

The New Criterion

Art

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Exhibition note

by [Philip P. Betancourt](#)

On "From the Land of the Labyrinth: Minoan Crete 3000–1100 B.C." at the Onassis Cultural Center, New York.

“From the Land of the Labyrinth:
Minoan Crete 3000–1100 B.C.”
Onassis Cultural Center, New York.
March 13–September 13, 2008.

For the first time, a major show of the art and artifacts of the Minoans, the people in Bronze Age Greece who built the first complex urban civilization of Europe, is being exhibited in America. In spite of the fact that the archaeology of Minoan Crete is well over a century old, much of the information about these enigmatic people remains a mystery. Their origins are obscure, we cannot read their records in spite of several attempts at decipherment, and many details of their culture are still being debated.

One remarkable thing about this exhibition—which features paintings, sculpture, stone vases, pottery, seals, bronzes, and other objects—is the intelligent choice of items included. One expects to see something of Minoan art with its dazzling ...

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