

EXHIBITION: NEW ART WORKS - DR PLATON ALEXIOU OF GREECE

40 new works depicting the island of Kastellorizo, Eastern Aegean

**A 'sister city' of Perth
One of Greece's leading academics and artists
Greece's leading academic and artist to launch new works in Australia**

The Australian Friends of Kastellorizo (AFK) announces an exhibition of 40 new works by the esteemed Greek artist, Dr Platon Alexiou entitled Kastellorizo: from Ancient to Modern, depicting the island of Kastellorizo, sister city to Perth and Greece's most eastern Aegean island. Esteemed Greek artist and academic, Dr Platon Alexiou will exhibit 40 new works for the first time in Perth and Sydney.

The exhibition entitled Kastellorizo: from Ancient to Modern depicts the island of Kastellorizo, Greece's most eastern Aegean island.

'We are delighted to announce this exhibition of new works depicting Kastellorizo, where some 150,000 Australians have their ancestral roots,' says Nick Mitaros, one of the Directors of AFK. 'Kastellorizo has a unique and fascinating history; Dr Alexiou's work captures the essence of this enchanting place.'

Kastellorizo was designated a sister city of Perth in 1984, recognising the significant bond that exists between Australia and this tiny, 9.8 sq kilometre island in Greece. There are approximately 6,000 Australians of Kastellorizian descent living in Western Australia. Migration to Australia from the island began in the mid 19th century with the first Kastellorizian, Arthur Auguste, arriving in Perth in 1890.

Dr Alexiou was commissioned by the Australian Friends of Kastellorizo as part of its youth and cultural program to paint 20 historical perspectives of Kastellorizo for a new children's book in Greek and English to be launched in 2010. He will also be presenting another 20 of his own that were inspired by his visit to the island.

Historian and artist Dr Platon Alexiou said he was inspired by the sea, the culture and the history of Kastellorizo.

"Despite being such a tiny and remote island, it had a great civilization unique in the Greek region. These works celebrate that, but they also bring it to life to spark the imagination and remind people of what things were really like," Dr Platon Alexiou said.

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"I was inspired by the sea, the culture and the history of Kastellorizo," says Dr Platon Alexiou, artist and historian. "The whole island inspired me to create these works. Despite the fact that it is such a tiny and remote island, it had a great civilization unique in the Greek region. These works celebrate that, but they also bring it to life to spark the imagination and remind people of what things were really like."

Our inspiration was to preserve the oral stories from being lost so they can be shared with new generations of Greek and Australian children,' says Marilyn Tsolakis, Coordinator of AFK. 'We felt this was a high priority to foster a greater love of literature by writing an illustrated history book that tells the story of the Kastellorizian cultural heritage.'

Kastellorizo is unique in its location off the coast of Turkey, where east meets west. Famous ancient Greek heroes such as Achilles and Hercules passed nearby on their way to the Trojan War. Kastellorizo has been occupied by Dorians, Romans, Spaniards, Venetians, Ottomans, Italians, French and Britons.

"As an art historian and modern painter I believe that there is no present without the past. The past has always been a source of inspiration and education for whatever is created in modern times," Dr Alexiou said.



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'Because of its remoteness, and small scale, Kastellorizo relies almost entirely on outside support from Rhodes, and the tourist industry,' says Mitaros. 'We have established AFK as a non-profit organisation that can bring investment and focus on areas that benefit the island, such as our cultural program.'

In the 21st Century, young people are flocking back to the island of their origins. All these images from these different historical periods are represented in the artwork that will be exhibited. The children's book for which they were commissioned is expected to be available in 2010.

'Dr Alexiou's paintings spark the imagination, evoking cultural influences from the ancient to the modern, from Apollo's Sanctuary and the Dionysian wine rituals through to the Byzantine period, the Knights of St John during the Crusades, the Ottoman, French and Italian Occupations, before Kastellorizo re-claimed its Greek origins in the 20th Century,' says Tsolakis.

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Exhibition Details

Perth 31 May 3.00-5.30pm
Castellorizian House, 160 Anzac Rd, Mt Hawthorn
Sydney 14 June 3.00-5.30pm
The Eastern Hotel, 500 Oxford St,

Bondi Junction

Dr Platon Alexiou

AFK commissioned Dr Platon Alexiou, an Athenian based artist to paint images of Kastellorizo for the purpose of the new children's book. Dr Platon Alexiou is a Professor at the University of Athens with a Doctorate in the History of Art & Archaeology. He has also completed a BA with Honours in Art and Design from Leeds, England. Dr Alexiou has exhibited many paintings and sculptures in galleries such as the Benaki Museum and Vore Museum in Athens, Greece.

About AFK

Australian Friends of Kastellorizo (AFK) is a recently formed non-profit making not for profit organisation that was established to help create a positive future for Kastellorizo recognising the island's proud heritage and giving something back to the home of our forebears. AFK contributes to Kastellorizo through a range of practical activities aimed at assisting the island, including environmental; educational; cultural and economic initiatives. We are apolitical and work collaboratively and sensitively with the island's residents, with full respect for their culture and values, to contribute where need has been identified. This exhibition forms part of AFK's youth projects, and with the works commissioned from Dr Alexiou, includes the creation of new children's literature.

www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org

Auction of Works

An on-line auction through eBay begins on the 18th May and runs for 10 days until 28th May. Proceeds will be used to fund further AFK philanthropic activities on Kastellorizo. You can find the artwork and details about the auction on the website www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org/gallery