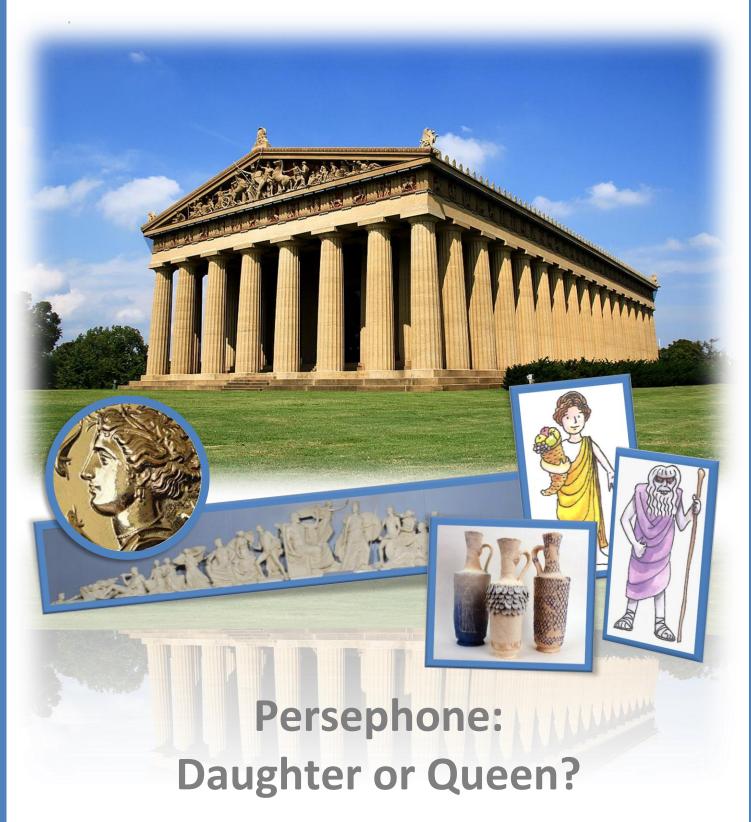


NASHVILLE PARTHENON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES







Persephone: Daughter or Queen?

Mission: To educate the public concerning the Parthenon and the civilization that built it, both in Athens, Greece, in the fifth century BCE and in Nashville, Tennessee, from 1897 to the present. To exhibit, collect, and care for objects and information related to: fifth century BCE Athens, the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, and the rebuilding of the Nashville Parthenon. To exhibit, collect, and care for visual art and to educate the public concerning is various forms.

Program Title: Persephone: Daughter or Queen?

Target Audience: All ages

Exhibit/Gallery: Flood Lines by Tasha Lewis

Author: Katherine Petrole, Director of Education, and Mark Medley, Curator

Contributors and Editors: Mark Medley, Curator; Alex Ponce, Education Intern; Kassie

Dooley-Smith, Education Intern

Activity Time: Approximately 10-15 minutes, plus time for visitor questions

Implementation Date: January 24, 2019 – May 10, 2020

Staff/Docents Needed: 1

Overview: This program offers visitors a deeper connection with one of the artistic themes of *Flood Lines by Tasha Lewis*: ancient Greece. During this program, visitors of all ages will be invited to join the staff/docent in discovering an important Greek goddess, Persephone, and discussing her symbols, her duties, and more. Staff and docents will draw connections to the art on display, plus the connection between the classical forms and the female form to begin thinking about women who lived in ancient Greece during this hands-on gallery learning experience.

Big Idea: What was the female experience in ancient Greece?

Goals:

- Visitors will gain an awareness of the Greek goddess Persephone.
- Visitors will participate in discussing mythology.

Objectives:

- Visitors will make observations about symbols of Greek gods.
- Visitors will see and touch symbols of Greek gods.

Family Learning Behaviors:

P. Family members contribute information or ask a question during program.

Example: "Who is your favorite Greek god?" "Demeter is Persephone's mother."

F. Family member compares something to himself, other family members, or other objects.

Example: "I have seen the Percy Jackson movies." "I've heard of her before, have you?"

M. Family members verbally and/or physically work on activity simultaneously to complete it. *Example: Families explore the cart items together.*

Background information:

About the Exhibition Flood Lines by Tasha Lewis

- The art in this exhibition focuses on the female experience in ancient Greece.
- Tasha incorporated hand-stitched seams and texture to highlight the humanness of the forms, avoiding air-brushed beauty and showing armor and confidence. Female forms took hours upon hours of time and effort—casts of the artist's own body were made then manipulated, and hair was stitched one strand at a time.
- The vessels throughout the exhibition are unguentaria, or small perfume jars. These
 have been found all over ancient Greece and were most commonly used for scented oils.
 - "Scales, pearls and netting speak to transformation as the wounds and abrasions of time become bejeweled and beautiful." -Tasha Lewis
- Various pieces remind the viewer of what is lost over time. Some works are missing pieces or concretions, or small encrusted pieces, on the surface.
- Here, Tasha seeks to explore cleansing effects of water as a regenerative force.
- Viewers are welcome to project their own myths or experiences onto Tasha's work.
- Artist Statement: (from <u>tashalewis.info/Statement.html</u>)
 - In my figurative sculptural practice, I use mixed-media techniques to articulate a mythic space inhabited by imperfect and resilient female bodies. My philosophy of making follows the modernist principle that an introversion into the self is the truest way to bridge the gap between minds. From Joyce, Gombrowicz, Wolfe, and Beckett, I take the need to build a world in my art as rich as my lived experience. I am particularly interested in developing visual languages through material techniques. Like Joyce in his novel Ulysses, I reference Greek art history not as a narrative template, but as a tool to showcase what has changed in our society and what has not: most importantly that we still live in a patriarchal system that imposes expectations on women's bodies. Like the sea's effects on coasts, or time's effects on Classical artifacts, this caustic atmosphere is manifest in my work through an erosion of form and surface.
 - O By using my body as a model, I engage in a public mode of self-reflection through making. The resultant sculptures are both flawed and intimate. Driven toward sensuous detail, I obsessively replicate body hair on my figures. The full heads of braids, curled wire pubic hair and embroidered leg and toe hairs are stitched in one strand at a time. I turn to fabric because it is familiar and versatile. While feminist artists of the sixties and seventies embraced textile as inherently female and made work using fiber alone, my art does not conform to society's gendered binary of labor. I seek to challenge the assumptions of what sculpture can be made of. It can be both hard and soft. Indeed, the intermingling of material is a more genuine articulation of the body where plaster casts act as muscle and bone and sewn textile as taut skin.
 - o In my newest works, arches and founts place my figures and vessels in a kind of minimalist bath house or public fountain. Inspired by metaphysical classicists like Giorgio de Chirico, the environment of my installations is defined through color gradients and architectural elements. Some figures decompose as I imagine objects lost at sea would after being taken over by aquatic ecosystems. Some take those same materials and present a bejeweled armor in place of scars or bodily defects. All of the pieces in my portfolio are women. They are sisters drawn out of my form, and inspired by broken, but still beautiful Hellenistic marble sculptures. They represent my processing of the systemic misogyny of America; an aggressive capitalist system which devalues the labors that I find most enriching and fulfilling. For me, it is a kind of self-care to devote my time to

these women, who are enriched by my stitches, and who act as ambassadors by taking my feelings and experiences out into the world.

About Tasha Lewis

- Tasha Lewis is in the MFA program at University of Tennessee- Knoxville. She studied Studio Art and Literature at Swarthmore College, in Swarthmore, PA, and was later a part of the 2014 Artist-in-the-Marketplace program at the Bronx Museum.
- As a two-month resident at the StudioWorks program at the Tides Institute in Eastport, ME, she created 644 works on paper in 18 different artistic styles/materials each in response to a single page in James Joyce's infamous novel *Ulysses*.
- Lewis was commissioned by the Breckenridge International Festival of Art to bring 1,000 magnetic butterflies to Colorado. This commission was an offshoot of her global street art project, Swarm the World, which she has coordinated since 2014. Swarm the World has 180 collaborators in 45 countries who are installing and photographing 300 magnetic cyanotype butterflies in their local environments to bring beauty to overlooked metal spaces and objects in urban areas.

Art Spotlight

Larger sizes available in Appendix A: Images.



Tidal Bather, 2017
Tasha Lewis,
Plaster, wood and mesh base covered in sewn cyanotype skin with macramé coral and beads
20" x 27" x 15"

"My art focuses on the female experience in ancient Greek culture. Viewers can project
their own myths or experiences onto my work. The hand stitched seams and pearls on
my figures are forces of humanism radiating positivity that is beyond idealized airbrushed beauty. Carefully sewn lines, shapes, and textures are like armor underscoring
each figure's confidence." -Tasha Lewis



Left to right:

Lekythos II, 2017

Tasha Lewis
dyed fabric, plaster gauze, thread
7" x 18" x 7"

Lekythos I, 2017 Tasha Lewis dyed fabric, plaster gauze, thread, wire, beads 6"x14" x 6"

Lekythos III, 2017
Tasha Lewis,
dyed fabric, plaster gauze, thread
7" x 18" x 7"

"The vessels you see among the figures are replicas of Hellenistic pottery forms —all
used to carry water or oil by the ancient Greeks. Their shapes suggest the female body
and provide surfaces upon which to explore the marks of water's cleansing effects.
Scales, pearls and netting speak to transformation as the wounds and abrasions of time
become bejeweled and beautiful." -Tasha Lewis



Converge
2018
Tasha Lewis
Cardboard, paper, plaster, found fabric, pearls, glass beads, cotton cord, custom wood pedestal
32"x74"x14"

"It was important to make these sculptures to feel as human as possible and so I stitched the body hair one strand at a time to imbue the work with my labor.
 Additionally, each figure is a woman created from casts of my body -they are different but visually linked as sisters might be. Some are marked as objects lost at sea —missing pieces and encrusted with barnacles. The work is not about water as a destructive force, but rather as a regenerative one." -Tasha Lewis

Symbols of Greek Gods in the Program

- Demeter: torch/lantern, cornucopia, wheat, bread, grains, baby pig
- Persephone: pomegranate, torch/lantern, flowers (narcissus), baby pig
- Hades: scepter, horn of plenty, Cerberus (three-headed dog), bearded

About Persephone

- Persephone is also known as Kore, which is Greek for "daughter" or "maiden".
- The following is from https://www.greekmythology.com/Other Gods/Persephone/persephone.html
 - o "The most famous myth about Persephone is the story of her abduction."
 - Hades, the ruler of the Underworld, decided that he wanted to marry Persephone, his sister Demeter's only daughter. One day, as she was gathering flowers in the Nysian meadow with her maidens, she wandered apart from the group ensnared by the sudden blooming of a glorious fragrant flower (some say it was a narcissus). As she reached to pluck it, the ground below her feet opened up and Hades, in his four-horse golden chariot, appeared before her in all his power and majesty. He snatched her and took her with him to the Underworld, to be his wife and gueen.
 - Needless to say, Demeter wasn't very pleased when she found out from Hecate and Helios what had happened. Hurt and distraught, she started wandering aimlessly around and was aggrieved to such an extent that she neglected all her duties. And since she was the goddess of agriculture and fertility, the earth was now barren, and people were dying of famine."
 - Note: alternate stories reframe Demeter's neglecting of her duties as an intentional refusal to perform her duties. How does this change Demeter's agency in the story?
 - "Seeing no way out of it, Zeus (who some say must have approved Hades' abduction in the first place) sent Hermes to the Underworld to

- fetch Persephone back to her mother. The divine messenger did do precisely that, and Demeter and Persephone were once again reunited on Olympus.
- However, either on her own accord or, more probably, after being tricked by Hades, Persephone had tasted one pomegranate seed before leaving the Underworld. This, according to the ancient laws, obliged her to remain in the Underworld.
- Zeus proposed a compromise: Persephone would spend two-thirds of the year with her mother, and one-third with her new husband. Everybody agreed – and that's how the seasons were born and how the growth of crops was explained.
- Just like a seed, Persephone spends few months of the year below the earth.
 This is the period of Demeter's grief which coincides with the dark, winter months. However, when the time comes for Persephone to go back to her mother, Demeter brings back the light and the warmth and the earth rejoices in abundance."

The Cult of Demeter

- When Persephone was kidnapped and Demeter wandered the earth in sorrow, she
 encountered the royal family of Eleusis and was invited to stay with them. Her
 interactions with this family explain the origins of the Eleusinian mysteries, one of the
 most popular cults in the ancient world as it gave participants special advantages in the
 afterlife.
- In ancient Greece, women who died before marriage were often called the "brides of Hades." Persephone somewhat reflects this phenomena, as she too was snatched away from her family by death.
- The confusion between "rape" and "abduction" partially arises from theories of Greek marriage practices. Many historians argue that traditionally, after a father gave his permission, the groom would have "kidnapped" his bride back to his home. In this interpretation of the myth, Hades was marrying Persephone with the permission of her father Zeus.

Modern Connection

Today, a resurgence of interest has led to retellings of many Greek myths with a
modern spin, including the story of Persephone and Hades. Many of these modern
adaptations eliminate the nonconsensual aspects of the story, often framing it as
Persephone willingly seeking refuge with Hades. What about our culture might cause us
to enjoy these versions more?

Primary Sources (translations via Theoi.com)

- Homeric Hymn to Demeter
 - "[Demeter's] trim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus [Haides] rapt away, given to him by all-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer."
- Diodorus Siculus, Library of History 4. 25. 4 (trans. Oldfather) (Greek historian C1st B.C.): "
 - Because of the love he [Orpheus] held for his wife he dared the amazing deed of descending into Haides, where he entrances Persephone by his melodious song and persuaded her to assist him in his desires and to allow him to bring up his dead wife from Haides."
- Strabo, Geography 8. 3. 14 (trans. Jones) (Greek geographer C1st B.C. to C1st A.D.)

"Near Pylos, towards the east, is a mountain named after Minthe, who, according
to myth, became the concubine of Haides, was trampled under foot by Kore
(Core) [Persephone], and was transformed into garden-mint, the plant which
some call *hedyosmos*. Furthermore, near the mountain is a precinct sacred to
Haides."

<u>Images of Persephone on Artifacts</u>

- Proserpina sarcophagus
 - https://www.ancient.eu/image/2197/persephone-sarcophagus-detail/
- The Walter's Persephone Sarcophagus
 - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman Sarcophagus with the Abduction of Persephone by Hades Walters 23219.jpg
- Outside of these sarcophagi, Persephone is mainly depicted on coinage or with her mother.
- At sanctuaries of Demeter and Persephone, small terracotta figurines holding torches, baby pigs, and birds are often found.
 - o At Corinth, bone pins with pomegranate decorative ends were discovered.

Further Recommended Reading:

- Corinth Excavations' research and finds of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore:
 - Interpreting Ancient Mysteries of Demeter (lesson plan)
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByUHHp_rthaoU0tQcGltLU9ubkE/view
 - Interpreting Ancient Mysteries of Demeter (PowerPoint of images)
 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByUHHp_rthaoT3B1MEFFdnpBMVE/view
- In the Museum Store, Richard Buxton's <u>The Complete World of Greek Mythology</u> has a great section on the Underworld (starting p. 206). Feel free to ask Katie for a copy of the Underworld chapter.

How does this program tie to your gallery content and museum?

This program introduces visitors to the theme of the temporary exhibition in an accessible and familiar way. The cart program highlights a Greek goddess featured in the architectural sculpture of the Parthenon (east pediment). It also creates discussion about women in ancient Greece by focusing on the story of Persephone, her family, and marriage. The program is connected to the artist's source of inspiration.

Ideas for Initiating Interaction: Where are you, and how can visitors know to find you?

- This program will take place in a visible location in the East Gallery.
- There will be a sign you can put out at the Front Desk once you start the program.
- Clearly display signage on the cart.

Props:

- Art Cart
- Stool(s)
- Signage in clear acrylic holders:
 - Program Happening Now
 - o Persephone: Daughter or Queen?
 - o Vote!

- Three laminated images of art in the exhibit (Appendix A)
- Artificial pomegranates
- Persephone coin (large, gold)
- Zeus coin (silver, small)
- Zeus toy, Hermes toy, Athena toy, Artemis toy (optional)
- Hades and Demeter voting ballots
- Ballot box
- Clicker counter
- Program tracking sheet clipboard

Advance Preparation:

- Gather all supplies and set up in East Gallery.
- Take the clear acrylic sign "Program Happening Now" to the Front Desk and inform Front Desk staff how long you will be in the gallery.

Gathering:

"Hello, welcome. My name is _____ and I brought some things to help us learn about this exhibit. Come stop by the cart to hear about Greek gods!"

Program Script: This script is a suggestion of how to initiate a discussion between you (the facilitator) and the visitors. You are welcome to navigate this discussion following your own path, as any dialogue that supports the mission, goals, and objectives is a successful program. All dialogue is plain, notes and stage directions are **bold**.

Hi, come on up. My name is _____ and I am a docent here at the Parthenon. Have you been to the Parthenon before? (Allow for response.) Welcome! (Or Welcome back!)

What do you notice about the art on the walls around us? (Allow for response. Include all visitors by asking for observations from younger and older visitors.) Excellent observations. My favorite observation that I made is that in some of the art, you can see clues of the past. This art was inspired by ancient Greece. What do you know about ancient Greece? (Allow for response.)

Today, we are highlighting Greek mythology by sharing Persephone's story. Have you heard the name Persephone before? (Allow for response. Prompts for hearing about her in mythology stories or Percy Jackson series can spark memories-- this helps younger visitors connect their Parthenon visit to something familiar.) Okay then, maybe this is familiar to you.

The Greeks had 12 main Olympian gods. The Parthenon—this museum—was the temple for the main god of Athens. Who do you think that was? (Allow for response.) Athena, yes! (show Athena toy) Have you seen Athena upstairs yet? (Allow for response.) She's a must-see while here.

All the gods are related, for example Zeus, Hades, and Demeter (**show toys and pictures**) were all siblings. Zeus and Demeter had a child together, named Persephone. That makes Hades Persephone's uncle... on both sides.

Demeter and Persephone were a special mother-daughter duo. They even appear sitting together on one of the pediments, you try to find them upstairs. Demeter is the goddess of agriculture, which is grains, cereals, and farming, and also the god of fertility. So, she's in charge of creating families and having children. Her daughter, Persephone (show gold Persephone coin), was connected to nature and flowers. Persephone has a really interesting story that archaeologists are still working to understand.

Persephone became the Queen of the Underworld. How do you think she became the queen? (Allow for response.) One version of the myth is that she was exploring a meadow and picked a flower. But it was a trap! The flower opened up into the Underworld and Hades, King of the Underworld, kidnapped her. Demeter, her mom, noticed her daughter went missing and began searching for her. Some myths say that Demeter left her duties in order to continue looking for her daughter. What do you think that meant? (Allow for response.) What happened to the fields and families of people in Greece? (Allow for response.)

The story goes that Zeus (**show Zeus toy**) then sent Hermes (**show Hermes toy**), the messenger god, down to the Underworld to return Persephone back to her mother. Demeter and Persephone were reunited! But Hades, possibly as a trick, had given her a pomegranate (**show pomegranates**) in the Underworld. Because she had eaten it, Persephone couldn't return to her mother full-time—she was now tied to the Underworld. She spent half the year with her mother, and half the year with her husband.

How would you feel if you could only spend half the year with your family? (Allow for response.)

But there's a second side to the story if we think about it from the perspective of life in ancient Greece. In ancient Greece, after the father gave permission for marriage the groom would have "kidnapped" his bride back to his home. So, in this case, Hades was marrying Persephone with the permission of her father, Zeus. This was a typical, regular marriage for ancient Greeks. Today, we would say a typical marriage is ideally a happy and loving marriage. How we see marriage today could be very different than how someone living in Greece 2,500 years ago saw marriage. And ancient sources do say Persephone was "given" to Hades by "all-seeing Zeus". As one of the wisest Greek gods, Zeus is very aware that he is making this match for his daughter, which elevates her from a regular Greek goddess to a Queen!

Homeric Hymn to Demeter:

"[Demeter's] trim-ankled daughter whom Aidoneus [Haides] rapt away, given to him by all-seeing Zeus the loud-thunderer."

We want to know what you think. She spent half the year with her mother, half with her husband. So think about which life gave her more freedom? Which life gave her more power? Which role do you think she might have enjoyed more—daughter or Queen? Do you think Persephone preferred life with her mother or her husband? (Allow for response. Tell this visitor that this is a tough question with no right or wrong answer. Then you may want to ask again: What do you think? Allow for response. Thinking like this is exactly how archaeologists think—they study the past to learn about what life was like thousands of years ago.)

You can vote! We have ballots for Demeter and Hades. Pick who you think Persephone preferred and place your vote in the ballot box. (Show visitors the images of Demeter and Hades, have them choose which to put in the ballot box.) In May when all this wonderful art has to leave, we will count up all the votes and announce the results on social media.

The story of Persephone helps us think about women in ancient Greece, just like this art exhibit. You will see shapes of women and shapes of ancient jars and vessels used by women.

Conclusion:

- Thanks for joining me today, and for voting! I hope you enjoy this exhibit inspired by women in ancient Greece. I'll be here if you have questions while you explore. See if you can find a *Lekythos*—it is my favorite!
- I appreciate your hard work today. As you explore this gallery, keep an eye out for Tasha Lewis' big sculptures—she made molds of her own body and then reshaped them with all sorts of details. I wonder what details you will find. Thanks for joining me!

Adaptation suggestions for different audiences:

One Family/Small program size

• Tailor information and tasks to specific ages in the group. Be sure to include all ages in the conversation and ability to hold objects and ask questions.

For younger/preschool audiences

Help younger visitors make comparisons to something they know. Spend time explaining
that this art made by a woman who was inspired by people who lived a very long time
ago. Ask their age, and explain that this is way, way, older. Consider what is visible from
their viewpoint. Remind everyone that we look with our eyes not our hands. Encourage
adults to participate equally- perhaps have the family unit work together.

Larger groups (who may wish to participate but have limited time or space)

• Keep discussions shorter. Include adults by inviting them to answer questions, modeling participation for their group. Encourage groups to come back with family or friends when they have more time.

Adults only

 Adults often look for more detailed background knowledge, including information about ancient civilization. With Persephone, interactions can be especially memorable by discussing the relationship with Persephone and her mother Demeter.

Following Up:

- At the end of your session, record the number of visitors on the program clipboard.
- Record comments overheard or memorable interactions (positive or negative experiences).
- Pick up the clear acrylic sign "Program Happening Now" from the Front Desk.
- Return cart and materials to their proper storage location.
- Report any items that need repair or replacement to Katie.
- Self-assessment:
 - o What went well?
 - o What is one thing that didn't go well?
 - o What is one thing you will try next time?

Resources:

- Museum text panels
- https://www.tashalewis.info/Statement.html
- https://www.greekmythology.com/Other_Gods/Persephone/persephone.html
- Shoo Rayner. How to Draw Ancient Greek Stuff Real Easy. 2018. p. 7, 11.
- https://www.theoi.com/
- https://www.ancient.eu/image/2197/persephone-sarcophagus-detail
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_-
 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_-
 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_-
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByUHHp rthaoU0tOcGltLU9ubkE/view
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByUHHp_rthaoT3B1MEFFdnpBMVE/view

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APPENDIX A: IMAGES

- The following images will be available on the cart for discussion with visitors:
 - o Tidal Bather
 - o Lekythos I-III
 - o Converge