

# ART

## BEFORE VENUS

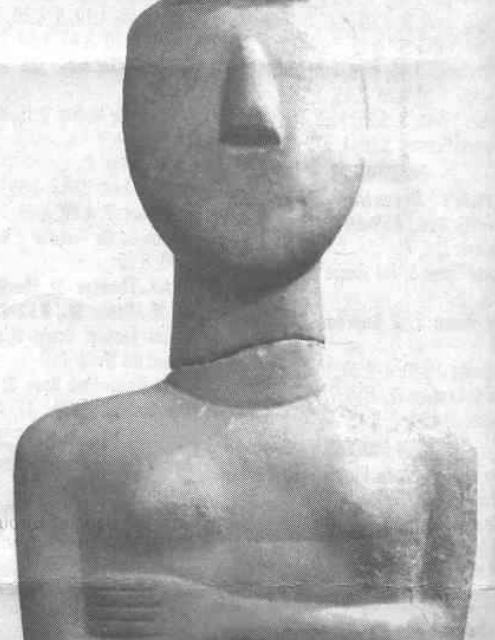
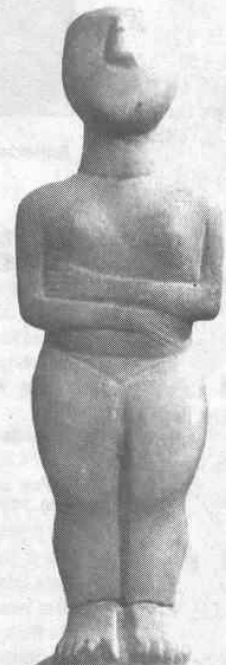
### seum highlights female idols of antiquity



"Female figure missing the calves/feet and base."



"Sitting female figure."



**By Abby Luby**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**T**he stunning and fascinating sculpture in the exhibit "Ancient Art of the Cyclades" has passed through countless hands over the past 7,000 years. Starting with the hands that chipped and carved the exquisite white marble, then painted them with bright pigment, to hands that held the delicate vessels and revered female forms during rituals or rested the figure for its final use in the afterlife. Many millennia later, hands unearthed this prized, ancient art.

### REVIEW

The show, now at the Katonah (N.Y.) Museum of Art, is only the fourth exhibition in the United States devoted to Cycladic art and is a rare compilation of pieces not usually seen in public. Most people's closest association with the Cyclades, a group of 30 small islands in the Aegean Sea, is with Homer's account of neighboring Crete in the Iliad. But as part of the

Please see **CYCLADES**, Page D4

Any inaccuracies in these listings may be the result of last-minute changes by the movie theaters.

**SUNDAY, NOV. 5.**



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**"Running With Scissors."**

10:10  
**Port Ave.,** Man of the Year: 7:25, 10:15  
 Open Season: Noon, 2:15, 4:45  
 The Prestige: 11:35, 2:45, 6:05, 9:20  
 The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause: 11:1, 1:30, 4:10, 7, 9:45  
 Saw III: 11:50, 2:30, 5:15, 8, 10:45  
**RIDGEFIELD**  
**The Ridgefield Playhouse, 80 E. River Ave., 438-5795**  
 The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause: 11:30, 2  
**RYE BROOK, N.Y.**  
**Clearview's Rye Ridge Cinemas, Rye Ridge Shopping Center, 914-939-8177**  
 The Illusionist: 2:30, 5  
 Marie Antoinette: 2, 4:30, 7  
**STAMFORD**  
**Avon Theatre, 272 Bedford St., 967-3660**  
 The Last King of Scotland: 12:15, 2:35, 5, 7:25  
 The Queen: 12:45, 3:05, 5:25, 7:45  
**Crown Landmark 9, 5 Landmark Square, 324-3100**  
 Borat: 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8, 10:10  
 Catch a Fire: 6:40, 9  
 Flicka: 1:20, 4  
 Flushed Away: 12:30, 1, 2:40, 3:10, 5, 5:30, 7:10, 7:40, 9:20, 9:50  
 The Grudge 2: 9:15  
 Man of the Year: 12:50, 6:30  
 Marie Antoinette: 1:40, 4:20, 7, 9:40  
 The Marine: 3:50, 9:30  
 Open Season: 12:40, 3, 5:05, 7:05  
 Saw III: 1:50, 2:30, 4:40, 5:10, 7, 7:30, 9:20, 10  
**Crown Majestic, 118 Summer St., 323-1690**  
 The Departed: 12:50, 4, 7:10, 10:20  
 Flags of Our Fathers: 1:10, 4:10, 7, 9:50  
 The Prestige: Thu: 4:20, 7:20, 10:05; Fri: 4:40, 7:30, 10:15; Sat/Sun: 12:40, 3:30, 6:40, 9:30  
 Running with Scissors: 1:30, 4:20, 7:20, 10

The Illusionist: 4:30, 6:50  
 Little Miss Sunshine: 4:20, 6:40

**TRUMBULL**

**Crown Marquis 16, 100 Quarry Road, 365-6500**  
 Borat: 12:20, 3, 5:30, 8, 10  
 Catch a Fire: 7:10, 9:30  
 The Departed: 12:45, 3:40, 7, 10  
 Employee of the Month: 1:40, 4, 6:30  
 Flags of Our Fathers: 12:10, 3, 6:45, 9:50  
 Flicka: 12, 2:20, 4:45  
 Flushed Away: 12:30, 1:10, 2:45, 3:30, 5:20, 6:10, 7:30, 8:15, 9:40  
 The Grudge 2: 9  
 Man of the Year: 1, 4:10, 7:20, 10  
 Marie Antoinette: 12:10, 3:20, 6:50, 9:20  
 Open Season: 12:20, 2:20, 4:30, 6:30  
 The Prestige: 1, 4, 7, 9:45  
 Running with Scissors: 12:30, 3:45, 6:40, 9:20  
 The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause: 12:40, 2:30, 3:10, 5, 5:40, 7:20, 8, 9:30  
 Saw II: 1:20, 2, 3:45, 4:40, 7:10, 7:45, 9, 9:45

**WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.**

**City Center 15 Cinema de Lux, 19 Mamaroneck Ave., 914-747-6000**  
 Borat: Fri/Sat: 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:40, 10  
 A Christmas Carol: 10 a.m.  
 The Departed: 12:35, 3:55, 6:40, 7:05, 9:55  
 Flags of Our Fathers: 12:30, 3:35, 6:50, 9:45  
 Flushed Away: 12:20, 2:20, 2:40, 4:35, 5, 7:10, 9:25  
 Man of the Year: 8:15, 10:30  
 Marie Antoinette: 1, 3:45, 6:30, 9:10  
 The Nightmare Before Christmas: 12:15, 2:30, 4:45, 7, 9:15  
 Open Season: Noon, 2:05, 4:10, 6:15  
 The Prestige: 1:10, 4, 6:55, 9:45  
 The Queen: 12:05, 2:25, 5:05, 7:25, 10:05  
 Running with Scissors: 1:20, 4:05, 6:45, 9:30  
 The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause: 12:10, 12:15, 2:35, 3:10, 4:55, 5:30, 7:15, 8, 9:35, 10:20  
 Saw III: Noon, 12:25, 2:25, 2:55, 4:50, 5:20, 7:20, 7:50, 9:50, 10:15

**WILTON**

**Cyclades**

Continued from Page D3

Aegean civilization, the pieces in this show are a mere glimpse into the lives of the islanders from the 5th millennium B.C.

Tastefully exhibited against dark red walls, the small, encased pieces are singularly illuminated and speak to worship and mystery. In her clearly written catalog for the show, curator and scholar Pat Getz-Gentle explains the difficulty of deciphering the use of figures and vessels from a preliterate culture. Overall, Getz-Gentle's observations leave no question that it was the time of the Mother, the fertility goddesses, Gaia, with powers to give life, heal, bring death and impact the forces of nature. The female idols in the exhibit are visually striking; with their softly carved basic lines and solid, folded arms resting on their bellies, they exude a presence that registers prominently in our psyche.

What's amazing is the dramatic shift of how, in the span of thousands of years, the image of the female idols changed. The bulbous, squat female figures from about 5,000 B.C. gradually became less round, more violin-shaped to slender, girl-like figures in the second millennia. Why the change? Was the perception of female attributes and powers lessened or heightened over several millennia?

"Sitting female figure," circa 5,000 to 3,500 B.C., is a plump, cross-legged figure with supple buttocks and thick, rounded thighs, which transitioned to the more streamlined, violin-shaped sitting figure of 3,000 to 2,800 B.C. Two hundred years later, a reclining female is thin, almost androgynous, with straight legs and handless arms folded under breasts.

In "Mother and Child," circa 2,800 B.C., the feet of a small child are firmly planted on the mother's head. The mother, still with enhanced womb, sublimely symbolizes conception and birth. Getz-Gentle tells us that the basic, folded-armed female figure was stylistically the most enduring, lasting several centuries. The icons from 2,400 B.C. have long, oval faces with angular features that gracefully plane off to a flat back. The flatness, according to museum notes, indicates the figure was meant to be held in reclining position during rituals or for burial placement; the supine pose explains the figures' quiet, contemplative aura.

That the female idols inspired cubists Brancusi, Modigliani and Picasso is obvious by the quintessentially subtle, stunningly expressive two-dimensional

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patterns over the entire face, plus chest stripes, hair and clothes on the figures, all of which have worn away over time, leaving us to conjure the rich earth tones on our own.

Many of the vessels are emblematic of the female torso, belly and pubic triangle and vary in shape and size depending on their intended use. The "kandila," flat-like bowls to store water for the dead, are redolent of large abdomens; another simple, elegant vessel has a primitive, painted spiral on the front and a small neck for the storage of pigment to stay with the deceased so they could paint in the afterlife.

At the exhibit, historical information leaflets are available near each small group of icons and vessels. Interspersed between encasements are large color photographs of the Cycladic islands, where blanched, white-rocked landscapes explain the still abundant white marble.

The Cycladic female idols were created several thousand years before the classic Greek Venus, but the indelible icon made its way across the Aegean Sea to Greece and Crete. These ancient figures and vessels created as functional and worshipped icons have endured time, history and artistic eras to miraculously appear at our neighborhood museum in a show well worth