

# GREEK SCULPTURE

INTRODUCTION

Curated by Anna Mattedi

- ◎ **HUMAN BEINGS** were central to the Greek culture. They gave their gods human form;
- ◎ Greek ideal: to create the perfect individual;
- ◎ The Greeks considered the **HUMAN BODY** beautiful and harmonious;



⊙ Key words of Greek art: **BALANCE,**  
**HARMONY, IDEALIZED BEAUTY,**  
**PROPORTION, UNITY;**

⊙ The Greek artists used **HARMONY** and  
**SIMMETRY** to express the idealized human  
form, central to their culture.

⊙ **HUMAN BODY:** focal point of their paintings  
and sculptures;



# THE NUDE IN ART

- ⦿ Pre- Greek world: NUDITY = SLAVERY
- ⦿ Greek art: NUDITY = symbol of **PERFECTION**;
- ⦿ The Greek artists signed their works!



# MAJOR PERIODS IN GREEK ART

- ◉ 600-480 BC: THE ARCHAIC PERIOD;
- ◉ 480-323 BC: THE CLASSIC PERIOD;
- ◉ 323- 150 BC: THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD.

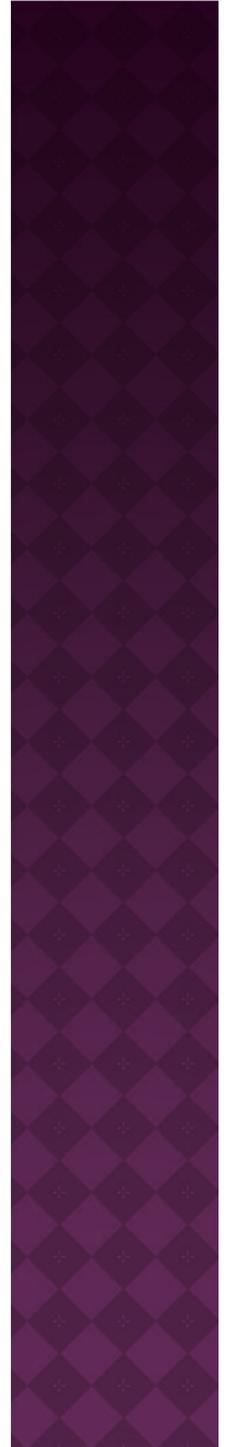


# GREEK STYLES

⦿ DORIC STYLE

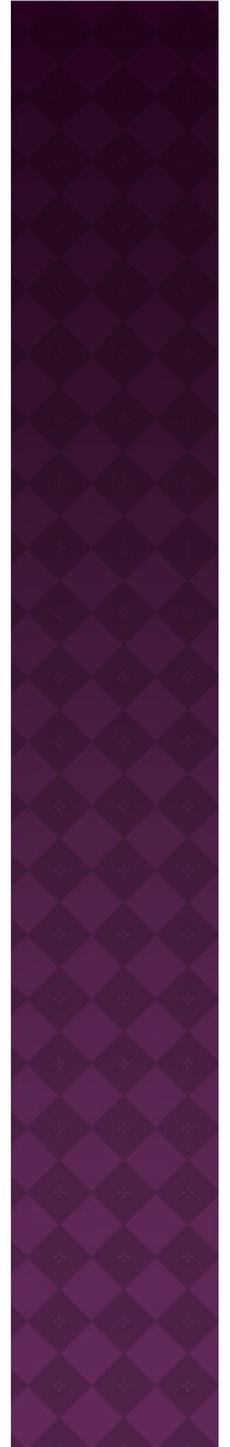
⦿ IONIC STYLE

⦿ CORINTHIAN STYLE



# THREE DISCIPLINES OF GREEK ART

- ◎ 1. SCULPTURE;
- ◎ 2. ARCHITECTURE;
- ◎ 3. PAINTING.



# GREEK SCULPTURE, THE KOUROS

- ◉ Sculpture of a young man;
- ◉ Life-size nude: ideal athlete or god (Apollo, god of beauty, art and youth);
- ◉ From **STYLIZATION** to **REALISTIC** representation of the human figure.



# DORIC KOUROS

- Rude figure, vigorous, out of proportion (head, arms);
- Rigid, stylized figure, face toward the front;
- Clenched fists, braided hair;
- Left foot is slightly forward.

Polymedes, Kouros, VI sec. B.C , marble, Delphi, Archaeological Museum



# DORIC KOUROS



- Both arms are held stiffly at their sides;
- Kneecaps are slightly curved;
- Archaic smile, faint smile;



# IONIC KOUROS



## IONIC STYLE:

Slender, elegant figure, higher,  
refined



# WHAT IS A “KORE” ?

- ⦿ Sculpture of a female figure;
- ⦿ Idealized young girl



# IONIC KORE



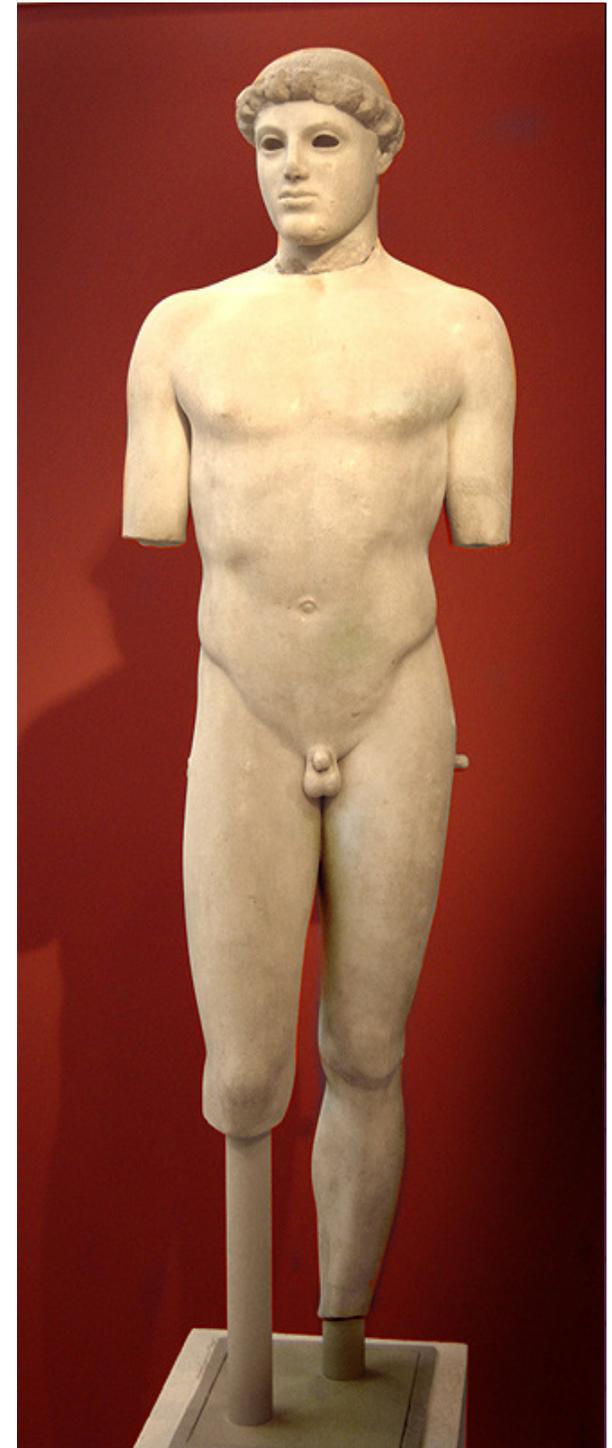
- Delicacy of the forms;
- More naturalistic;
- Elegance;
- Refined style;
- She is offering something to a god;
- Thick folds of the draperies,
- CHITON = DRESS;
- HIMATION = CLOAK.

HERA FROM SAMO (ionic island in the Aegean Sea), Louvre, VI century BC

# THE KRITIOS BOY

- ◉ The development of Greek art is easily seen in this sculpture;
- ◉ Like Egyptian sculptures early Greek figures were stylized;
- ◉ An example of how artists began to move away from this restricted way of depicting the human form is the Kritios boy.

480 BC, marble, Acropolis Museum, Athens



- ⊙ Athenian sculptor KRITIOS;
- ⊙ He really stands! He is not bounded to a block for balance, he stands free;
- ⊙ The knee of the forward leg is lower than that of the other leg;
- ⊙ Faint S-curve of the body = sense of movement

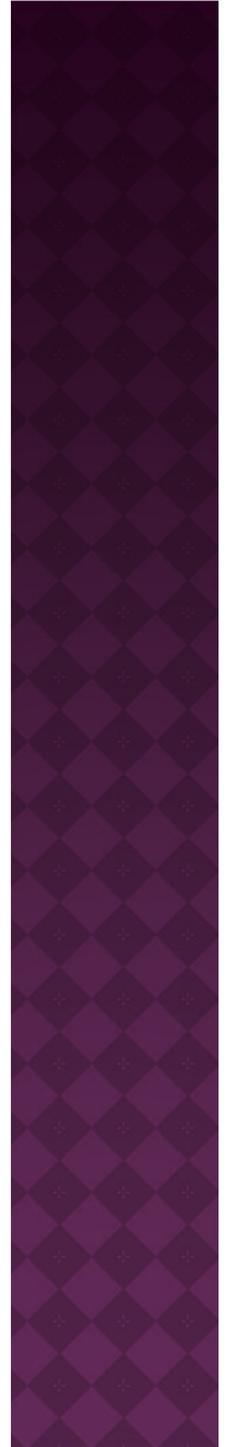


- ⊙ Relaxed, natural position (COUNTERPOSE) = important discovery;
  
- ⊙ Definition of **COUNTERPOSE**: technique of sculpting a human figure in a pose that shows the weight of the body in balance. With weight on one leg, the shoulders and hips counterbalance each other in a natural way;
  
- ⊙ 1. representation of the relaxed body;
- ⊙ 2. representation of the body in motion;



◎ The Kritios boy gives us a sense of  
**VITALITY;**

◎ The sculpture truly has come to life!



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- ◉ ARCHAIC PERIOD: doric/ ionic sculpture;
- ◉ SEVERE STYLE;
- ◉ CLASSIC PERIOD (the Greeks defeated the Persian fleet): period of peace, the arts flourished;
- ◉ HELLENISTIC PERIOD.

# THE CHARIOTEER OF DELPHI



-Severe style:

-Cast in bronze;

-Charioteer: vehicle with 2 wheels pulled by horses. Melted down to realize weapons of war

Sòtade, 470 BC, Archaeological Museum, Delphi

- ◉ Eyes: made of **GLASS PASTE**;

- ◉ LIPS and EYELASHES: **COPPER**;



- ◉ The features of the face of the athlete, the muscles and the folds of the draperies are natural (light and shade);

- ◉ **Archaic smile**: replaced by a look of calm and self-control (**SYMBOL of BALANCE of EMOTION**)

◎ POSE: RIGID and SEVERE;

◎ He is holding the reins,

◎ BAND of VICTORY



# DISKOBOLOS, DISCUS THROWER

- ◉ MYRON: Greek statue in Roman copy;
- ◉ The copies usually were made in less costly marble;
- ◉ There are a lot of copies of this statue but the most famous is the Lancellotti's copy

Myron, Diskobolos. Roman marble copy after a bronze original of 450 BC. Museo Nazionale Romano, P.zzo Massimo alle Terme



- ◉ It is a vigorous action statue, like the Artemision Zeus, but it is composed in an almost Archaic manner, with profile limbs and a nearly frontal chest;
- ◉ The right arm has reached the apex of its arc but has not yet begun to swing down again;
- ◉ Myron froze the action and arranged the body and limbs to form two intersecting arcs, creating the impression of a tightly stretched bow a moment before the string (corda) is released.



- ⦿ This tension is not mirrored in the athlete's face, which remains expressionless. The head is turned away from the spectator .

- ⦿ ABSTRACT MOVEMENT;

- ⦿ FRONTAL VIEW



# DORYPHOROS BY POLYKLEITOS

- ◉ THE SPEAR BEARER, Roman copy after a bronze original, 440 B.C;
- ◉ Marble copy that stood in a palestra at Pompeii, where it served as a model for Roman athletes;
- ◉ It is the embodiment of the vision of the artist about the ideal statue of a nude male athlete or warrior.

Roman marble copy from Pompeii, Italy, after a bronze original of 450-440 BC. Museo Nazionale, Naples.



- ⊙ It is the culmination of the evolution in Greek statuary from the Archaic kouros to the Kritios boy;
- ⊙ The “contrapposto” is more pronounced than ever before in a standing statue, but the artist wasn’t content with simply rendering a figure that stands naturally;
- ⊙ His aim was to impose order on human movement, to make it beautiful and perfect. He achieved this through a **chiastic system**, or cross.



- ⊙ The first sculptor to write a treatise on art, the “**Kanon**”, a guide concerning sculpture, based on the PROPORTION of the human being;
- ⊙ Perfect, ideal image of human beings through numbers and number relations;
- ⊙ Mathematical system: before the head should be  $1/7$  of the total height, now  $1/8$ .



- ◎ The essence of his **treatise**: HARMONY of opposites, dynamic asymmetrical balance through the counterpose (interplay between tension and relaxation);
- ◎ The right arm is free, the right leg carries the weight. The left leg is free, the left arm carries the weight.
- ◎ Aim: natural and relaxed position.



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