

## ARTIST PROFILE

# Magda Kamper

The journey of our parents has always inspired me. They all came to an unknown land which took a lot of courage. My mother-in-law came as a single girl at the age of 17, with the greater vision of wanting to marry and have children in a country with far more opportunity than her land was able to offer at the time, hence, my first portrait is of her, which I painted from a small photograph taken of her not long before she took her journey to Australia.

Her vision of her having children came to fruition, hence the second portrait I have painted. This captures a time that most would be able to relate to, an era when studio photos were a grand opportunity to capture the family, and to be able to send photos proudly back to their loved ones in Greece.

The third portrait is in colour, of my daughter, which expresses the vibrancies of the children that came from our third generation.

The fourth portrait is of a young child, that being my grandson. Today he proudly chases his great grandmother around, calling her "Yaiyai".

These four portraits are a product of her vision that she had at the age of sixteen.

These paintings represent all of our parent's journeys which I am proud to be a product of. They came to a new land, found work, learnt a new language and educated their children, all for the love that they had in their hearts for the generations that would follow on from their journeys.

**How did you become involved in the Hellenic Lyceum's "Nurturing Hellenic Heritage the Australian Way" exhibition?**

I was invited by the Hellenic Lyceum through recommendation.

**What influenced your decision to accept the invitation?**

I was enticed by the concept of blending

art with a Hellenic theme.

**Was the artwork you are exhibiting especially designed for this event or is it part of your on-going work?**

The artwork I am exhibiting was especially designed for this event.

**How did Hellenic culture and/or history influence your work?**

My personal experience of the Hellenic generational journey inspired me to produce works that depict the experience that most Hellene's can relate with.

**How are these influences projected in your work?**

I have produced works that include four generations beginning with my mother-in-law from her village in Greece to my grandson. Each artwork represents a different era and reflects upon the way in which the Hellenic culture has evolved.

**A Greek-Australian artist: a blessing or a hurdle in getting recognized by the Australian art community?**

The artistic community does not embrace discrimination. A Hellenic culture is of wonderful value and can only enhance personal creativity.

**Once upon not so long ago, the term "Greek-Australian" artists carried a certain stigma. What issues did you have to overcome on a personal basis?**

I am of a generation where a Hellenic background is of a positive influence.

**Have you got any projects on the pipeline?**

Yes, I am currently preparing for a Watercolour Exhibition in April. Although I do enjoy portraiture, my works also consist of landscapes and animals, as I have a broad subject matter.

**Finally, a message to the Greek-**



**Australian community.**

We must never lose sight of the bravery and strength of our first Hellenic

generations that came to Australia and continue to embrace our rich, wonderful Hellenic culture.

## Fatigue and fear as Cyprus' history is rewritten

OVER THE last week most Cypriots have watched the dramatic events unfold with morbid fascination, aware that their lives were about to change in ways not seen since the Turkish invasion.

On Monday as the denouement approached and the island's fate was being brutally thrashed out in Brussels, the public response was a combination of fear, anger and plain fatigue.

"Do you understand what's going on? Cyprus is destroyed," a 55-year-old Cypriot woman living in London said. "I've been crying for days now."

"It's all horrible. I keep watching the news. I am depressed," 56-year-old Margarita Xenofontous said.

"No one knows what they are doing, with no exceptions," said Christina Theophilou, a 33-year-old mother of two who is pregnant with her third.

Referring to the eurozone's finance ministers meeting yesterday, she said that she prayed the divine light would help them "do the right thing". Christina is not religious, but like many others, the uncertainty is bearing down on her.

"I haven't felt so uncertain about the future since I was

13 and Cyprus was invaded," 53-year-old nursery teacher Dora Giorgali told Reuters yesterday. Giorgali lost her job two years ago when the school she worked at closed down.

"I have two children studying abroad and I tell them not to return to Cyprus. Imagine a mother saying that," Giorgali said. "I think a solution will be found tonight but it won't be in the best interest of our country."

In Nicosia's Ledra St yesterday, coffee shops, restaurants and many shops were open for business as usual. And, also as usual for Sunday, the street was packed. There was still the woman who sells local produce on the busy pedestrian street, the pop corn stand, and there were - as ever - families with small children buying ice cream. But a sign on a mobile phone store also said, "Cash only - until the financial situation is resolved." And across town, around 200 bank workers demonstrated outside the presidential palace chanting "Troika out of Cyprus!" and "Cyprus is not for sale!"

Many yesterday sipping coffee and chatting in the busy coffee shops said they had had enough of the news.

A group of friends in their 30s, most of them civil

servants, said they were escaping from the non-stop and "unreliable" news coverage and were "trying to forget", although one of them admitted they were not doing a very good job of completely avoiding the subject matter.

A family of four said they had laid down a new rule from Friday: "no more news". They decided as a family to tune in today and find out the aftermath of the bailout talks. "They tell us one thing, and then another," Marios said, sitting next to his two sons.

"Tell me anything you want, but don't talk about the monetary crisis," 57-year-old architect, Giorgos Fialis said in a down town coffee shop. "That's why we are here," he said. "We are discussing people, the theatre, anything else except (the crisis)," he said. His friend, 48-year-old Glafcos Theophylactou, a graphic designer and teacher, said that there are still "many beautiful things in life".

Theophylactou tried to watch the news yesterday but gave up after five minutes. Better to wait until something is finalised, the two friends said.

But how can they keep away now? isn't Cyprus' history being rewritten?

"Without us," Fialis said.