has consistently and powerfully achieved the







goals originally set by Aristotle Onassis himself.

The public presentation of the Foundation's work clearly proves how fully its Founder's plans were accomplished through the different activities undertaken by the Foundation, which not only materialized, but also managed to expand Onassis' vision considerably.
According to the President of the Foundation's Board of Directors, "As a whole, the Word [Logos] is composed of the conception's justification, and the intentionality of the realization of the Work. Therefore, Actions are also included in the Word, in so far as they reveal, support, promote and contribute to its realization. This Exhibition aspires to go beyond the Myth and project the Logos and the Action".

In essence, the Foundation is described through its work: photographs and documents about its activities, models of its buildings, projections, and a wealth of materials evidencing and reflecting the Foundation's thirty-year contribution to society, as well as its plans for the future. The exhibition closes with a number of rare paintings from the Foundation's collection, several of which were created by such major Greek artists as Nikolaos Lytras, Constantinos Volanakis, Nikolaos Gyzis, etc.
The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue of the same name, in Greek and English.

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Opening hours:
Wednesday, Thursday, Sunday: 10:00 - 18:00
Friday - Saturday: 10:00 - 22:00
Monday - Tuesday: Closed
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