

"Bridging Cultures" – connecting cultures

100 Years of German-Greek Archaeology on Samos

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of archaeological research of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) on Samos, the exhibition "**Bridging Cultures**" opened on Friday, July 4, 2025: The photographic exhibition showcases the archaeological discoveries from a century of research – highlighting the exceptional role of Samos as cultural crossroads in the ancient Mediterranean world. The exhibits show how strongly ancient society interacted with external influences – an exchange that promoted cultural change, technological innovation, and social progress.

Samos as an example of intercultural encounters

"**Bridging Cultures**" stands for cross-border dialogue, openness and building bridges between cultures. The exhibition demonstrates that exchange was already a driving force behind social and technological developments in antiquity. The ancient Samians took advantage of this and developed a city-state culture that absorbed and developed influences from Anatolia, Egypt, and the Middle East: "This geographical privilege enabled the rapid adoption of new technologies, artistic concepts and architectural techniques – such as the use of the Egyptian system of measurement or innovative methods in temple construction," explains curator and Head of the excavation project at the Heraion of Samos (DAI Athens). "The island's openness to external influences was decisive for its architectural and artistic achievements."

The archaeological finds reveal the engagement of the ancient society of Samos with external influences. The concept of **Bridging Cultures** is evident, i.a., in the Kouros of Isches: Although the sculptor explored Egyptian representations of the human body in depth, he developed a completely new and independent aesthetic concept. The Kouros is therefore an example of constructive intercultural dialogue, rather than unreflective adoption. A dynamic process between the foreign and the familiar, which can still be understood today as a symbol of successful intercultural dialogue: "**Bridging Cultures**" describes also the mission and self-image of German archaeologists abroad, who build valuable cultural bridges through their commitment and cooperation in international research teams," emphasized Ambassador Andreas Kindl at the opening ceremony (English translation by editorial). The photo exhibition invites visitors to discover, with the help of archaeological findings and across cultural and historical borders, how pivotal cultural knowledge transfer is to the genesis of societies – then as now.

Expression of a close relationship

"The sequence of historical milestones shows us in an exemplary way what an important component archaeology is in our foreign policy and what a constant it is [...] in German-Greek relations," affirmed the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Greece. "**Bridging Cultures**" is also a token of our close ties to Greece, the local authorities, and the people of Samos in gratitude for their longstanding trust and close cooperation. With this cultural contribution, the DAI Athens would like to express its appreciation and thanks.

Duration and accompanying program

The exhibition will be on display at Art Space Pythagorion from July 4 to October 10, 2025.

"**Bridging Cultures**" honors the cultural heritage of Samos, sheds light on the island's past from new perspectives and raises awareness of its historical significance – among locals and visitors alike. The project was realized together with the Schwarz Foundation and with the support of the

Greek Ministry of Culture, represented by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Samos and Ikaria. An accompanying program will complement the exhibition. All information and opening hours can be found at: <https://www.dainst.org/en/dai-standorte/athens/research/exhibitions/bridging-cultures>

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German Archaeological Institute

Global Research

The German Archaeological Institute (DAI) is an internationally active research institution under the Federal Foreign Office. Since its establishment in 1829, it has evolved into one of the largest research organizations in archaeology and classical studies. Through its global initiatives and versatile network, the DAI fosters intercultural dialogue and plays a vital role in Germany's foreign cultural and educational policy.

With a total of eleven major branches – comprising the headquarters in Berlin, three commissions in Bonn, Frankfurt am Main, and Munich, and seven departments in Athens, Berlin, Cairo, Istanbul, Madrid, and Rome – the DAI maintains a presence in Germany and abroad. In addition, its departments and commissions operate offices in Tehran, Sana'a, Baghdad, Damascus, and Beijing, as well as research centers in Lisbon, Ulaanbaatar, and Budapest. These offices and centers enhance collaboration with local scholars and institutions, contributing significantly to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage worldwide.