

Athena Parthenos

Each plume of the helmet is supported by a mythological beast; the Sphinx in the center and Pegasus (winged horse) on either side.

The ear flaps of the helmet are folded up as a indication of peace. For battle she would pull them down. A griffin is carved on each: griffins also guard each corner of the Parthenon.

In Athena's right hand stands the 6'4" statue of Nike, the goddess of victory. She holds a wreath of victory with which she is about to crown Athena in honor of the Greek victory over the Persians.

Eleven snakes appear on her breastplate, belt and bracelets. These are symbols of renewal and rebirth, relating to the fact that a snake sheds its skin each year. The large snake between Athena and her shield is probably Erechtheus, a legendary king of Athens. He represents the people of Athens who are protected by Athena.

The Base of the statue depicts the birth of Pandora, the first woman born in Greek mythology. The figures from left to right are: Helios, Hermes, Hera, Zeus, Nike, Dionysius, the three Graces Pandora, Pandora, Hephaestus, Athena,

Poseidon, Artemis, Apollo, Ares, Demeter, Hestia, Eros, Aphrodite, Selene.



Athena's breastplate, also called her aegis, is made from a magic goatskin which made the wearer invulnerable and was given to Athena by her father, Zeus.

In the center of the breastplate is the head of Medusa, the gorgon who had snakes for hair. Athena gave Perseus the magic shield which he used like a mirror and cut off Medusa's head without being turned to stone. He gave the head to Athena in appreciation for the use of her shield. Medusa's head also appears in the center of the shield.

The shield is carved with scenes of the battle of the Greeks and the Amazons. The wall of the Acropolis is visible, as is the facade of the Parthenon in the upper background.

Athena's sandals are decorated with scenes from the Battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs, a story which can also be seen on the metopes (frieze) on the outside of the Nashville Parthenon.

A Brief Nashville History

Created over an eight-year period by Nashville sculptor Alan LeQuire, Athena Parthenos is the only full-scale recreation of the statue of the Greek goddess Athena, which once stood in the Parthenon in Athens, Greece. LeQuire worked with an international team of scholars to ensure his work accurately represents the ancient original. Standing 42 feet high, Nashville's Athena Parthenos is the tallest indoor sculpture in the Western world.

A Brief Ancient History

Considered to be the greatest achievement of Pheidias, the pre-eminent sculptor of Ancient Greece, the original Athena Parthenos was an superb example of the high degree of refinement achieved by the ancient masters. Crafted of ivory and gold over a wooden frame, the Greek statue epitomized the golden age of Athens under the rule of Pericles-when freedom of thought, art and statesmanship were exalted. The original gold and ivory statue was destroyed approximately 700 years after its creation.

