

# Show celebrates global connections to place

## Paintings, sculptures shown at Imogen

BY BRIANA ALZOLA

From paint to stone, artists M.J. Anderson and Christos Koutsouras have different artistic mediums. But each have experienced some sort of displacement during the coronavirus pandemic.

### 'To the Ends of the Earth'

Featuring works from M.J. Anderson and Christos Koutsouras through Sept. 6

Imogen Gallery, 240 11th St. in Astoria.

Opening celebration 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday

Anderson is working in Newhalem, instead of in an Italian studio. Koutsouras is working in his home in Greece instead of coming back to work in Astoria.

Both artists' work will be featured in "To the Ends of the Earth," a new show running Saturday through Sept. 6 at Imogen Gallery in Astoria.

The show marks the gallery's ninth anniversary. Anderson will be at the gallery during an opening celebration, set to be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on Saturday during Astoria's Second Saturday Artwalk.

Owner Teri Sund said she's grateful that people have continued to support the gallery.

Both artists have a deep connection to the Astoria area, but come from elsewhere, Sund said. "They both bring a little of both places in their work," she said.

That connection to place makes their pieces even more special, she said.

The artists also have an appreciation of art history, and the classics have made an impact on their work, Sund said.

"They are masters in their chosen medium," Sund said.

Both have shown together at the gallery before, and Sund said she's been working with Koutsouras for just about as long as the gallery has been open.

Sund said she aims to have a large show each August to celebrate the gallery's anniversary. The artists, both internationally known, were perfect for this year's show, she said.

Anderson creates stone sculptures. She said most of her creations come from listening to the "material itself, to the stone."

"I begin with a general idea, but the



Christos Koutsouras' 'Exodus'



A painting by Christos Koutsouras.



M.J. Anderson's 'Cloud Study'

sculpture reveals itself in the carving process, keeping me alert to respond to each cut, to each blow of the hammer," she said in an email. "I generally work within a series, with some series such as my torsos, mermaids and abstract onyx sculptures lasting decades."

Her various series reflect different parts of her life and what she's experienced.

She has a new form, inspired by her difficulty to concentrate during the first months of the pandemic lockdown.



M.J. Anderson's 'Double Tailed Mermaid'

"I carved a series of house forms, each house representing one of us, but grouped together, still representing a community," she said. "I enjoyed working the repetitive nature of multiples and continued with a series of bottle forms, which are featured in the Imogen show. The bottles have comforting personalities, especially when seen in groups of three or more (much like in a Giorgio Morandi painting)."

Anderson started carving in college and said the process keeps moving her forward

and her brain engaged.

"A reductive process, once the stone is gone, just like time, there is no going back," she said. "Carving stone keeps me in the present tense, eager to see what is being revealed — which I find exciting."

She said creating the sculptures helps create a history and a record of the time that she's living in.

"So much of what happens in the world is recorded from a male point of view, and I feel it is my mission to create a lasting record from a woman's point of view," she said.

For Koutsouras, he said through sharing his work, he can share experiences with the audience.

Koutsouras is a painter and will show a series of acrylic pieces on canvas at Imogen.

"Everything that can make a mark on a surface can be a medium to create," he wrote in an email.

He chooses the medium to match the theme he's working on.

He described his artistic process as "Layers of thoughts and sensations transformed in colored patches to resemble the initial experience and source of inspiration, which is nothing less or more than life in all its forms."