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exhibition

! reception bring Greece and Turkey closer



by Turkish painter Hatice Kumbaraci Gursoz

Two nations, one colour

GREECE and Turkey are not exactly two countries famed for their friendly relations and diplomats on both sides often have their work cut out in promoting good ties, *Mary Sinanidis writes.*

While Turkish Consul-General **M. Bahattin Gursoz** never rests in Greece, his wife, **Hatice Kumbaraci Gursoz**, also promotes peace in her own way - quite simply, she paints.

If a picture says a thousand words, Gursoz's pictures say that the common people are the same regardless of race or creed. This message is repeated throughout the pictures on display at the *Aenaon Gallery* as of tomorrow.

The works show daily life using simple expressionistic techniques. Cheerful pictures, with bright colours and folkloric motifs. Subjects include wedding cere-

monies, camel-wrestling (!), a carpenter at work, even village people simply posing in front of a bicycle.

"My heart feels happy and calm when I am with village people," the painter told *Athens News*, adding that despite the politics, Greek and Turkish common people are tied by the same roots.

"Our history, mythology and culture are somehow linked," she says, "Besides, the daily life of common people is not so different. They do the same things." Though her depictions are influenced by the "Anatolian way of life", she believes that the centuries preceding Greek liberation were important in causing the two cultures to interrelate. "The people I draw can be either Greek or Turkish, their way of life is more important than their nationality."

Of special importance in Gursoz's work is a person's relationship with environment.

Nature provides a backdrop for her work, with rich greens and earthy hues. Even the reds and yellows have a natural quality. Gursoz feels a sense of nostalgia

when it comes to simple life. "The day before television and microwave had another charm," she says.

Her life as a diplomat's wife has, of course, turned out to be far more elaborate than the lives led by her paintings' subjects.

She has travelled the world both with her husband as well as on her own in order to research paintings in various countries, such as Australia, Pakistan and Germany.

Her pictures can be found in museum and private collections in Turkey, Australia, Pakistan, Germany, Finland and Greece. "Artists don't think in a political way," she insists. "Art is not Greek or Turkish or American. It is international."

Her work will be on display at the *Aenaon Gallery* until November 18th. Visiting times are daily from 10am to 2pm and from 6pm to 9.30pm (closed on Sunday and Monday morning).

The Aenaon Gallery is located at 18 Andersen St, Katechaki. The telephone number is 671-1264.