

Synchronicity

Artist Maria Aristotelous exhibits her artwork at Slipping Signs group exhibition

I started drawing, as every child does, mixing crayons and colour pencils, giving life to book characters and heroes inspired from those in the books of Charles Dickens, Jules Verne and Greek Mythology.

"Growing up in Limassol in the 80s there were not a lot of possibilities for a child to become an artist. Even though my parents supported me and took me to art lessons and guitar lessons, I didn't become an artist straight away. I guess some things are meant to be," artist Maria Aristotelous, who first graduated from Medicine School before becoming an artist, told me when we recently met to discuss her participation at a group exhibition.

"My professional career really started in 2003, when, near the end of my medical studies, I stepped for the first time in a neo-classical building in Kipseli, the painting workshop of artists Savvas Georgiades and Sotiris Adrianos. Two years later, I was admitted to the Athens School of Fine Arts, where I studied at the painting workshop of artist Zacharias Arvanitis. The Athens School of Fine Arts, was an important step in my life," she admitted.

Despite having completed medicine school, in Athens before embarking on her life-long dream, she has been working in Athens as an artist since then and there's no regretting the change of course in her life.

In fact, she has now taken an even bigger step by recently moving to The Hague, the Netherlands currently studying at the Institute of Sonology in Steim, Amsterdam, for her MA in Instruments and Interfaces researching the connection of archetypes that define the human psyche, electronic music performance and developing new instruments and interfaces for live electronic music.

Her recent work at the Slipping Signs exhibition at 50-1 gallery, has a symbolic

and psychoanalytic concept, something the artist admits plays a vital role in her work. Her inspirations include Carl Jung's theory of the collective subconscious.

"Usually, I either work on very small scale artworks or small canvases or on very large scale artworks. I concentrate on innate dipoles, subconscious inner opposite forces, and document them at their moment of collision, which I then process and depict on my frame as archetype abstractive forms. The project Countertransference is an installation of drawings that initially began in Athens, but was completed in Hague at the end of 2011. Countertransference is a psychoanalytical term that can be understood as the projection of the psyche of the person being treated in therapy on the therapist in an exchange of roles.

The title, taken from Goethe's 'Faust', 'Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust, Die eine will sich von der andern trennen' can be translated as 'Two souls alas! Are dwelling in my breast; And each is fain to leave its brother'. My other works in this collection are 'The Shadow and the Personae' and 'Synchronicity' also documenting the psyche. They are made using oilsticks, pastels, pencils and lack a sense of time," she said.

Aristotelous's innate talent has already resulted in her taking part in various competitions in Athens and Cyprus, including the 5th Athens Biennale where she has received considerable distinctions.

"Competitions are a medium that provides an artist with the incentive to create, because, fortunately or unfortunately, 'inspiration' does not always come, and there are times when you need to invent inspirations," she confessed.

She has collaborated with many artists, for example in Art Athina last year, and took part in Project Sotiria in 2010, with a film entitled 'And reality replied' where



she collaborated with two visual artists. The film was part of a project on the Sotiria hospital, an abandoned building where they tried to document the lives of the ailing in the hospital. She cherishes collaborations, because "more voices create a louder effect than one".

Adding: "I am hoping for more collaborations in the future, especially ones that will have to do with the electronic music field," she said.

She particularly admires Flemish art and art in the Netherlands. "Johannes Vermeer, Rembrandt, Hieronymous Bosch, artists from the CoBrA movement, Vincent Van Gogh. I also really like Mark Rothko and abstract expressionism and Kasimir Malevich. I admire Greek sculptor Yiannoulis Chalepas. I am influenced by Japanese Calligraphy and Japanese philosophy," she said.

With regards to art in Cyprus she admits it has changed in recent years. "There's a new generation of young artists who constantly rejuvenate the visual art scene in Cyprus. There are new galler-

ies, spaces that promote contemporary art, and I believe that art will change and develop even more in the next few years, with the opening of a School of Fine Arts in Cyprus," she said.

Even though she is an artist, her interests also lie in electronic music, interaction and art, and she considers working in film and theatre in the future, and collaborations in video and performance.

"I will be having a solo exhibition at penindaplinena gallery in Limassol, that will take place end of 2012. Also, I will be taking part in electronic and electro acoustic music concerts with my band Sonology Electroacoustic Ensemble, a music band in Hague directed by Richard Barrett."

"For me art is there to create questions and not to answer them. The answers are subject to each observer and everyone has their own."

Slipping signs is at 50-1 gallery, 49 El-lados St, Limassol, 25340727 www.mariaaristotelous.com

On until February 8.

