

Press release

Berlin, 2 March 2011

PERGAMON – PANORAMA OF THE ANCIENT CITY

**An exhibition by the Collection of Classical Antiquities, part of the
National Museums in Berlin, and Asisi Visual Culture GmbH
30 September 2011 to 30 September 2012
Pergamonmuseum, Museum Island Berlin**

In a unique collaboration with Asisi Visual Culture GmbH, the National Museums' Collection of Classical Antiquities proudly presents a major exhibition dedicated to Pergamon. Spread over 4000 square metres in both the Pergamonmuseum's north wing and the three main architectural rooms of its east wing, some 450 exhibits will be on view from the Collection of Classical Antiquities, the bulk of which have never been displayed before. In addition, a new monumental 360° panorama installed in a specially constructed, temporary rotunda by the artist Yadegar Asisi and his firm, Asisi Visual Culture, will transport visitors to the hill of the acropolis in Pergamon in the year 129 AD.

The excavations in Pergamon conducted by the Berlin museums were one of the most successful endeavours ever undertaken in the history of German classical scholarship. The most important find from these digs, the altar reconstructed in the Pergamonmuseum, is now one of the most famous exhibits on the UNESCO World Heritage Site that is the Museum Island Berlin, attracting well over a million visitors from home and abroad to the Pergamonmuseum. However, the imposing recreation of this monument has somewhat overshadowed the remaining, far richer Berlin collection of Pergamon finds. Many of the objects now assembled in the exhibition that were originally brought to Berlin as a result of the division of finds officially agreed to by the German and Ottoman Empires in the late 19th century have never been shown in public before. The exhibition will be enriched by an array of loaned artefacts from other museums, both within Germany and from around the world.

Elaborate restoration work is being conducted in preparation for the show so that the famous Hellenistic marble sculptures from Pergamon are once again able to radiate in their full glory.

A wide variety of sculptures, mosaics, coins, ceramics and everyday objects will form a vivid picture of life in the ancient city. The exhibits will be presented in their original architectural and functional contexts and, as far as possible, their use in antiquity explained. Scores of drawings, paintings and archive material will provide an insight into the exciting history of the exploration of the site. Room will also be given in examining

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the impact that Pergamon art, and the Pergamon Altar in particular, had on the fine arts and literature of the late 19th and early 20th century.

The exhibition is a core component of the research project entitled 'Berlin Sculpture Network – Contextualisation and Interpretation of Ancient Sculpture', financed by the Ministry of Education and Research, which serves to disseminate initial research findings to a wide audience. The scholarly analysis of the Pergamon sculptures, which aims to retrieve information on the contexts in which the works were originally displayed, is being performed within the research project's framework. The findings will be presented to a wide audience using the most modern IT and computer simulation methods. A key role in this is played by the virtual 3D model of ancient Pergamon, devised in association with the German Archaeological Institute, the department for illustrative design at BTU Cottbus and Zuse Institute Berlin (ZIB).

The exhibition will be complemented by a 360° panorama, measuring some 24 metres in height and 100 metres in length, to be erected in the Pergamonmuseum's forecourt, which will create a vivid picture of ancient Pergamon. The recreation of the city on a scale of 1:1 is based on all the research on the city gathered up to now, as carried out in close collaboration with the Collection of Classical Antiquities' own team of archaeologists and the German Archaeological Institute. A day and night simulation, complete with sunrise and sunset, and a tapestry of sounds recreate life in the ancient city in a spectacular and immediate way. Subtle background music by film composer Eric Babak rounds off the journey through time that takes visitors back to antiquity.

In creating the monumental panorama of ancient Pergamon, Asisi used drawings from the digs to guide him, as well as photographs of the Berlin finds and the very first Pergamon panorama by Kips and Koch (1886). In 2010, Asisi took photographs from the top of a 30 metre high temporary tower of the topography of the acropolis hill and the surrounding country at the site of the ruins in Bergama itself. In addition, he also took staged photos with extras in ancient costumes. The panorama, which invites the visitor to embark on a journey through time back to antiquity, was then painstakingly assembled from all the material gathered using computers.

Advance tickets go on sale from 2 March 2011, at:
www.pergamon-panorama.de as well as from all ticket offices at the National Museums in Berlin. Bookings for group tours can even be placed now.

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