

# **the amphora project.**

reinterpreting our heritage through art



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# Foreword

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Cultural heritage has a universal value for us as individuals, communities and societies. It is also the true embodiment of Europe's 'Unity in Diversity'. You may think of heritage as being 'from the past' or static, but it actually evolves through our engagement with it and connects generations as it reflects cross fertilizations over many centuries of shared history.

To mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the Representation of the European Commission in Cyprus wanted to celebrate a symbol of the cultural heritage of Cyprus, and asked 12 local artists to reinterpret this symbol using their own artistic freedom of expression. The 12 amphora were made of local terracotta harvested in the regions of Kalo Chorio and Gerasa and made by Nikos Katelaris of the Katelaris family who have a long tradition of making pottery in Cyprus. The shape of the amphora is a distinctly Cypriot one, known as a 'κορύπα με δύο φκια' (meaning 'a koriba with two ears' in the local Cypriot dialect).

The artists chosen for this project represent the diversity of the cultural landscape of Cyprus and we are grateful to them for their enthusiasm towards this unique project. Through this initiative we wanted to see a metamorphosis of a once functional item, which is now rarely used for its initial purpose of carrying water. In this way we can discover our heritage anew and keep it alive through the reimagining of the artists.

**Androulla Vassiliou**

Vice-President of Europa Nostra

# Andreas Charalambous

**Title:** 'Χαίρε και πίνε ευ' / 'Το νερό νεράκι'  
**Drink and be merry' / 'Water is precious'**

**Media:** Acrylics and acrylic varnish

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“

The amphora is a vessel for water or wine, and I reference these purposes through my work.

I wanted to convey the totality of the pot's purpose and existence with these dual facets.

”



# Anonymous Collective

**Title:** Untitled

**Media:** Acrylics

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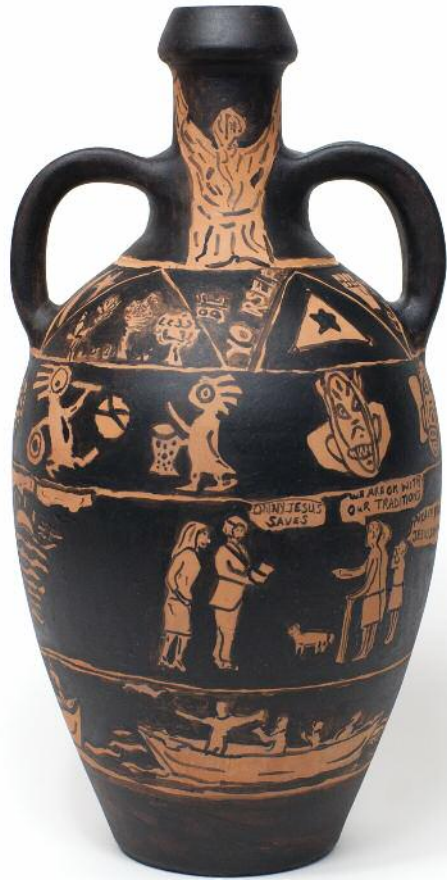
The Cypriot amphora was the result of an expanded economic and cultural networking of the productive actors of the island itself, as well as of the wider Mediterranean region and beyond. By looking at the amphora as a functional object, as well as through its visual representations, we are able to identify local traditions and practices as well as influences from other cultures. As such, the cultural identity of the creative producer of the amphora is established. At the same time, the image of Cyprus throughout antiquity is reinforced as a cultural melting pot of intersections and interactions.

Through this call of a fundamental European appeal, with the possibility to reach various audiences, the Collective is providing a space for the stories of people to be told, who remain for the most part invisible in our society, yet exist among us and interact in silence and from a distance, and live, often for particular reasons, under protective environments.

The Collective wishes to remain anonymous and aims to highlight and recall the vital existence of this invisible network, and the imperative need for an essentially democratic way to manage it. At the same time, it wishes to underline the urgency of an extensive crisis situation within and beyond the Mediterranean region, which is naturalised and normalised by the policies and institutions of power, referring to what the philosopher Giorgio Agamben has declared as a "state of exception (exceptio)".

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# Giorgos Lash

**Title:** Archontia / Αρχοντιά

**Media:** Mixed media

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Inspired by the traditional Cypriot folk song '**Στείλε με μάνα στο νερόν**'/'Send me mother, to fetch water'.

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# Hourig Torossian

**Title:** Alphabet

**Media:** Acrylic paint and folded paper

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I have been using and collecting posters with letters from the Greek Alphabet in my recent work and having first seen the amphora, it seemed right to print the alphabet all around its figurative form.

The letters are cut by hand and stencilled directly on the amphora as a symbol of preserving culture through language.

The folded paper inserted within the handle of the amphora is reminiscent of a figure carrying the daily newspaper under their arm.

”



# Lia Boyiatzi

**Title:** Blue / Μπλέ

**Media:** Blue velvet and French tapestry in a silver tray

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The symbolism of my work is immediate and straightforward: the amphora "koriba with two ears" has a characteristic shape with prominent curves reminiscent of a woman's body, which I identified with immediately.

The blue velvet that I used to dress the amphora is in direct antithesis to the bare, hard surface of the clay which it conceals, while also giving it the finesse of a different culture, in exactly the same way a ball gown acts upon a woman's body. Tapestry is a traditional way of depicting life, and in my work it acts as a means of bringing together the two worlds I live in: Cyprus and France.

In short, for me the amphora is the place, which is easily "dressed" as anything European, yet its fundamental essence doesn't change, as it slips uninhibited through luxury. Finally, the folkloric tapestry symbolises the traditions and foundations, which however skilfully concealed, always eventually reveal themselves.

”



# Lia Lapithi

**Title:** Water Amphora

**Media:** Text + stainless-steel sink-stopper + handpainted

**Description:** Gottfried Semper text + stainless-steel sink-stopper + handpainted 7th Century B.C. archaic bird with tree branch (as seen in the Archaeological Museum of Cyprus and reproduced today by the Cyprus Handicraft Centre, a government-sponsored foundation committed to preserving Cypriot heritage handicrafts).

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For the most part, an amphora was tableware, or sat close to the table, was intended to be seen, and was finely decorated as such by master painters. Stoppers of perishable materials, which have rarely survived, were used to seal the contents. This water carrying amphora, today replaced by the tap (hence the contemporary household sink gadget), also has a quote from Gottfried Semper's *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten* (1860–63; "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts").

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# Nicholas Panayi

**Title:** Untitled

**Media:** Natural black charcoal

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“ The use of charcoal as a drawing medium is hardly used on pottery. I have decided to use it as a reference to its original use in firing the kiln, to produce sufficient temperatures to complete the process of turning clay into ceramic.

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# Achilleas Michaelides AKA Paparazzi

**Title:** Ο Κόσμος της Κύπρου / The People of Cyprus

**Media:** Mixed media

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My artwork is inspired by the iconic painting of Adamantios Diamantis, entitled 'The People of Cyprus'.

It is a contemporary interpretation using the characters and faces of modern-day Cyprus, which reflect the diversity and multicultural nature of the island.

I wanted to show the positive side of Cyprus - the sun, the sea, the mixture of cultures and the hospitality of its people.

”



# Ruzen Atakan

**Title:** Amphorator

**Media:** Fiber glass, Plastic Paint, Text, Ceramic insertion.

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Our perception, and even our biological receptors have changed with the 21st Century's visual culture and cultural industry. This culture is highly western and dominant at the same time. And so it did, and does, change our lives within.

Art, and specifically contemporary art, generates an alternative language for its audience to adapt itself to these rapid changes. I, too, have tried to make an intervention to the form which has been given to us, using this language. I shall ask: for whose gaze have these amphoras been determined as a common form to look at?

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# Senih Çavuşoğlu

**Title:** 'Water pot breaks on the way to water.'

**Media:** Ceramic glaze applied through vinyl stencil

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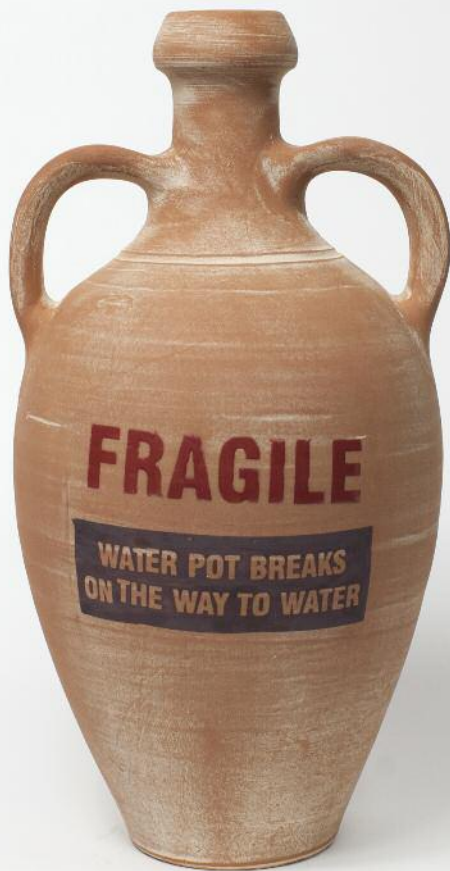
We are living in a very fragile region and island. The saying 'Water pot breaks on the way to water' is an idiom that basically means a person may encounter various obstacles on the way to pursuing their aim; they may suffer an accident, get hurt, even die.

In spite of everything, this is the geography that makes us who we are and it is our cultural heritage that conveys our existence from generation to generation.

Our recent history is like the broken water pot on the way to water. But in the end, geography will beat history.

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**FRAGILE**

**WATER POT BREAKS  
ON THE WAY TO WATER**

# Souzana Petri

**Title:** The fertility of an endless century

**Media:** Ceramic, copper, wood.

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An irreplaceable love which will always be important through the centuries.

Female idols used to depict the position of women in society and sending messages of fertility and motherhood.

Even if the way of drawing a female body is changing, the meaning always remains the same.

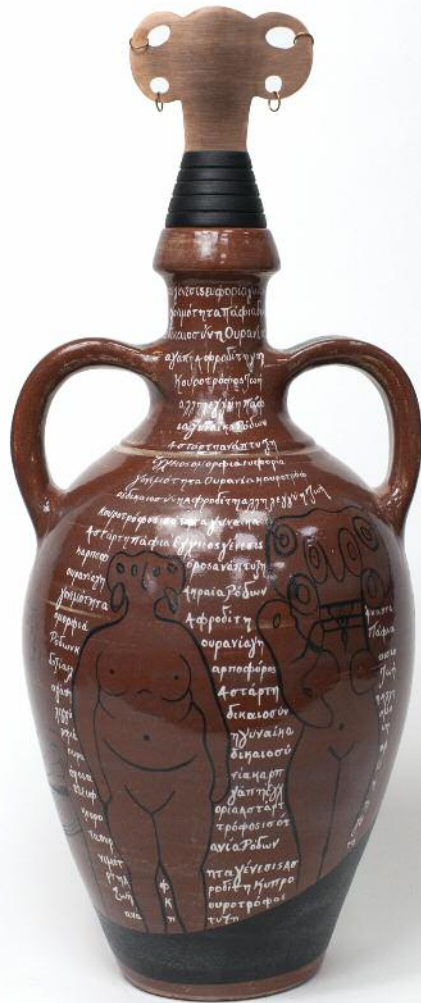
**Αγάπη** - Love

**Γυναίκα** - Women

**Ομορφιά** - Beauty

**Ζωή** - Life.

”



# TwoFourTwo Art Group

**Title:** Postcards from Cyprus

**Media:** Photography, Metal, LED, Paper, Ink.

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The artwork of the 242 Art Group has progressed in recent years towards appropriation and action. In many cases their latest work involved a process where the art object became a series of interactive events, allowing audience participation and interaction. “Postcards from Cyprus” is an on-going activity of the last 4 years, which initially kicked off from their stance towards the socio-political situation since the 2013 financial crisis.

With a very similar mode the Amphora Project was treated similarly using again the appropriation process. Based on its history and tradition the ‘pot’ was taken to the Famagusta area and was photographed in various locations depicting paradisiac vistas of the country. The actual ‘amphora’ became a double sided light box and a series of giveaway postcards in an effort to disseminate its sight, its story and its tradition.

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# 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage

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Cultural heritage shapes our identities and everyday lives.

It surrounds us in Europe's towns and cities, natural landscapes and archaeological sites. It is found not only in literature, art and objects, but also in the crafts we learn from our ancestors, the stories we tell our children, the food we enjoy together and the films we watch and recognise ourselves in.

2018 has been designated as the European Year of Cultural Heritage. A time to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage across Europe. The aim of the year is to encourage more people to discover and engage with Europe's cultural heritage, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space.

The slogan for the year is: 'Our heritage: where the past meets the future'. Cultural heritage should not be left to decay, deterioration or destruction. This is why in 2018, we search for new ways to celebrate and preserve it.

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