



الجمعية الخيرية اليونانية في بيروت  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΒΗΡΥΤΟΥ  
GREEK COMMUNITY OF BEIRUT



*Ta Nea*

Issue 22  
March 2021

## Hopeful Spring

As spring is around the corner, both mankind and nature seem to come out of their dormancy. Spring brings warmth and hope and with it, a rush of vivid colours, a waking to life, a desire to wander and explore. No matter where you go, the earth is sprouting and the flowers are blossoming. The weather is warmer, days are longer, the mood is brighter and nights are softer.

Springtime has been regarded as a time of new beginnings throughout human history, with the ancient Minoans' celebration of New Year's in the spring for example and, of course, the Christian world's celebration of Easter. Easter in Greece is exceptionally marked by feasts, traditions, celebrations, gatherings and united prayers. The lent period preceding Easter is equally important and holds its share of customs still carried out by all Greeks whether in their homeland or the diasporas scattered all over the world.

May this cleansing period of lent and spring bring you all the warmth and joy your hearts desire.

In this issue we will be taking you on a tour to watch the Sursock Museum's façade being lit in commemoration of the bicentenary anniversary of the Independence, a landmark event celebrated worldwide with Greek flags being proudly raised all over the world.

Enjoy your reading!





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## Celebrating the 25th of March at the Lebanese National Museum

Under the auspices of the Greek Embassy of Beirut, our Community has scheduled a series of events, leading to the illumination of the Sursock Museum with the colors of the Greek flag on March 25.

A brief visit to the premises of the famous Sursock Museum took place on March 25th by the Greek Embassy Delegation - H.E. the Ambassador Mrs. Catherine Fountoulaki, the Defense Attaché Mr. Constantinos Antonakos, the Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Konstantinos Hadjithomas and the Consul Ms. Athanasia Iliaki - along with the President of the Greek Community Mr. Panos Andriotis and the administrative members Me. Nadim Abboud, Ms. Ariane Kotzabassi

and Mrs. Stephanie Kowalski and the Director of the Sursock Museum Mrs. Zeina Arida.

The visit to the sadly damaged Museum was followed by a brief tribute speech by H.E. the Ambassador and Dr. Tarek Mitri, Chairman of the Board of the Sursock Museum to commemorate the 200 years of the Greek Revolution.

The Museum's façade was then lit with the colors of the Greek flag, white and blue.

Given the current situation imposed by the pandemic, this event was kept private however it was broadcasted live on the Community's Facebook and Instagram pages.







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EMBASSY OF GREECE  
IN BEIRUT

Beirut, 24 March 2021

**GREEK NATIONAL DAY – 25 MARCH 2021  
LIGHTING OF THE SURSOCK MUSEUM**

Dear members of the Hellenic Community of Beirut,

This year's anniversary of 25<sup>th</sup> March 1821 marks the bicentenary of the Greek Struggle for Independence. It is an important year that symbolizes what Greece has achieved within these two centuries, and guides our reflection, individually and collectively, to build a vision for the future.

The struggle of the Greek people bore fruit and as a result, a new albeit small Greek State was founded. It was the beginning of the gradual fulfillment of the national aspirations of the Greek people.

The sacrifices and the achievements of the 1821 fighters took almost mythical dimensions in peoples' minds and shaped a new heroic tradition which deeply influenced the new generations of Greeks, as well as countless Philhellens all over the world.

Both in Europe and the USA, the Greek fight for freedom created a significant support movement that helped decidedly the Greek cause. Furthermore, the participation of the Greeks of the diaspora was crucial, thus emphasizing the global character of the Greek Struggle.

A nation that fought for its right to be an independent state and that has never since shied away from the international struggles to defend and uphold freedom and human values, including in both World Wars. A state that has become a sturdy pillar of democracy and stability in the Balkans and the wider Mediterranean region. A dependable Ally and a dedicated member of the European Union for the past 40 years, actively contributing to the promotion of its fundamental values and priorities.

We are also very happy that this important anniversary for Greece and the Greeks coincides with the centenary of the Greek Community of Beirut.

It is our great honour that Lebanon will participate in our celebration this year through the symbolic lighting of the Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum with the colours of the Greek flag. It is yet another expression of our excellent bilateral relations rooted in ancient times.

On this occasion we invite you to virtually join us on 25 March at 19:00 p.m. for this symbolic event through the social media accounts of the Greek Community of Beirut (Facebook: "Greek Community of Beirut" and Instagram: "Greek Community of Beirut").

Χρόνια Πολλά!

Catherine Fountoulaki  
Ambassador of Greece



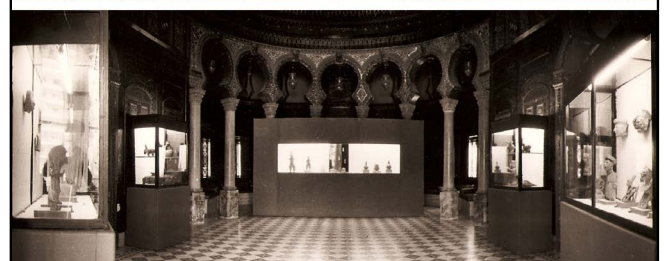
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The Sursock Museum, officially known as Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum is a modern contemporary art museum located in the historic Rue Sursock in the district of Achrafieh. The street is home to other mansions that were built in the 19th century by Beirut's most prominent families, such as the Sursocks and the Bustroses. It is one of the few remaining villas from its epoch in Beirut.

It was built in 1912 and served back then as the private villa of the prominent aristocrat Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock. He donated it to the citizens of Lebanon to be, upon his death in 1952, an art museum.



© Courtesy of the Nicolas Sursock Museum archives, Beirut.

"As I love fine art and long for its development, particularly in my homeland, Lebanon . . . As I wish for this country to receive a substantial contribution of fine art works, and that my fellow citizens might appreciate art and develop an artistic instinct . . . I, Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock . . . set up in the form of *waqf* [trust] all of [my] estate . . . in order that this property and its contents form a museum for arts, ancient and modern, originating from the territory of the Republic of Lebanon, other Arab countries or elsewhere, as well as a space where Lebanese artists' work shall be exhibited . . . it being understood that this Museum shall remain eternally and perpetually . . . This ensemble will be entitled the Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum, and shall be handed over to the *mutawalli*, who will be the President of the Municipality of Beirut, regardless of which political regime exists at the time."



© Courtesy of the Nicolas Sursock Museum archives, Beirut.

It took several years to implement Sursock's will and from 1952 up to 1961, the President Camille Chamoun used the villa as a "palais d'hôtes" to receive prominent figures and heads of states.

Ultimately, the museum opened its doors in 1961 with the Salon d'Automne- an open call exhibition showcasing new art of the time- with an exhibit of works of contemporary Lebanese artists, setting a precedent for cultural events in Beirut. The Salon was held regularly following the Museum's opening, tracing the evolution of fine arts in Lebanon throughout the





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years featuring major Lebanese artists of their time. In the years of 1970 up to 1974, an expansion project was undertaken in 1970 by Lebanese architect Grégoire Sérof. The expansion reconfigured the villa's interior so that key areas were converted into gallery and storage spaces. From 2006 up to 2015, the museum closed its doors for another major renovation and expansion project. Four floors underground were integrated to accommodate a wider art collection, a café, a library, an auditorium, a workshop space for activities and a storage for the artworks.



10 exhibitions are held annually and the museum welcomes around 70.000 visitors a year. Activities related to the exhibitions are organized throughout the week and over the weekend.

This cutting-edge 21st century cultural institution has a vital role to preserve and share the cultural and artistic heritage particularly to the younger generation.

Sadly the museum was hit by the horrible explosion on August 4, 2020 that shook the entire country to its core. The museum sustained significant damage and 57 artworks were destroyed. Luckily, the artworks in the storage spaces were unharmed. The Museum is currently being renovated. Donations from abroad will hopefully speed up the renovation process given that Lebanon is under a severe financial crisis and hopefully the museum will be ready to open its door for its 60th anniversary this November.

Make sure you browse their website and subscribe to the newsletter:

<https://sursock.museum/>





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## In the news

A bicentenary revolution that led an entire nation to its freedom is a landmark event to be celebrated and praised. As March 25<sup>th</sup> is approaching, it seems the entire world has a say in the commemoration of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

The luxury brand Hermès has created a collectible scarf paying tribute to the special celebration.

The mother of Jean-Louis Dumas, the former CEO of the Hermès Group, was Rena (née Gregoriadès) Dumas, the Greek-born architect who founded Rena Dumas Architecture Intérieure in 1972 in Paris.

The scarf was designed by the Athens-based artist Elias Kafouras and is to be available at Hermès Athens starting March 26, 2021.

All proceeds are to be donated to Thoracic Diseases General Hospital Sotiria. The limited edition all-silk scarf features characteristic landscapes of Greece and bolds the word Έλευθερία (Freedom).

The Hermès storefront window display in Athens was also transformed to celebrate the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution.



## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GREEK CITIZENS

Kindly contact our Center by phone or email informing us about any change of address, phone number or social status helping us to keep our data list updated.







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### The Tradition of Martis

Come March 1st, it is a tradition in Greece mostly for mothers to have their children wear a bracelet made of red and white ribbons intertwined. The white color symbolizes purity whereas red stands for life and passion. The “Marti bracelet” or just “Marti” is an ancient custom for the beginning of Spring. It is believed it dates back to ancient Greece and it is known all over the Balkans. Wearing the “Marti bracelet” protects you from getting sunburnt. Children wear the bracelet for the entire month and remove it on the last day of March. After taking off the bracelet, they hang it in a fruit tree, so the tree will remain healthy and give many fruits.

However, the custom varies in different areas in Greece. For example, in some regions you can remove the bracelet when you see a swallow returning for spring, so the bird can use the thread to build its nest.

Head to this link to welcome March with your own bracelet and Καλό μήνα!

<https://greekcitytimes.com/2021/03/01/how-to-make-marti-bracelet/>



### The Kombokoi

Another well-known accessory commonly used in Greece is the “Kombokoi”. Other than being the Greeks’ favorite pastime, specially for papoudes hanging at the cafeteria and sipping their frappé, this tiny bracelet dates back to when monks in Mount Athos began making strands of beads by tying knots on a string at regular intervals in order to say their prayers to God.

Nowadays, Kombokoi transitioned into an object that is no longer associated with religion. This transition seemed to have fully taken place after the end of the Turkish occupation of Greece in the 1800’s, when the citizens of Greece decided that there would be 23 beads used instead of the typical 33, as the 33 number had a religious aspect tied to it. Some say it was related directly to the number of years that Jesus was alive. The word Kombokoi is derived from the words Kombos and Logio, which means “in each knot, I say a prayer”. It is said that people use it as a means to guard against bad luck, as well for relaxation and enjoyment. It’s also said to be a very effective way for helping to limit smoking and to reduce stress. Today, the string used to hold the beads is often made of silk, while the beads can be crafted by anything from plastic to marble, with amber and silver being signs of prestige and sophistication. Although these beads were typically used solely by men in the past, they have since transitioned into an object that both men and women now use. This change has allowed worry beads to become more popular and entrenched within Greek culture worldwide.



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## 2021, the bicentennial of the Greek revolution

As part of the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Greek revolution of 1821, we dedicate a new section. Each month we will present a story and a famous person who actively contributed to creating the actual Greece.

March is the month where women are worldwide celebrated. We will therefore dedicate our section to women who rebelliously fought in order to claim their freedom.

Laskarina Pinostsis known as Bouboulina (1771-1825) was a Greek revolutionary and naval commander. An illustrious name that arouses feelings of patriotism, sacrifice and bravery in the heart of every Greek. She is the celebrated heroine of the sea, one of the most famous figures in Greek history.

Bouboulina was born in May 17, 1771 in Konstantinople and died in May 22, 1825 in Spetses. She was born in a prison but originated from the island of Hydra. The Ottomans had imprisoned Bouboulina's father, Stavrianos Pinostsis who was a captain for his part in the Orlof Revolution back in 1769-1770 against the Ottoman rule. Her father died in prison and during one of her mother's visit, she was also born in prison. The mother and child moved from Hydra to Spetses where the mother remarried to Dimitrios Lazarou-Orlof.

Bouboulina, herself married twice first to Dimitrios Yiannouzas and later to the wealthy ship-owner and captain Dimitrios Bouboulis whom she took after his surname, his fortune and his trading business.

Bouboulina joined the Filiki Etaireia in support of the independence movement. Filiki Etaireia aka Society of Friends was a secret organization founded in 1814 in Odesa and whose purpose was to overthrow the Ottoman rule of Greece and establish an independent Greek state.

The Agamemnon ship she built at her own expenses in 1820 was one of the largest warships in the hands of the

Greek rebels. On March 13th 1821, Bouboulina raised her own Greek flag on the mast of the Agamemnon and sailed along with eight other ships to Nafplion and began a naval blockade which allowed the capture of Monemvasia and Pylos. Bouboulina lost her son Yiannis Yiannouzas in battle in May 1821 at Argos. This didn't stop her. On September 1821 she reached Tripolis in time to witness its fall and to meet the general Theodoros Kolokotronis, another crucial figure in the Greek Revolution of 1821. Their children, Eleni Boubouli and Panos Kolokotronis, were united later on in marriage.

Bouboulina however was arrested by the Greek Government due to her connection to the Kolokotronis family when the opposing parties erupted into civil war in 1824. She was exiled back to Spetses and had exhausted her entire fortune to back up the war of independence and freedom.

The heroine of sea was later killed in 1825 as a result of a family feud in Spetses. In an homage to her heroic stance and the role she played in the independence, a statue of her is found at the harbour of Spetses. The "Bouboulina Museum", also in Spetses is housed in the 300-year-old mansion of Bouboulina's second husband. Various streets all over Greece and Cyprus are named in her honour, and she was depicted on the reverse of both the Greek 50 drachmae banknote of 1978 and the Greek 1 drachma coin of 1988-2001.





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Laskarina Pinostsis known as Bouboulina



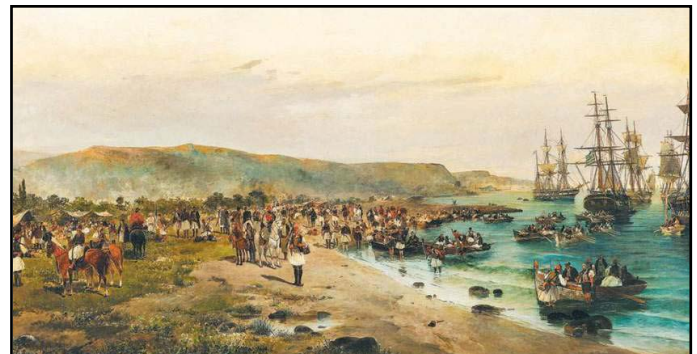
Statue of Bouboulina in Spetses



Greece Currency 50 Drachmae Banknote 1978



Bouboulina Museum



Painting of the Battle



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## Everything you need to know about the consulate:

All requests should be addressed by email in order to obtain an appointment.

Visa Applications: For visa applications please visit our website

[www.mfa.gr/missionabroad/en/lebanon-en](http://www.mfa.gr/missionabroad/en/lebanon-en).

Additionally, due to the lockdown and the restrictions, Greece is not issuing visas at the moment. Exceptions can be made to specific cases and only by appointment.

**Passport renewal or issuance:** You will get an appointment by receiving an email.

Required documents are: 2 photo passport size (4x6), a Greek identity card or a birth certificate (that can be provided by us if you send us in advance any old Greek birth or family certificate).

For additional info kindly visit <http://www.passport.gov.gr/en/>

**Legalization of documents:** The Consular Office can legalize any Lebanese official document that has been stamped by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is advised to ask for an appointment by email.

**Power of Attorney:** The Consular Office can exceptionally provide a power of attorney to Lebanese citizens that have already made an investment in Greece and want to apply for a residence permit.

**Marriage, birth, death registration:** Required documents: The Lebanese certificates of marriage, birth or death stamped by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and translated in Greek (translations in English or French are accepted as well).

Any old Greek birth or family certificate to be sent in advance by email.

The Consular Office is currently upgrading the embassy's website in order to make it more friendly user and to provide all necessary information and downloadable documents.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GREEK CITIZENS

This section has been specially created by the Greek Community of Beirut with the kind collaboration of the consulate of Greece in order to better serve Greek citizens who wish to have information on all administrative formalities before presenting their requests.

Consular Office can be reached by email at [grcon.bei@mfa.gr](mailto:grcon.bei@mfa.gr)





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In the commemoration of the bicentennial anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 1821, the Greek Community is launching a competition. Three different age groups are created to make sure everyone is eligible and will participate. We are sharing below their descriptive flyers for you to be fully informed.

Put your thinking caps on, don't forget to tag us and email us your artwork once ready at: [info@greekcommunity.org.lb](mailto:info@greekcommunity.org.lb) **Deadline: 26 April 2021**

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL DAY

> **COMPETITION** <  
Ages 8-15  
Bring your Greek heroes back to life!

100

Here is your chance to win an Ipad mini !  
Draw your own artwork in a suitable frame  
by bringing your own Greek heroes back to life!  
All you have to do is send us your artwork by e-mail

How do Greeks see the 1821 revolution?  
Win a Laptop!

How do Greeks see the 1821 Revolution?  
Here is your chance to win a **laptop**.  
Use your imagination to portray how history inspires the future.  
All you have to do is send us your work by e-mail and post it on social media and tag us using the hashtag #GCB25

**COMPETITION**  
Ages 24+  
Portray the Greek war of Independence through your eyes  
Win a Laptop

100

It's hard to imagine what Greeks at the time of the revolution felt, yet we can bring their spirits to life on canvas or through any type of work. Use your imagination to portray the Greek war of Independence through your eyes. Send us your work by e-mail and post it on social media and tag us using the hashtag #GCB25 for a chance to win a **laptop**.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
The examination dates for the Certificate of Attainment for the year 2021 was postponed till the first week of October.  
Registrations will reopen in June.



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