

Mytilene Museums

There are several impressive museums in and around the Mytilene area. The diversity and uniqueness of these museums should appeal to a variety of interests.

Archaeological Museum of Mytilene



This museum is housed in a 3-story mansion near Mytilene's "Statue of Liberty", and was built in the eclectic style in 1921, illustrating the exquisite architecture that was prevalent during the final years of Ottoman occupation. It is now protected under a

preservation order. Previously housing the Ministry of the Aegean, with antiquities stored in the basement, the exhibition was finally put in place by the 20th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in 1992.



Numerous significant findings from excavation sites all over the island are displayed in this museum, as well as in its garden. Exhibits include:

- ❖ Unique Aeolic column capitals from the temple at Klopedi
- ❖ Prehistoric figurines, pottery and jewelry from Mytilene, Antissa and Mythemna (Molyvos)
- ❖ The marble Throne of Potamon (pictured above), 1st century BC – 1st century AD
- ❖ Notable and highly important inscriptions concerning treaties that were signed between Lesbos and various other states during ancient times
- ❖ Splendid gold funeral gifts and funerary stelai, or burial stones
- ❖ Relief sculptures, statues and rare coins from the Archaic to the Roman Periods
- ❖ Exquisite mosaics and earthenware of various ages

The goal and philosophy of the exhibition is to enable you to gain some insight into the island's history and the role it played throughout the ages, both in the Aegean and on the shores of Asia Minor.

New Archaeological Museum



Completed in 1995, the New Archaeological Museum is a fine example of new museum architecture. The permanent exhibition titled "Lesvos from the Hellenistic Era to the Roman Era" gives you a view of the way of life on Lesvos from the 2nd century BC to the 3rd century AD. Using presentations of mansions decorated with exquisite mosaics, items used in day-to-day living, and sculptures used for both worship and to symbolize power and welfare, the exhibit is enhanced by explanatory texts, maps and models. Other exhibits include sepulchral bas reliefs, statues and portraits of prominent personalities of the period.

Byzantine Museum

The Byzantine Museum is located in the Agios Therapon Church courtyard, on the ground floor of the Philanthropic Foundation of Mytilene. It houses an invaluable collection of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art, icons and ecclesiastic relics, including:



- ❖ Icons of Christ the Pantocrator, St. John the Divine, a double-sided icon of St. George in armor, and the 14th century icon of the Archangel Michael from Constantinople
- ❖ Sacerdotal vestments, sections of iconostases from old churches, valuable ecclesiastic vessels, and numerous rare manuscripts and Byzantine books
- ❖ Orpheus Playing the Lyre

- ❖ Wall paintings from the Church of Episkopi, from the 10th-13th centuries
- ❖ The Treasury of Mytilene, a 6th century collection discovered in a sunken ship off the island

This world-renowned collection contains 15,000 objects from Byzantium (476 –



1453 AD), a time when the wealthy Orthodox Church was highly influential in politics and the arts. You can also see a mock-up of a 19th century Lesvian village house and the **Museum of Costume and Embroidery**.

Museum of Popular Art

Housed in the beautifully restored old Port Authority along the waterfront of the Mytilene pier, its folklore collection includes hand-crafted earthenware produced in the nearby mountain village of Agiasos and the small northern town of Mandamos, both with flourishing pottery trades. Other exhibits include:

- ❖ Plates illustrating scenes taken from daily life on the island in the recent past
- ❖ Household utensils
- ❖ Furniture
- ❖ Old firearms
- ❖ Exquisite examples of needlecraft
- ❖ Traditional costumes
- ❖ An admirable reproduction of a typical Lesvian home (above)



Museum of Theofilos

Located in the Mytilene suburb of Vareia, the birthplace of the famous painter Theofilos, this



museum has five exhibit rooms housing 86 of his paintings. These are all from the private collection of Stratis Eleftheriadis (1889-1983), or Teriade, who financed the building of the museum in 1965.



The paintings illustrate scenes from history, mythology and folklore and include the celebrated *Limnios Kehagias*, *The Gulf of Gera*, and *Trata* (a traditional dance), among others, as well as scenes from everyday life,

showiing clothing and landscaping styles of the era. For more information on this fascinating man, see [Helen's Journal](#).

Teriade Museum and Library of Modern Art

On the same grounds as the Museum of Theophilos, we find another creation of the publisher/editor Stratis Eleftheriadis, as a means to exhibit the works of the greatest and most renowned artists of the 20th century. His greatest publication is *Grand Livres*, or Great Books, containing original works of art and designs created by the Great Painters.



A permanent exhibit since 1973, "Honour to Teriade" gave painters like Matisse, Picasso and Chagall an opportunity to create new artistic work by illustrating these tomes. Other exhibits include works by Miro, Baudin, Gromaire, Leger, Laurence, Giacometti and le Corbusier, as well as the Greek artists Vakirtzi, Hatzimichael, Kalligianni, Kanelli, Marouda, Rorri and Tsarouhi. Occasionally there are also temporary exhibits of established painters in the exhibition rooms.