

“Homelands”, a series of paintings by Gefso Papadaki

On the occasion of the opening of the exhibition “Beautiful and strange homelands” in the Gallery *Peritechnon*, Gefso Papadaki addresses the readers of the newspaper *Peloponnese* by saying that “people are by nature creative”. The renowned artist distances herself from the darkness of today, talks about the liberating effect art has and allows our mind to wander around the most beautiful homelands. What we see in every painting is a very striking itinerary...

Which “homelands” are we going to visit in your exhibition?

Two homelands have truly left their marks on me. Constantinople, where I was born and lived until I was 15 – which is quite natural to have left its visible and invisible traces, and Cappadocia, where my ancestors came from and I have recently visited. On the other hand I should mention Athens, where I have been living since I left Constantinople, a city that I obviously love. These are beautiful and at the same time strange homelands, places that are all also rather harsh on their people. I would like to add though that you will “visit” more homelands, you will also recognize some scenes from South Africa, from one of my recent journeys, part of Rome’s Coliseum, and imaginary landscapes...

What socio-political gap does modern painting fill?

Works that showed the atrocities of wars have become significant moments in the History of Art. Nowadays where everyone feels lonely and defenseless, inside a tough and unfair society, it is imperative that people should find space to express themselves. This is also the reason we see the emergence of so many art groups. Art has thus acquired many forms where artists have the opportunity to share their feelings and views, even with a small audience, a fact that together with being socially accepted lessens the experience of isolation, particularly in large cities, and functions in a liberating manner.

You are also involved in creative activities for people with special needs, what can you say about the way art influences people?

Working with partially disabled people and participating in creative activities with them has offered me only positive experiences. Their relation with art is direct and self-evident. They feel happy. We shouldn’t forget to mention the positive effects art activities have on children as they help them cultivate and develop every aspect of their personality, better their observation skills, improve their dexterities and allow them to express their feelings.

Are people creative by “nature” or “nurture”? Is creativity born or trained?

I believe and you can understand it from what I have already mentioned, people are creative because of “nature”. An example I will like to mention to confirm this opinion is that of cavemen and cave-paintings done during “innocent”... times. A strong proof of the people’s need, during their primordial years, to “scribble” wherever they could find space or materials, to move their bodies when they heard music and many more.