



ENVIRONMENT
MUSEUM OF STYMPHALIA

The Environment Museum of Stymphalia

The Environment Museum of Stymphalia is located in the mountainous area of the Korinthia prefecture, in a region with a rich cultural and natural heritage. It was inaugurated in 2010 and is the seventh member of PIOP's Museum Network. Its creation reflects the emphasis given by the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation to connecting culture to the environment.

Situated on the southern side of the Prefecture of Corinth, Stymphalia is a plateau surrounded by the mountain masses of Zireia, Oligyrtos, Mavrovounio and Gravias. Stymphalia's catchment basin is considered the largest mountain catchment basin of the Peloponnese, at the same time as being the southernmost wetland of the Balkans. Its main interest resides in the lake's rich organic world, as well as in the underground and visible ways along which the water circulates. The region's ecological value, centred on the catchment basin and its rich forests, is confirmed by its inclusion in the European Network of Protected Areas NATURA 2000.

The region is mentioned in mythology. According to the legend, this is where Hercules confronted and slew the Stymphalian birds. This is one of the innumerable cases of human intervention that shaped the region's landscape. In historical times, a medium-sized city of strategic importance was built on the lake's shores: ancient Stymphalos. Centuries later, a medieval monastic complex was established for a short period of time. In modern times, small villages saw the light of day, and continue to be inhabited to this day. This age-old interactive and sustainable cohabitation of mankind and Nature constitutes the main trait that makes the region of Stymphalia a cultural landscape.

The Environment Museum of Stymphalia seeks to illustrate the interdependence of mankind and Nature, as well as their harmonious coexistence in the Stymphalia basin. The key aims of its museological design are to raise the public's ecological awareness and to preserve our knowledge of the region's traditional technology. This intent is reflected museologically through the exhibition's development in two modules: the first concerns the region's environment, while the second records the manner in which it influenced the development of human activities and in particular that of traditional occupations. Exploiting the exhibition area's linearity and the unimpeded view towards the lake, the first module, dedicated to the environment, offers the possibility of a direct acquaintance with the natural habitat, which is

also the object of the individual subsections. Thus the region's particular geological characteristics, the land and the water, are presented, as well as their exploitation by mankind over the centuries. After this, the visitor has the opportunity to see the particular traits of the lacustrine and mountain biotopes, with an emphasis on their flora and fauna. The module concludes with a presentation of human habitation in the region, from Antiquity through to the present, thus introducing the human element into the museum narrative. The elaboration of this subsection benefitted greatly from the input of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinth and the Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens.

The second module focuses on the traditional occupations that flourished in the region, in direct relation with the environment. Three subsections indirectly define people's area of action: the lake, the plain and the mountain. A central exhibit, the Cross-Section of the Lake, brings the lake's flora and fauna into the Museum and stresses the lake's role as a driving force of all human activities in the region. The first subsection presents hunting and fishing, the second is dedicated to farming and viticulture, while the third concerns livestock farming, beekeeping and transport with draught animals. The Museum highlights issues such as the necessity of an ecological balance and the respect of the environment.

Various means of expression and audiovisual media are used to ensure a better understanding of the exhibition's content. Pictorial presentations refer to the objects' use and are accompanied by corresponding audiovisual material of an educational nature. The exhibition's objectives are supported by models and applications, digital reproductions and documentary films. Also, the accessible Cross-Section of the Lake in the Museum's interior offers the visitor the possibility of observing the region's plants and fish first hand.

The Environment Museum of Stymphalia also comprises a cafeteria and a gift shop, while its multipurpose hall supports the development of cultural actions in the region by hosting temporary exhibitions and a variety of events.

The Museum's building ties in harmoniously with the landscape and is custom-built of concrete, stone and wood. The glass frontage of its front section offers a panoramic view of the lake, as well as of some of the surrounding settlements. From the Museum's balcony, visitors can admire the lake and the fir forests on the surrounding mountain slopes.

Lake Stymphalia's ecological importance, the need to protect Nature's particular elements, as well as to ensure the financing of the lake's management, formed the basis of the European co-funded programme "LIFE-Stymphalia: Sustainable Management and Funding of Wetland Biodiversity. The case of Lake Stymphalia". The programme implements actions for protecting and improving the state of conservation of fauna species and types of habitats. In parallel, it examines economic activities relating to the conservation of biodiversity with which the protection and management actions will be financed, in accordance with the current directions of European policy regarding the sites of the NATURA 2000 Network. In the context of this programme, "Mankind and Nature along the footpaths of time", an interpretational itinerary of Lake Stymphalia's environment was created as part of the effort to showcase Stymphalia's cultural landscape.

Lake Stymphalia constitutes an important example of the interrelation between Nature and mankind. The biotope, the ancient city's ruins and the traditional occupations that flourished in the region prove that, on this land, mankind was able to live in harmony with the environment.

The Environment Museum of Stymphalia (MPEST) was created by PIOP, which is also responsible for running it. It is housed in a building designed specifically for this purpose, on a plot of land ceded by the Municipality of Stymphalia and the Forestry Department. The project was included in the 2000–2006 Regional Operational Programme of the Peloponnese and was financed by the Third Community Support Framework, with the aid of the Piraeus Bank Group.

Useful information

Address

GR-20016 Stymphalia Korinthias

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Opening hours:

From March 1st through to October 15th:

Daily (except Tuesdays) 10 am - 6 pm.

From October 16th through to February 28th:

Daily (except Tuesdays) 10 am - 5 pm.

Closed on: Tuesdays, January 1st, Good Friday (until 12 noon), (Greek Orthodox) Easter Sunday, May 1st, September 14th (local patronal feast), August 15th, December 25th and 26th.

Admission

Standard entrance fee: € 4,00.

Concessionary ticket: € 2.00.

Group visits

For better service, it is recommended to give the Museum advance notice of group visits.

Disabled visitors

Admission for disabled visitors is free. For group visits, it is necessary to notify the Museum in advance.

Photography - Filming Permit

Amateur photography or video filming is permitted. Professional/commercial photography or filming is strictly prohibited without prior special permission from PIOP. Application for special permit.