

Special Exhibition of Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum



110th Anniversary Exhibition of
the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations
between Japan and Greece

Lafcadio Hearn and Greece

Other Roots and
Inherited Spirit

April 25, 2009–March 31, 2010
Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum
Matsue, Japan

Opening Ceremony: April 25, 2009

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Lafcadio Hearn and Greece

Other roots and inherited spirit

Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo) was born on June 27, 1850 on Lefkada in the Ionian Islands. He spent about two years in Greece before he moved to Dublin, Ireland, where his father Charles' family home was located. His middle name, Lafcadio, was chosen to commemorate his birthplace. Curiously, Lefkada and Matsue share similarities in scenery, as both are situated on lagoons.

Hearn and his mother, Rosa Cassimati, parted when he was four years old and never met again. However, he continued to have firm affection towards and longing for his mother as well as pride in his Greek identity. He found commonality between Japanese culture and Greek culture, featuring paganism with active ancient Greek gods and animism where even small animals have their souls. He pictured Greece as Utopia in his mind.

We planned this small exhibition this year—2009—to mark and celebrate the one hundred and tenth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Greece. The main exhibits are the pictures of Kythira and Lefkada Islands I took when I

visited Greece in September 2008. Among the exhibits are some Greek art objects donated by Mr. Takis Efstathiou to Mr. Matsuura Masataka, Mayor of Matsue City. Some of them are works by Theodoros Stamos (1922-1997), one of the exponents of Modern Greek Art, who was deeply attached to Hearn. On Kythira Island where Hearn's mother Rose was born, I was moved by the anecdotes about her handed down orally with pride by the people there. These anecdotes reflect their interests and affections for her, and are different from what are stated in the biographies.

I believe this exhibition is one small step to a new cultural exchange between Japan and Greece. We can observe how the spirit that Hearn professed was given him by Greece has had an impact on the works of the artists who came after him. We can also see possibilities of expressing his spirit and cultural background through figurative art.

Bon Koizumi

Great grandson of Lafcadio Hearn

1. Kythira Island

Hearn's mother, Rosa Antonia Cassimati was born in 1823 in Kythira located in the center of Kythira Island. In April, 1848, Charles Bush Hearn came to the Fort Capsali located just across from Rosa's family house to take his post as an assistant to a military doctor in The 45th Nottingham Infantry Regiment. Before long, he fell in love with Rosa, who ardently attended the Church in the Fort. Charles was 30 years old and Rosa was 25. Hearn himself said Rosa's brother, who was against their marriage, stabbed him with a knife, but whether this was true or not is not clear. When Charles was transferred to Lefkada in June 1849, Rosa left the Island together with him.

Rosa came back to Kythira under an unstable mental condition, leaving behind four year old Lafcadio in Dublin. She remarried to a man named John Cavallini, who was of Italian descent. Their son, Angelo, became a clergyman and respected by the people there. The older generation on the island are still proud of the fact that they were baptized by him. Even though most biographies say Rosa was illiterate and emotional, according to the stories being told by the people, she enjoyed high level education at a school just down the street from her house. She was also said to have been worried about Lafcadio who she had left in Dublin. She died on Corfu Island in 1882.

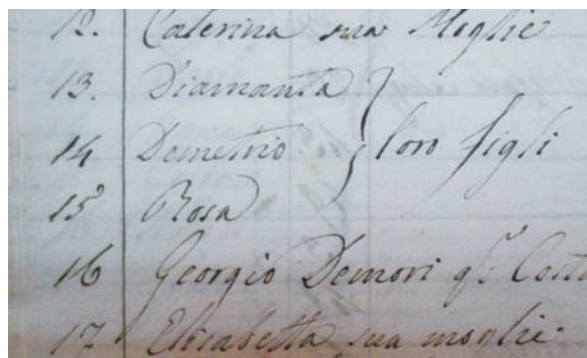
Kythira Island is located off the south-eastern tip of Peloponnesus, lying at the point where the Aegean Sea meets the Ionian and Crete Seas and with the population of 3,000. There is a well known story about Aphrodite, the Goddess of beauty and love, who was born in bubbles and carried to the Kythira Island by wind. Even after the Middle Era, the island was occupied by Turkey, Venetia, France, Russia and Britain.

2. Lefkada Island

Charles Bush Hearn, father of Lafcadio Hearn, moved from Kythira Island to Lefkada with Rosa in June 1849 and stayed there until February the following year. Lafcadio Hearn was born on June 27, 1850 at Lefkada in the center of the Island. It was four months after his father Charles was called back to Ireland. His middle name 'Lafcadio' means 'a native of Lefkada'. The house where Rosa was born. It was under renovation. The Registration stored in the archive of Kythira. The name of



The house where Rosa was born. It was under renovation.



The Registration stored in the archive of Kythira. The name of Rosa (No.15), and of her brother Biamanta (No.13) and Demetoriosh (No.14) can be recognized.



Rosa's tomb. She was buried in 1882 with her remarried family.

Rosa (No.15), and of her brother Biamanta (No.13) and Demetoriosh (No.14) can be recognized. Rosa's tomb. She was buried in 1882 with her remarried family.

He was baptized as a child at St. Paraskevi Church (Greek Orthodox Church). Paraskevi is the God of Eyes. Curiously, when Hearn got injured in the eye later in his life, he had sympathy with faith in Yakushi. In August of the same year when Hearn was born, his brother Robert died of febrile illness and was buried in the same Church. We can imagine Rosa spending uneasy days in an off street house with little sunshine, left alone with a small child. In August 1852, Hearn and Rosa left for

Dublin, Ireland via Marta Island to visit Charles' house, accompanied by his uncle Richard who came down from Paris.

Lefkada and Matsue share a lagoon scenery, cut off from the sea by a bund or a sand bank. Having the ocean on the west side, both landscapes tend to appear foggy. That subconscious scenery of Lefkada might explain his love for Lake Shinji.

Lefkada is the fourth biggest island in the Ionian Islands. It is connected to the mainland by a bunk road and a bridge. The population is 22,879 (2005). Like other Ionian islands, Lefkada had been occupied by Macedonia, Venetia, France, Russia and Great Britain.

3. Inherited sprit

It is said that Hearn used to draw pictures of muscles on the blank margins in notebooks. This can be interpreted to mean that he had been asking questions to himself regarding outstanding muscular beauty of ancient Greek carvings. He probably surmised that "this must be related to celestial and geometric idea on human bodies as expressed through love" (a letter addressed to Chamberlain), because this was during the era without sense of shame. He believed Greek Art was beautiful because it was not negatively influenced by Christianity. Hearn himself never failed to train his own body using 10kg dumbbells.

His affection and respect for Greece was not only about physical beauty. In his letter addressed to his brother James, he said he inherited his good features from the spirit of Greeks who had dark skin. "I love justice, hate wrong things, respect beauty and truth, trust people, both men and women, and I am blessed with sensitivity toward artistic items." All these good features came from Greek spirit. He confidently considered the sense of values he supported as a gift from Greece.

Later in his life, he wrote 'memory of a place and a magical time', 'country' and 'she was divine' in 'The dream of a summer day'. If those descriptions were fusions of his subconscious images of a Greek scenery and his mother, the core of his admiration toward Greece could be his affection toward and longing for his mother. His strong feelings toward his mother can be observed through his conclusion to a story of a ghost raising a child in Daiouji Temple in Matsue as follows; A Mother's love is stronger than death.



Lafcadio Hearn Street.
The house where he was born is located along this path.

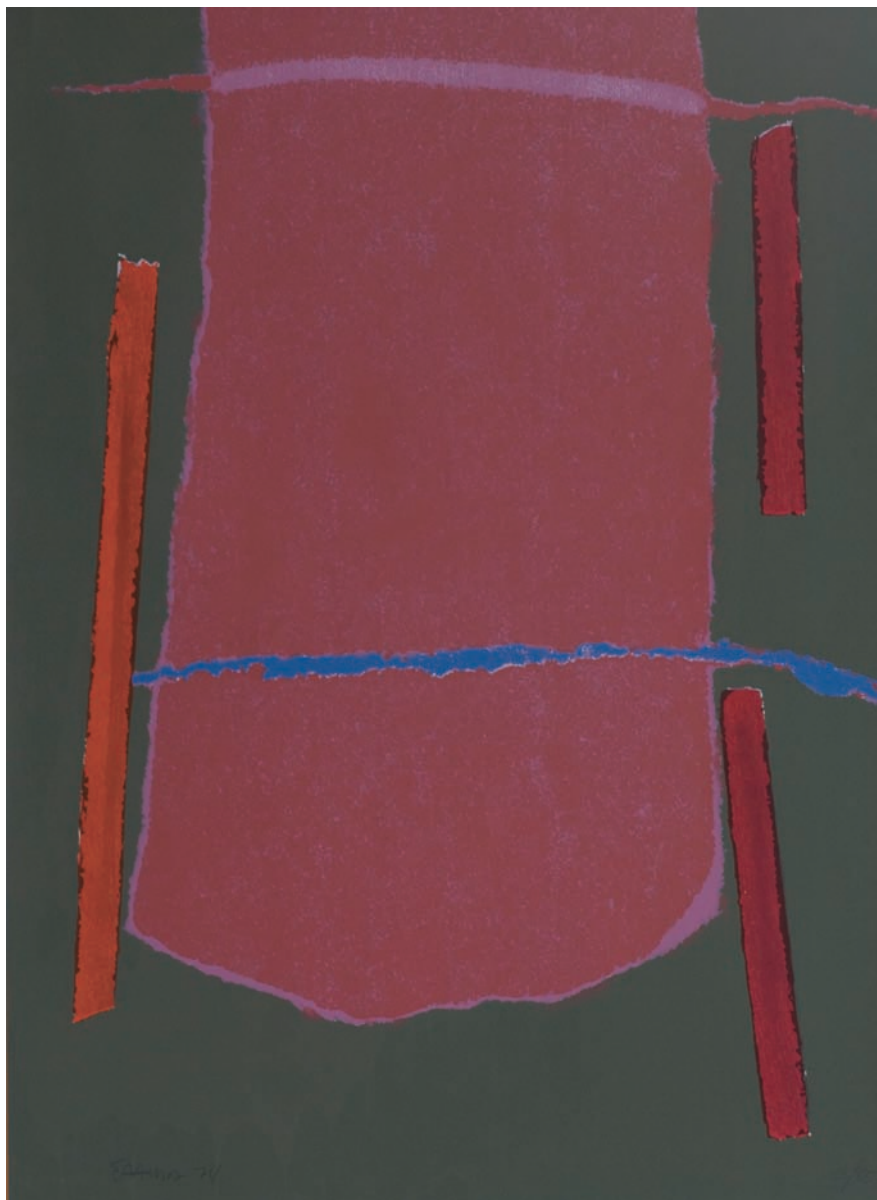


Later, Hearn's affection toward Greece touched the heartstrings of Theodoros Stamos, one of the exponents of Modern Greek Art. His best friend, Takis Efstathiou, as if he wished to sustain his friend's dream, has been working hard to establish cultural exchange between Greece and Japan through Hearn.

In order to inherit and re-evaluate Hearn's Greek spirit, a variety of activities are taking place or being planned including Hearn's Collection at American College in Athens, exhibitions of creative art featuring Hearn by modern Greek artists and creation of monuments to abstract Hearn's spirit by Masaaki Noda.

Explanation by Bon Koizumi

References ; O.W. Frost, *Young Hearn*, Eishiro Nishino, *Koizumi Yakumo and Europe*, Miyoko Kudo, *Island of the Holy Spirit – The Life of Lafcaio Hearn in Europe, Lafcadio Hearn Inclusive Edition Vol.15, Concerning Koizumi Yakumo, KYTHIRA (Complete and Up-to-date Travel Guide), The dream of a summer day*



Theodoros Stamos

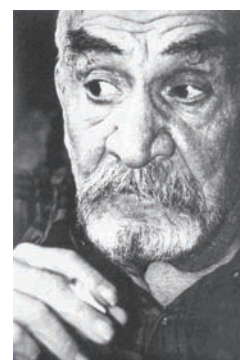
Infinity Field Lefkada Series (Original: Silk screen on paper 1974)

Athens Gallery published to the print on the occasion of his exhibition in their gallery in Athens in 1974.

98 (H) × 78 (W)

Donated by Mr. Takis Efsutathiou.

Theodoros Stamos (1922-1997) was one of the original and youngest Abstract Expressionist artists working in New York City in the 1940s and 50s. He studied in 1936 at the American Artists School. From 1958 to 1975 he taught at the Black Mountain College, Cummington School of Fine Arts and the Art Students League of New York. Stamos was also a member of the Uptown Group. In late 1970s he donated many of his works to the National Gallery of Greece and the retrospective exhibition was held one year after he passed away. He is buried in Lefkada, Greece.



Sotiris Therianos

The Dream

After earthquake 14 Aug. 2003

He altered a photo taken immediately after the earthquake in San Nikitas by Sotiris Therianos, an artist from Lefkada.

30.4 (H) x 40 (W)

Donated by Mr. Takis Efsutathiou.



John Henning

Plaque of the Parthenon frieze Plaster (1819)

John Henning was one of the first artists to gain access to Lord Elgin's collection of marble sculptures from Greece. Henning was struck by the beauty of the sculptures from the Parthenon frieze and asked for permission to draw and model them. Original sculpture designed by Phidias (BC480-BC430) at the British Museum what is original copy. The name of this plaster copy is Metopes of the Parthenon Cavalcade Frieze II West frieze of the Parthenon it was designed by Phidias.

40.8 (H) x 29 (W)

Donated by Mr. Takis Efsutathiou.