

## IN HER OWN IMAGE: GREEK-AUSTRALIAN WOMEN — A historical and contemporary insight —

Macquarie University Art Gallery is proud to present *In Her Own Image: Greek-Australian Women*, curated by Effy Alexakis and Leonard Janiszewski as part of the University's Diversity Week celebrations.

This photographic exhibition highlights the images and statements of past and present, both known and not so well known, Greek-Australian women – their successes, their failures, their hopes and their dreams. Their personal experiences reveal an Australia of challenges, a Greece of memory, and a faith in the unfolding of a potentially unlimited future.

Some of their stories will surprise, all of them will not disappoint. From the personal insights of actors Mary Coustas and Zoe Carides and film-maker Ana Kokkinos, to the yet to be fully recognised triumphs of Stavroula Likiard, an Australian national springboard diving champion of the 1930s, and Mary Dakas, Australia's only Greek female pearl lugger operator, the poignancy of their struggles, losses and successes exposes the powerful human desire which we all cradle, but at times fail to fully seize the potential of – the desire 'for a better life'.

The stories of Greek-Australian women have often been neglected in the grand social narratives of Australia's historical and contemporary development, yet their experiences offer significant and often diverse insights into major elements of this nation's collective attitude towards women over almost the last two hundred years – particularly given that their marginalisation in regard to gender has generally been further firmly compounded by their ethnic origin.

### Exhibition Structure:

The exhibition contains 50 images: this includes both principal framed and mounted photographs and supplement-



**Katherine Crummer (nee Aikaterini Georgia Plessos) probably taken in Sydney, late nineteenth century. Katherine is the earliest known Greek woman to settle permanently in Australia and the first 'free' Greek settler.**

*Photo courtesy R. and P. Crummer, from the 'In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians' National Project Archives*

tary images. Each has an associated caption outlining the details of the photo's subject, extracted primarily from oral history interviews conducted by historian Leonard Janiszewski. Most of the principal images are contemporary portraits taken by documentary photographer Effy Alexakis. Contemporary photographs and oral history interviews were undertaken between 1985 and 2004. Supplementary images are primarily historical and range in date principally from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s. A multimedia component has also been developed for the show.

Geographically, all Australian states are represented as are select areas in Greece (a number of Greek-Australian communities exist in Greece). A diversity of occupations and age groups are presented.



**Mary Coustas, actor, Sydney, NSW, 2004. Mary (Maria) was born in Collingwood, Melbourne, in 1964. Her parents, Sterios and Theofani (nee Efthimiathis), both from Florina in northern Greece, were married in East Melbourne in 1960. Her mother migrated to Australia in 1958 and her father in ... She has an older brother, Constantinos. Mary received an Australian Film Industry Nomination for Best Supporting Actress in 1988 for her performance in Mull, but it is for her Greek-Australian character, 'Effie', that she is best known.**

*Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the 'In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians' National Project Archives*

### Exhibition Venue

Macquarie University Art Gallery, Building E11A, North Ryde, NSW. Tel: 2 9850 7437

Both road and rail transport to the University campus is available. The University Gallery is a short walk from Macquarie University Rail Station.

### Exhibition Dates

1 August – 12 August 2011  
Mon – Fri, 10am – 15pm;  
Sat 6 August, 11am – 4pm

### Official Opening

Wednesday 3 August at 4 – 6pm. A public floor talk by Effy Alexakis and Leonard Janiszewski on the exhibition

will take place to officially open the exhibition. Refreshments will be provided. RSVP: 2 9850 7437

### About the Curators

Documentary photographer Effy Alexakis and historian Leonard Janiszewski, have been researching the Greek-Australian historical and contemporary presence in both Australia and Greece since 1982. Their project and archives, *In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians*, encompasses visual, oral and literary material and is based at Macquarie University, Sydney, in association with the Department of Modern History and the Australian History Museum. Their archives is one of the most significant collections in the country on Greek-Australians. Various national and international touring exhibitions, books, articles and a film documentary have been produced. Of their exhibitions, the most pronounced has been 'In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians', which was created in partnership with the State Library of NSW and toured throughout Australia as well as Athens and Thessaloniki in Greece; in Athens it was part of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Cultural Festival, 'Reaching the World' and in Thessaloniki it was invited as the Australian component of the City's 'Cultural Capital of Europe 1997' program.

Alexakis' photographs are held in both public and private collections in Australia – most significantly in the Australian National Gallery, Canberra, and the NSW State Library, Sydney. She currently holds the position of Honorary Associate at Macquarie University. In 2001 Janiszewski was awarded the New South Wales History Fellowship to research a history of the 'Greek cafe' in New South Wales – a major exhibition on the Greek cafe is currently touring the country. He is a Research Fellow with the Department of Modern History, Macquarie University.

## ONE FOR THE BANK BOOKS.... WHICH BANK?

**94 YEAR OLD** Mrs Joan Coleman opened her first bank account at the Arncliffe Commonwealth Bank when she was only 14 years old. Eighty years later, her bank has decided to close its doors, leaving its oldest customer out in the cold.

"I can't walk to the next suburb to do my banking and I don't know how to use an ATM" said the spritely great grand mother as she and 100 other locals stood outside the Arncliffe Branch of the Commonwealth Bank.

Many business owners and residents made their voices heard as stern and emotionless bank officials looked on.

"She represents everything this community stands for" said one of the irritated protestors, "Loyalty, hard work, mateship its all here but the bank doesn't want to know".

State Upper House member and Local Ward Councillor, Shaoquett Moselmane spoke to the crowd, determined to get the message across to the banks CEO, Ralph Norris "Banks are the glue that builds business and community. Shoppers need banks to give life to local business, take the business away



and you take away a whole community" he said.

Protestors are preparing to march on the Commonwealth Bank HQ in Martin Place next Thursday July 28. Local Community Organiser, Josie Vendramini says that This strong vibrant communi-

ty deserves better treatment after loyal and long patronage of their local bank. The Commonwealth Bank who made 6 billion dollar profit last year has a moral obligation to keep the branch open and the community alive and thriving."