



LINES OF SITE

THE PARTHENON FRIEZE

28 JANUARY - 28 MARCH 2020

An Exhibition of Contemporary Works
by Debbie Loftus

Museum of Classical Archaeology Press Release

Lines of Site: The Parthenon Frieze

An exhibition of contemporary works by Debbie Loftus

28 January – 28 March 2020

Installation: Monday 27 January 2020

Website: <https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum/exhibitions/exhibitions/lines-of-site>

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is excited to host works inspired by the Parthenon Frieze by artist Debbie Loftus. With a background in design and fine art, Loftus has created a series of works which revisit this well-known ancient monument in unexpected ways.

In 2015, Loftus was Artist-in-Residence at the British Museum, timed with the premiere of a new cantata produced by Thomas Hewitt Jones and Paul Williamson. The result was six new works inspired not only by the fragility of the past, embodied in the surviving Parthenon marbles, but also of the senses themselves.

‘The bleached and broken stones that make up the Parthenon frieze as we see it today are like an immense beautiful jigsaw from which innumerable pieces have been lost,’ says Loftus. ‘Those absences are poignant because they remind us that we are seeing isolated pieces of a distant, seemingly perfect world that can never be recaptured in its pristine entirety.’

She was also inspired by a British Museum publication, *Second Sight of the Parthenon Frieze*, which uses Braille and tactile images to communicate the composition of the frieze for blind and partially sighted users. *Second Sight* will be available to all visitors at the Front Desk for

the duration of the exhibition and a touch tour for partially sighted and blind visitors will be included in the programming (date and time tbc).

And for Loftus, the process of making the artworks also involved engaging with the fractured history of the Parthenon marbles themselves. 'The series was made during a time of chaotic political upheaval, and it explores both historical and contemporary ideas about social order, ideology, power and loss,' she says. The techniques she employed involved the artistic decision to erase, destroy or replace areas of laboriously worked imagery, then layering the fragments to create new wholes.

Moreover, the opinions of visitors on the question of whether the Parthenon marbles belong in London or Athens became a vital part of her practice, as she worked in the galleries themselves during her residency at the British Museum. 'When I was drawing in the British Museum I was privileged to overhear many opinions on the subject, expressed by the many visitors who liked to come and stand next to me as I worked. As an artist, I felt it was my role to see and hear, while remaining as unobtrusive and unobserved as possible. That experience contributed to my title: Lines of Site.'

In further works included in the show, Loftus continues to explore the shattered fragments and fractured lines of the Parthenon Frieze. She uses techniques which combine digital images and analogue techniques to interrogate absence, loss and the accretions of time by layering and eroding her own images of the sculptures. The result is a provocative, colourful and striking array of wall-mounted works on paper, which encourage the viewer to look again at the ancient artefacts themselves.

All works are available for sale.



IMAGE COPYRIGHT: Debbie Loftus

Left: Lines of Site 3

Right: Blind Eye View, triptych central panel (Braille rubbing, charcoal, pastel, cotton thread)

About the artist

Seeking to create order from chaos, Loftus explores human consciousness, ideas about infinity, and the fabric of our universe with a critical yet playful eye, obliquely referencing western cultural history.



Debbie Loftus trained at the Chelsea School of Art and has a background in fine art, design and photography. She works on location and from her studio in London. Recent shows include the British Museum (London), Kings College (Cambridge), Ulriksdal Palace, (Stockholm), and Tom Rowland fine art (London). Recent publications include *Galileo 24* (2017), *Six London Preludes* (2017) and *Clay: Themes and Variations from Ancient Mesopotamia* (2018).

More information: <https://www.debbieloftus.com/>

Events

Workshop Tuesday 10 March 2020, 2-4pm. Lines of Site: Artist-led workshop

Touch Tour Date and time tbc

About the Museum of Classical Archaeology

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is home to one of the finest surviving collections of plaster casts of Greek and Roman sculpture in the world, housed in its atmospheric Cast Gallery. Exhibitions are displayed amongst the casts, creating new dialogues between ancient and modern, antiquity and its reception. MoCA is one of eight museums and collections which work together as the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) and received funding from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation.

For further information and images, please contact the Curator, Dr Susanne Turner

smt41@cam.ac.uk | 01223 335153

www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
**MUSEUMS
& BOTANIC GARDEN**