



ALEXANDER S. ONASSIS
PUBLIC BENEFIT FOUNDATION (USA), INC.

**FIRST U.S. EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY WORKS BY ARTEMIS
TO BE PRESENTED IN THE OLYMPIC TOWER ATRIUM
AT THE ONASSIS CULTURAL CENTER**

***"Odyssey" by Artemis* Exhibition of Twelve Tapestries
An Abstract Interpretation of Homer's Epic**

New York, NY, February 25, 2005 — Beginning March 21, 2005, the Onassis Cultural Center will present *"Odyssey" by Artemis*, the first U.S. exhibition of works by the contemporary artist and weaver Artemis. Consisting of a series of twelve abstract tapestries, these works are based on the characters and plot of Homer's *The Odyssey*, as well as a contemporary interpretation of the epic, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* by Nikos Kazantzakis. The tapestries will be exhibited in the Olympic Tower Atrium in New York City through May 21, 2005. The exhibition will be inaugurated in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein, the Ambassador of Liechtenstein to the United States and members of the senior leadership of the Foundation.

Artemis' vibrantly colored, abstract tapestries chronicle the life of Odysseus, the protagonist of Homer's epic, and elements of his famous journey: in the tapestries *The Resourceful Man* and *The Archer*, the hero displays his ingenuity and military skills in the Trojan War; he resists dangers and temptations in *Between Charybdis and Scylla*, *The Cyclops*, *Circe* and *The Sirens*; and in *Hades*, Artemis interprets Odysseus' visit to the realm of the dead. Accompanying each tapestry are selections of text from *The Odyssey* and Kazantzakis' interpretation, drawing direct connections between the elements of the story — and the dialogue of the characters — and the artworks they inspired.



Circe, from *Odyssey Series*, wool, cotton, silk and viscose, 2.40 x 2.40m, 1999

The twelve tapestries in the *Odyssey Series* took Artemis ten years to complete, working exclusively during daylight hours at her home in the island of Tinos, in Greece's chain of Cycladic Islands – a region renowned for its contribution to the development of Hellenic culture in antiquity. Artemis weaves her tapestries on vertical looms, using a variety of materials including wool, cotton, silk and viscose. The artist's preoccupation with sunlight as part of the artistic process, as well as her use of the luminous fabric viscose in the tapestries, creates works that are infused with light, giving each piece a distinctly spiritual quality.

Born in France, Artemis was a composer and singer in Paris before becoming a visual artist, when she formally established her own studio in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, in 1984 and then moved to Tinos, Greece, in 1987. Her first completed woven work, *Song of Song*, consisted of five tapestries and collages, and she has subsequently produced more than six different sets of tapestry-based works, each of which use their abstracted forms to tell a story. Since 1984, Artemis' work has been exhibited in across Europe, with solo exhibitions in Switzerland, Austria and Belgium, as well as Liechtenstein, and she has been included in group exhibitions in countries such as France, Germany and Poland. The installation at the Onassis Cultural Center will be her first exhibition in the United States.



The Resourceful Man, from *Odyssey Series*, wool, cotton, silk and viscose, 2.35 x 4.80m, 1998

Onassis Cultural Center

"*Odyssey*" by Artemis continues the Onassis Cultural Center's ongoing contemporary art series presented in the Olympic Tower Atrium. Previous exhibitions in the series have included *Periplus: Magnum Photographers in Contemporary Greece*, showcasing work by nine photographers who traversed Greece documenting the nation as it prepared for the 2004 Olympic Games; *Silent Chapel*, an installation by contemporary Greek-American artist Stephen Antonakos; and *Re-cast: Post Modern Classical*, an exhibition of international contemporary artists inspired by classical antiquity, which was curated by the Museum Studies program of The City College of New York.

The Onassis Cultural Center is the public forum of the Onassis Foundation (USA), an Affiliate of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation founded by Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis upon his death in 1975. The mission of the Onassis Foundation (USA) is to disseminate Hellenic civilization throughout the United States of America and Canada. By cooperating with universities, colleges and art institutions in Greece, the United States and Canada, the Onassis Foundation (USA) promotes bilateral cultural relations. The Onassis Cultural Center, opened in the Fall 2000, carries out the mission of the Foundation by presenting cultural and artistic activities concerning ancient, Byzantine and modern Hellenic civilization. The Center seeks to give the public greater access to significant aspects of Greek culture through its ongoing series of exhibitions, lectures, musical events, literary evenings and theatrical performances by Greeks and non-Greeks inspired by Hellenism.

Currently on view at the Onassis Cultural Center is *Alexander the Great: Treasures from an Epic Era of Hellenism*, an exhibition featuring a variety of rare Macedonian artifacts including portraits of the legendary Greek king in the form of ancient marble heads, bronze statuettes, medallions and ancient coins. *Alexander the Great* will be on view through April 16, 2005. Other recent exhibitions at the Center include *From Ishtar to Aphrodite: 3200 Years of Cypriot Hellenism* presenting art and artifacts from the island of Cyprus, spanning the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Hellenistic period; and *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece: Images of Childhood from the Classical Past*, the first exhibition to examine the lives of children and attitudes about childhood in Ancient Greece.

Running from March 21 through May 21, 2005, "*Odyssey*" by Artemis will be on view seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., in the Olympic Tower Atrium. Admission is free. An exhibition catalogue will be offered free to visitors.

The Onassis Cultural Center, which is located in the Olympic Tower (645 Fifth Avenue – entrance on 51st and 52nd Streets), is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and admission is free. To learn more about the Foundation and the Onassis Cultural Center, please visit www.onassisusa.org.

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