



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Remarks by Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the gift of *Cellules / Choirokoitia* by Theodoulos
Gregoriou

Paris, 30 October 2012

· Excellency Marios Lyssiotis, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to UNESCO,

· Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

· Dear Theodoulos Gregoriou,

· I welcome you all to UNESCO.

· It is a true pleasure to unveil this work of art, entitled *Cells / Choirokoitia*, by Theodoulos Gregoriou.

· UNESCO is an Intergovernmental Organization – but, really, more fundamentally, we are a House of culture.

· We are a place shared by all societies, where all peoples can meet and become stronger from this meeting.

· UNESCO is also a House of art.

· Undoubtedly, one of the greatest strengths of UNESCO arises from the presence one feels all around of so many different artists from so many different countries.

· The UNESCO Collection spans 6000 years, includes more than 500 pieces, and brings together such luminous names as Giacometti, GUYASAMIN, Miró, Picasso, Takis and Tàpies – and many more.

· *Cells / Choirokoitia* was donated to UNESCO by the Republic of Cyprus in 2009.

· It is a monumental and, I would say, a magical piece.

· “Choirokoitia” refers, of course, to the unique Neolithic settlement situated in Cyprus, which was occupied from the 7th to the 4th millennium B.C.

Inscribed on the World Heritage List, this is one of the most important prehistoric sites in the Mediterranean, highlighting the long role played by Cyprus as a place for dialogue across cultures.

The “cells” refer to the shape of the houses uncovered at the settlement, the cell-like shapes of ancient Cypriot scripts, and, of course, the forms at the heart of all life.

If you look carefully, you will see the cell shape all throughout this work of art, which provides almost an aerial view of the settlement, a map of space and time, evoked through the rhythm that arises from rich mineral colours.

For me, this work touches both that which is timeless and that which is always in movement.

It is a piece about history, about place, about the trajectory of humanity.

We are all honoured to welcome it to this House.

This is not the first time Theodoulos Gregoriou is associated with UNESCO.

I believe you received a UNESCO scholarship which allowed you to study art in Bucharest from 1976 to 1981.

Your work was greatly appreciated during the ‘Alpha-Omega’ exhibition at UNESCO in 2006.

I am very pleased you have returned once again to this House, which you may consider as your home.

I wish to thank you again for your inspiration and the Republic of Cyprus for sharing part of the brilliance of its culture with us.

This is UNESCO’s vision of art – it is a wealth that belongs to everyone and that grows from being shared.

Thank you.