

Greece: "No" to the sale of the Express Mail business



The Greek Postal Workers Union at their 31st conference taking place in Athens 27-29 November have sent an emphatic message to the Greek Government. They have said "NO" to the proposed sale of the Express Mail part of the Greek postal service. The delegates are totally opposed to the split up of the Postal Service into different parts and the partial privatisation of some of those parts.

"No" to sale of express mail logo at the conference

The conference also came out strongly in favour of demanding the Government change their thinking on proposals to cut out a number of Post Offices. The delegates in

a number of speeches supporting the unions initiatives to flight post office closures told of how the local post office is an integral part of Greece's small and widespread communities. In a time of great financial crisis they said it was crazy to close a vital part of these communities.

The financial crisis was also the subject of much debate with the conference calling upon the government to put the Greek Post Office on a sound financial footing to combat the affects of the worsening crisis.

Delegates also passed a motion of support for Canadian colleagues, striking to save their sick leave entitlements.

Hellenistic Studies in Alexandria

The modern-day restoration of a beacon of knowledge in the ancient world, the Library of Alexandria, will soon host a new program offering post-graduate and doctoral courses in Hellenistic studies.

The Center of Hellenistic Studies will open in the next academic year, with funding by the Alexandros S. Onassis Foundation, the Vardinoyannis Foundation and the Alexandria University, under the auspices of Egyptian first lady Suzanne Mubarak, all part of the Alexandria Library partnership.

Deputy Foreign Minister Theodoros Kassimis, Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa Theodoros II, the president of Onassis Foundation Antonis Papadimitriou and UN Goodwill Amb. Marianna Vardinoyannis attended the center's inauguration on Friday.

Modern masterpieces trace contemporary art history in Athens

AN EXHIBITION AT THE B&M THEOCHARAKIS FOUNDATION

We rarely get the chance to enjoy the work of truly leading 20th-century artists in Greece, the kind of pieces that paved the way for the world of contemporary visual arts we we know it.

With the invaluable aid of the Museum of Modern Art in Saint Etienne, as well as the Pompidou Center and the Picasso Museum in Paris, the B&M Theocharakis Foundation presents an exhibition where the protagonists include Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Fernand Leger, Yves Klein, Max Ernst, Andre Masson, Juan Miro, Jean Dubuffet and Francis



Claude Monet's 'Nymphéas' (Water Lilies), painted in 1907, is seen at left. Right: Pablo Picasso's 'Femme Assise' (Seated Woman), 1971. (Both photos: Yves Bresson)

Picabia, among others.

All in all, "The Eras of the Moderns: From Monet to Yves Klein" brings together 48 European artists and is divided into three main sections: The avant-garde of the 1920 and 1930s, the shapeless and lyrical abstraction of the 1940s and 1950s and the radical realism of the 1960s.

According to Dr Lorand Hegyi, director of the Saint Etienne museum and co-curator of the Athens exhibition along with Dr Sania Pappa, breaking down the show into the aforementioned sections is no sign of any didactic disposition.

"We aim to promote a dialogue between the periods and the correlations and influences which we recognize among them," notes Hegyi.

As always at the B&M Theocharakis Foundation, the story begins on the fourth floor – as it turns just a year old, the foundation has already accustomed its public to the descending route of its temporary visual arts events. Fernand Leger appears imposing at the far

end of the hall, while, on the right-hand side, the audience meets a familiar composition of water lilies as it appears in a round, golden frame – greetings from Monsieur Monet.

The abstract takes over the third floor, while, further down, everyday objects and contemporary society, without discarding elements of more traditional art forms, become leading players, both as the subject matter and as materials.

This is where the works take on larger dimensions, require more space and touch upon today's familiar contemporary art.

For those who are not frequent travelers, or lack the kind of patience required when reading a comprehensive book on the history of 20th-century art, this particular exhibition has plenty to offer, featuring numerous emblematic examples while also avoiding didacticism.

"The Eras of the Moderns: From Monet to Yves Klein," at the B&M Theocharakis Foundation, runs to February 22, 2009.

Ephraim to stay on as spiritual leader

During Sunday mass, the archbishop said that the Vatopedi affair had triggered a crisis in the Church that could not be blamed on any one individual. 'When one monk errs, the whole of human nature errs, we all err,' he said. 'The current crisis touches us all; we all have some responsibility; we are all moral instigators to some degree,' he said. The monk in charge of the Vatopedi Monastery will remain responsible for its spiritual affairs but will not have any say in administrative matters following a meeting with Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomaios on Friday, sources have told Sunday's Kathimerini. Head monk Ephraim was summoned to the Patriarchate in Istanbul after a series of revelations about the Mount Athos monastery's business dealings and Ephraim's refusal to answer MPs' questions about the property exchange with the state, which is the subject of a corruption inquiry. A statement was issued after the meeting, in which the Patriarchate, regarded as the spiritual home of Orthodox Christians, stated that Ephraim had decided to tender his resignation. Sources have now revealed that Ephraim's resignation was a direct result of pressure from Vartholomaios and it was decided that, as a compromise, Cyprus-born Ephraim, who has been at Vatopedi for the last 18 years, would retain a significant role at the monastery, which houses 110 monks. 'As the spiritual father of the monks, Ephraim will keep the title of chief monk but, as he expressly vowed, he will relinquish every administrative power, at least until the investigation of the matter by justice is completed,' a Patriarchate source told Kathimerini. Ephraim denies any wrongdoing. In the statement he submitted to the parliamentary committee last week, he claimed that the state had decided what properties to include in the exchange for some 8,000 hectares of land around Lake Vistonida in northern Greece. Ephraim's decision not to answer the deputies' questions prompted a separate judicial probe, which means that he will have to appear before a prosecutor on Friday. A successor to Ephraim as administrative leader of the Vatopedi Monastery is to be announced soon.