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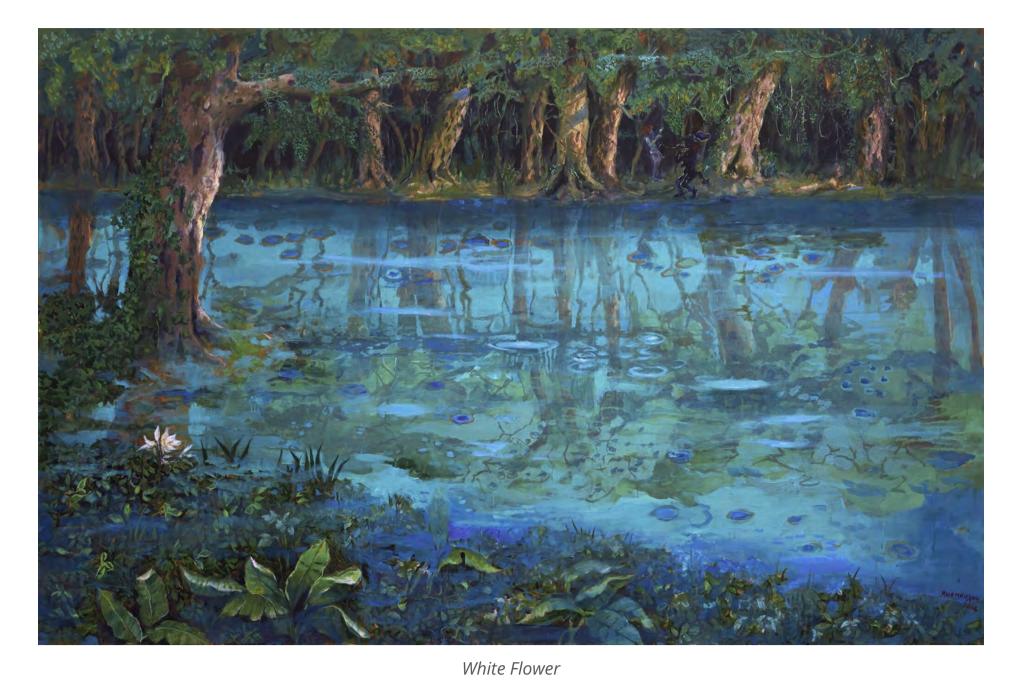
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Mar 5, 2025 | Arts in Greece

Irini Iliopoulou's harmonious blend of technical skill and intuitive imagination channel her inspiration and emotions into her art. Her artistry emerges from her inner creative instincts, resulting in works defined by bold and confident brushstrokes, that create an authentic connection between the viewer and her journeys, from the Parisian cafes to southern France and the island of Kasos.

Her paintings reflect the inherent mystery and beauty of the places she has visited, conveying her perspective about art and life. Her art is both imaginative and grounded, offering a visual narrative of joy, innocence and tranquility. It captures the essence of beauty and mystery, inviting us to escape into her vibrant worlds. Iliopoulou uses elements from the natural world; at the same time, though, she transcends reality to convey deeper meanings as the viewers are encouraged to question, reflect, and engage with the unseen layers of a narrative.



Irini Iliopoulou studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts (1977-1981) and then moved to Paris to study at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts under Leonardo Cremonini. She has extensively exhibited in Greece and abroad. Her works are included in prestigious public (National Gallery of Athens, Museum of Contemporary Art Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation, Bank of Greece, Greek Parliament) as well as private collections. She lives and works in Athens.

Irini Iliopoulou talks to Greek News Agenda\* about her journeys, her diverse visual narratives and the effect her surroundings



Your solo exhibitions reflect a different visual universe each time. How do you choose your themes?

Since I started exhibiting, that is to say right after graduating the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1988, painting cycles would open and close every 3-4 years. This was not intentional but rather associated with places that would fascinate me.

the countryside of the South of France, Bordeaux and Arles, to paint the vineyards, marshes and rice fields. I was amazed by the beauty of nature and the similarities and differences from our countryside. I paint anything that fascinates me until my desire and the reasons I started painting it are exhausted. Back in Paris, I started painting at the Parisian cafes. So, a new period of painting emerged: the carousels and cafés of the city. Nothing is ever planned. I chose my subject matter depending on where my gaze focuses and gets hooked. Then, one thing

leads to another. I always follow my inner compass. Every painter has his way. Many work on the same subject all their lives;

In the early years of Paris, the spaces depicted were indoor, mainly theaters and subways. Around 1990, I started traveling to

they move on focusing on the same things. It's great to keep looking at the same subject and rediscover it each time! As far as I am concerned, changing the subject matter offers me the opportunity to find new ways of painting to accurately communicate what I want and to evolve my painting language. You paint nature, interiors and people each time in a different way and this is so stimulating and exciting. When I refrain from observation, I resort to memories and issues that have to do with my experiences, my "hidden ones", that have to come to the surface and there begins another cycle (Small Tropics) that is based on forests with puppeteers, humidity,

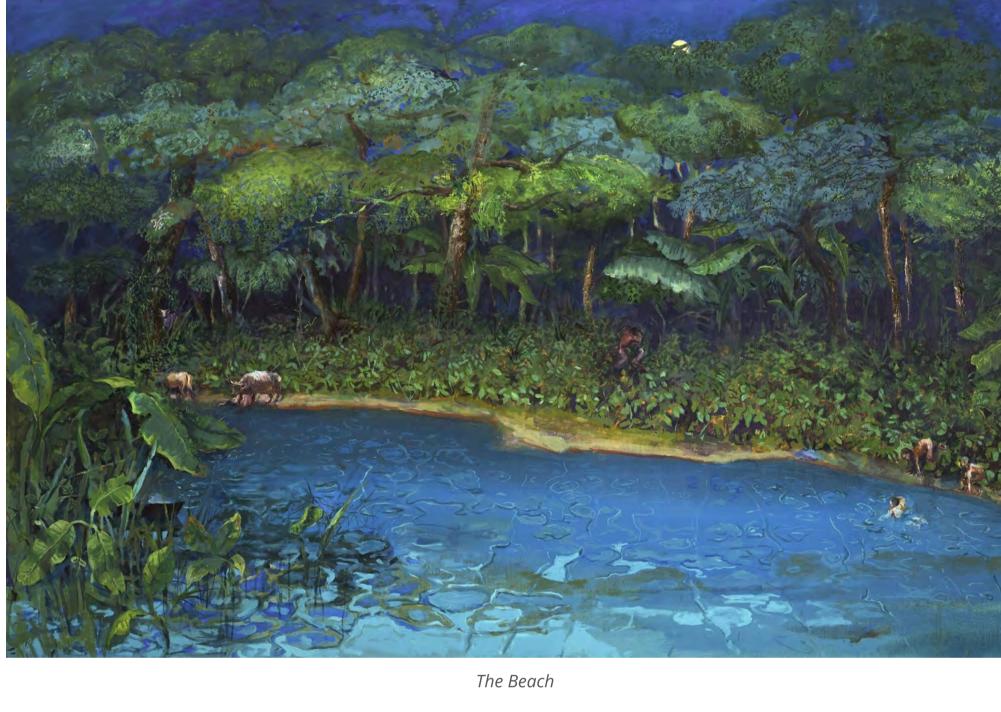
water and dense vegetation. When I get back to reality, I paint rocks, sensual themes and so on. I just let myself be carried away. There seems to be a lot

inside of me and needs to be told in a painterly narrative that follows my psyche and the way I evolve.



## Nature has a prominent presence in your works. What does this choice signify? Nature is an inexhaustible subject. No matter how many lives you have and paint it, it always has a refreshing, cooling and

nourishing effect; just like real life itself. In nature, I wander around my canvas painting it, until the center of my desire is revealed. Nature is memory and desire. It is a place for fairy tales and a wealth of infinite richness able to create complicated visual narratives.

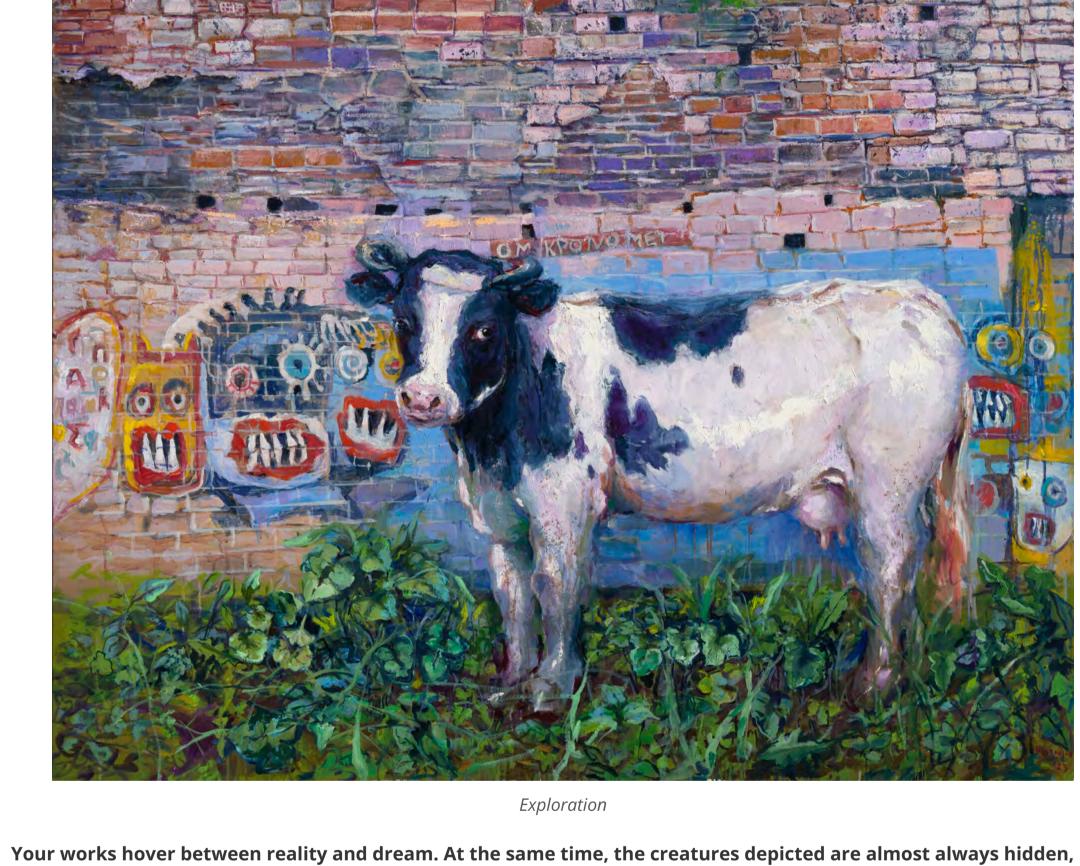


## Are you influenced by the place where you live?

When you live in the city, you think that nothing that happens in the outside world can invade your studio. But this is wrong. Stimuli are recorded and stored in the brain's hard drive and pop up at the right time when you need them. It is always those important or trivial things that you encounter along the way, that amaze you and you just want to return as

them. Of course, when you change your environment or travel, the surprise of the wealth of new images can shake you up and open new paths in your painting career. Relocations are priceless opportunities for new perceptions.

quickly as possible to your studio and start painting them. Everything lends itself to painting and even if they don't, you invent

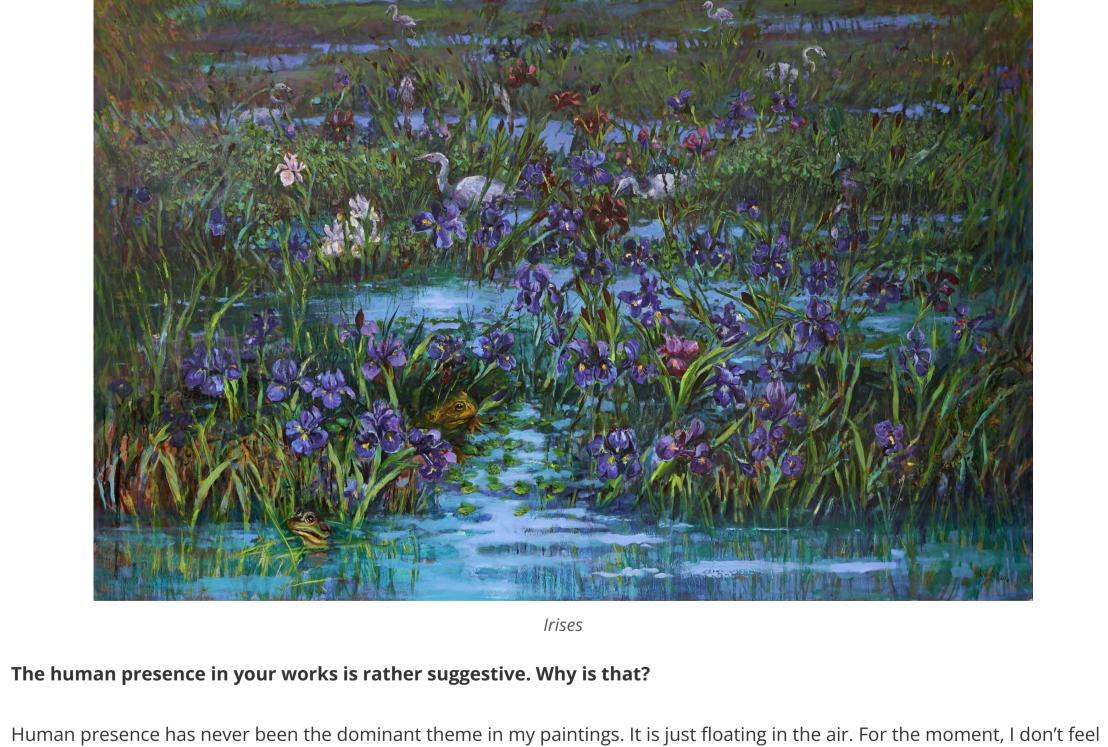


camouflaged, creating a sense of mystery. What's the role of dreams and mystery in your works?

When I paint from life, observing and analyzing reality, my works come out more realistic because reality works in a binding way. When I paint landscapes or places of memory and desire, that is, from my mind and my imagination, they move away from the physical and take their own way! When I work on my painting, nothing is unreal. Everything has to do with where my

canvas takes me and this is my only reality. Sometimes, I might also place elements from the natural environment into an imaginary context. This is the case with my last exhibition, where animals were painted from nature and placed in my own invented environment.

The dream and the mystery are never planned. They emerge from the whole atmosphere of the work. Without wishing to demystify anything, many times the hidden and camouflaged elements might not be created intentionally but from painting accidents or from the needs of the work.



the need to deal with it more elaborately. And it is done by choice. People always interest me in relation to nature and in their relationship with each other. They are a structural part of the story but not protagonists. I mainly paint the imprint of human

beings and the marks they leave in space. In your latest exhibition, "A Farm: The Story of Bella and Harry", the protagonists are two lovely little animals. What does their conspicuous presence suggest?

In my last exhibition, I painted the animals that I see outside our house on the island of Kasos, where I spend my summers. Painting them, over the last three years, I have come to notice how unwittingly they converse with the viewer, confiding stories of primordial joy, emotion and innocence.

painted life! In our real life we may not manage to do things our way, but in painting, fortunately, we have the privilege to make all our wishes come true! \*Interview by Dora Trogadi

In my studio, seeing them on large canvases warmed my soul. After completing this cycle, I realized that what was important

for me was an approach to innocence in my way, that is painting! I wanted their serenity, peace and joy to dominate their

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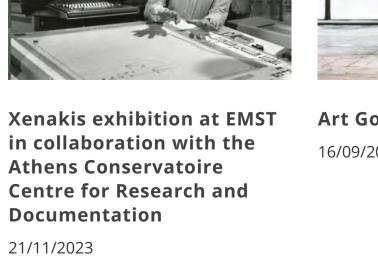


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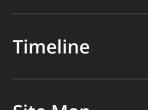
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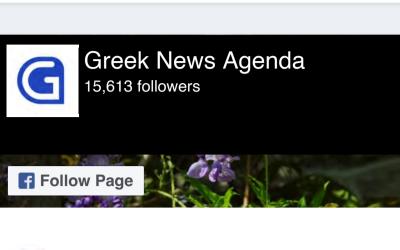
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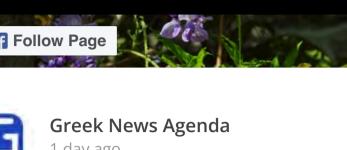
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