

# THE BRITISH MUSEUM



## The Body Beautiful

A TOURING EXHIBITION FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

# The Body Beautiful

Drawing exclusively on the rich collections of the British Museum, the exhibition offers a visually engaging and thought-provoking exploration of the human condition seen through ancient Greek eyes.

For over 2,000 years the Greeks experimented with representing the human body in works that range from prehistoric abstract simplicity to 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 ideas of representation the exhibition invites visitors to engage with artworks that have shaped the way that we think about and look at ourselves. The development of the human body in art as an object of beauty and bearer of meaning was driven by the ancient Greek lust for life and constant enquiry.

## Content

- 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



2

1. The Westmacott Athlete, marble statue of a boy athlete. Roman copy of a Greek bronze original of c. 440 BC. Roman, 1st century AD.  
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. Marble sphinx, from Monte Cagnolo outside Larium, near Rome, Italy. Roman c. AD 120–140.

## Further information

### Curator

Dr Ian Jenkins joined the British Museum in 1978 from Bristol University and is responsible for the ancient Greek collections. His special interests include Greek architecture and sculpture, and ancient Greek social history. Dr Jenkins has completed a number of exhibition projects including the permanent exhibition of Greek and Roman Life (Room 69, 1983), the permanent display of the Bassae Sculptures (Room 16, 1992), the temporary exhibition *Vases and Volcanoes – Sir William Hamilton and his Collection* (with Kim Sloan, 1996), and the Parthenon Information Galleries (Room 18, 1998). Dr Jenkins has recently published a major new history of Greek architecture and architectural Greek sculpture in the Museum and he leads the British Museum's excavations at Cnidus (Knidos) in south-west Turkey. Recent publications include *The Parthenon Sculptures in the British Museum* (British Museum Press, 2007), *Greek Architecture and its Sculpture* (British Museum Press, 2006), and *The Greek Body* (British Museum Press, 2009).

### Practical details

- The exhibition features over 100 objects including over 10 pieces of free-standing sculpture. Major pieces include the discobolos, the iconic representation of a discus thrower from the Roman emperor Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli.
- Space requirements: approximately 600–1000m<sup>2</sup>
- Object descriptions and text for inclusion in the exhibition and the catalogue are provided in English
- The suggested minimum display period is three months

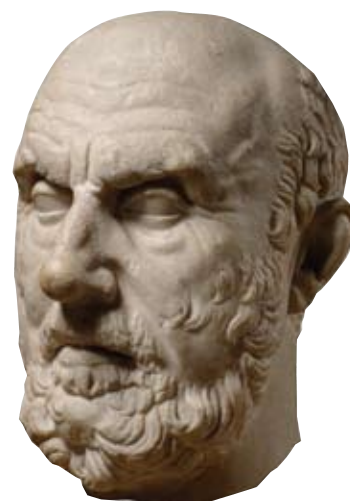
### For further details of this exhibition

Email [internationaltours@britishmuseum.org](mailto:internationaltours@britishmuseum.org)  
or visit [www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours](http://www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours)

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



3



4



5



# THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG  
[internationaltours@britishmuseum.org](mailto:internationaltours@britishmuseum.org)  
[www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours](http://www.britishmuseum.org/internationaltours)

© The Trustees of the British Museum 04/2009

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.