

“PALAIKASTRO KOUROS” SHOW OPENS OCT. 27

20-YEAR PROJECT COMES TO FRUITION WITH EXACT REPLICA OF ANCIENT MINOAN SCULPTURE

For more information: Jane Waggoner Deschner, RMC Ryniker-Morrison Gallery  
Director, 406-248-7494 or [jwd@bresnan.net](mailto:jwd@bresnan.net)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Mark Moak, “Palaikastro Kouros”

Opening reception: Thursday, October 30, 2008, 4:30–7:00pm  
Exhibition: October 27 - November 14, 2008  
at Ryniker-Morrison Gallery in Tech Hall  
Rocky Mountain College  
1511 Poly Drive  
Billings, Montana

BILLINGS -- The Ryniker-Morrison Gallery will show “Palaikastro Kouros,” a one-man exhibition by Rocky Mountain College Art Professor Mark S. Moak, highlighting a 20-year odyssey.

An opening reception is scheduled for Thursday, October 30, 4:30-7:00 pm and will include an artist talk at 5:30 pm. The exhibition runs October 27–November 14, 2008.

On display will be his replica of this ancient Minoan sculpture as well as tools he used and photographs of the site. On October 18, 1988, Mark Moak began the journey that led him to create what almost has become his life’s work. In that day’s Billings Gazette, a student noticed and showed him a small article about the discovery of a statue in Palaikastro which dated back to 1500 BCE. A combination of his excitement over this discovery and a passion for the Aegean Bronze Age that began in college led him to call the director of the excavation. This eventually brought him to Crete in 1989 to work on the British Excavations studying, drawing and photographing the kouros in order to make a replica. In addition to that, he also helped with the conservation process as the kouros was badly burned and fragmented. His replica is meant to provide a plausible version of the original.

The original statue, referred to as the "PK Kouros," is nearly 20 inches (51 cm) high and has a body that was expertly carved out of Hippo ivory. This figure exhibits the finest of details showing veining, tendons, manicured nails and cuticles. It also has rock crystal eyes and intricately woven hair carved onto the steatite head. The original was clothed in a finely crafted pair of sandals and a kilt both made from delicate sheets of gold. In addition there was evidence of a wood base decorated with Egyptian blue and the suggestion of golden constellations.

Mark Moak’s replica is the exact scale of the original and is made from boxwood, steatite, rock crystal, 24k gold, Egyptian blue, ivory, bitumen, charcoal/beeswax and Douglas fir. The replica stands on a base made of African zebra wood, gesso, Egyptian blue, copper, bronze, brass and 24k gold.

This project has been a work in progress from 1991 to 2008 as Moak has been careful

to remain true to the materials and tools available to the ancient artist who created the PK Kouros. He made his own Bronze Age-type tools, including saws, chisels, burnishers and drills. Moak believes that “by retracing the steps of ancient artists, we can know the past in a way different from reading and writing.”

Mark S. Moak is a Professor of Art at Rocky Mountain College with BFA and MFA degrees from the University of Georgia. He has co-authored and presented papers regarding the PK Kouros at the British Museum, Cretological Convention and the Archaeological Institute of America. In 2000 he co-authored the book “The Palaikastro Kouros.”

The public is invited to the exhibition, artist talk and reception. The Ryniker-Morrison Gallery is on the first floor in Tech Hall, the building between the library and the football field. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., and by appointment (contact Jane Deschner, 248-7494).

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10/01/08

Press release prepared by gallery intern, Monica Geary

NOTE: Three jpgs are attached; the photographs were taken by Mark Moak. For more information, contact Jane Waggoner Deschner, [jwd@bresnan.net](mailto:jwd@bresnan.net) or 406-248-7494.

1. “Palaikastro kouros” replica, 1991–2008 CE (original Minoan c. 1500 BCE)  
Statue: boxwood, steatite, rock crystal, 24k gold, Egyptian blue, ivory, bitumen, charcoal/beeswax, Douglas fir; Base: African zebra wood, gesso, Egyptian blue, copper, bronze, brass, 24k gold; 21 x 6 x 8.5 inches
2. Palaikastro kouros replica (detail of head)
3. Palaikastro kouros replica (detail of feet)