

Hellenic Heads In Southampton

Staff Writer on Jul 7, 2022

Six larger than life heads, inspired by 2,500 years of Greek history and culture, are on view at The Muses gallery in Southampton now through September 5. The sculptures are part of a traveling solo exhibition featuring the work of artist George Petrides and the pieces premiered at the Embassy of Greece in Washington D.C. this past spring when more than 1,000 people stood in line to see them on Europe Day, May 14, which celebrates the foundation of the European Union.

Marking the occasion of the centennial of the destruction of Smyrna in 1922 and the bicentennial of the Greek War of Independence, Petrides's exhibition is a personal exploration into his Greek background, seeking to understand the cultural influences that have shaped him and the people closest to him.

“Our community is honored to host the extraordinary art of sculptor George Petrides, which honors important periods in our Hellenic history, from the fifth century B.C. to the present day,” said Father Alex Karloutsos, Protos-priester of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church in the Hamptons.

Starting with a rigorous research process, including archaeological artifacts, academic sources, family stories and historical photographs, Petrides studied six important periods from 2,500 years ago to the present

“One of these sculptures honors the memory of those who died and lived through the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922,” Father Alex said. “As our Archdiocese celebrates its centennial, we can never forget that 100 years ago, people died as martyrs for our faith. Another work honors female leaders — who are frequently overlooked — of the Greek



War of Independence (1821-1829) which was initiated and sustained by our faith.

“George’s beautiful art reminds all of us — not only Greek Orthodox Christians — of our Hellenic foundations so we can wisely use today to create a better day tomorrow for all humankind,” he added.

Petrides’s creative process is of his own invention. He often begins by sculpting in clay from a live model or historical photographs. Next, the clay piece is scanned in 3-D, and the digital file is manipulated using sculpting software. Then it is 3D printed or CNC milled in a size that is up to two-and-a-half times life-size.

Petrides then reworks the piece by hand, using power tools and construction materials. Often the sculpture is then cast in bronze in Greece, using the same lost-wax process that was used by the ancient Greeks 2,500 years ago. Finally, various patinas are applied in a rich expressionistic manner.

“As a Greek-American — born in Athens and having spent more than half my life in New York City — I have always been interested in my Greek roots, initially absorbing them through my family members: a grandmother who escaped the destruction of Smyrna in 1922 and parents who lived through the 1940s Nazi occupation and ensuing Greek civil war,” Petrides said. “I continued studying these topics at Harvard College, where I studied Classical Greek literature, philosophy and history, as well as four visits to Mount Athos, where I was steeped in art and culture from the Byzantine period.”

This presentation is the second installation of Petrides’s solo show, following its world premiere at the Embassy of Greece in the U.S. in Washington, D.C. Afterward, The Muses, “Hellenic Heads” will travel to other venues in the United States and continue on to European venues in 2023. Details are forthcoming and will be announced at petrides.art.

The Muses is at 111 St. Andrews Road, Southampton. “Hellenic Heads: George Petrides” went on view on June 16 and will remain on display through September 5. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and by appointment at 917-860-0932 or info@petrides.art.