



HERM ITAGE SYKKA WINEA

Autumn Residency 2023

Portrait Sykaminea

IZZI: Michael Otto, Christl Mudrak, Ute Ringel,
Ole Aselmann

Guest artists: Lizza David May, Orkun Akdag

Artist residence:

19 September - 09 October 2023

Exhibition opening:

Old School Skala Sykamineas

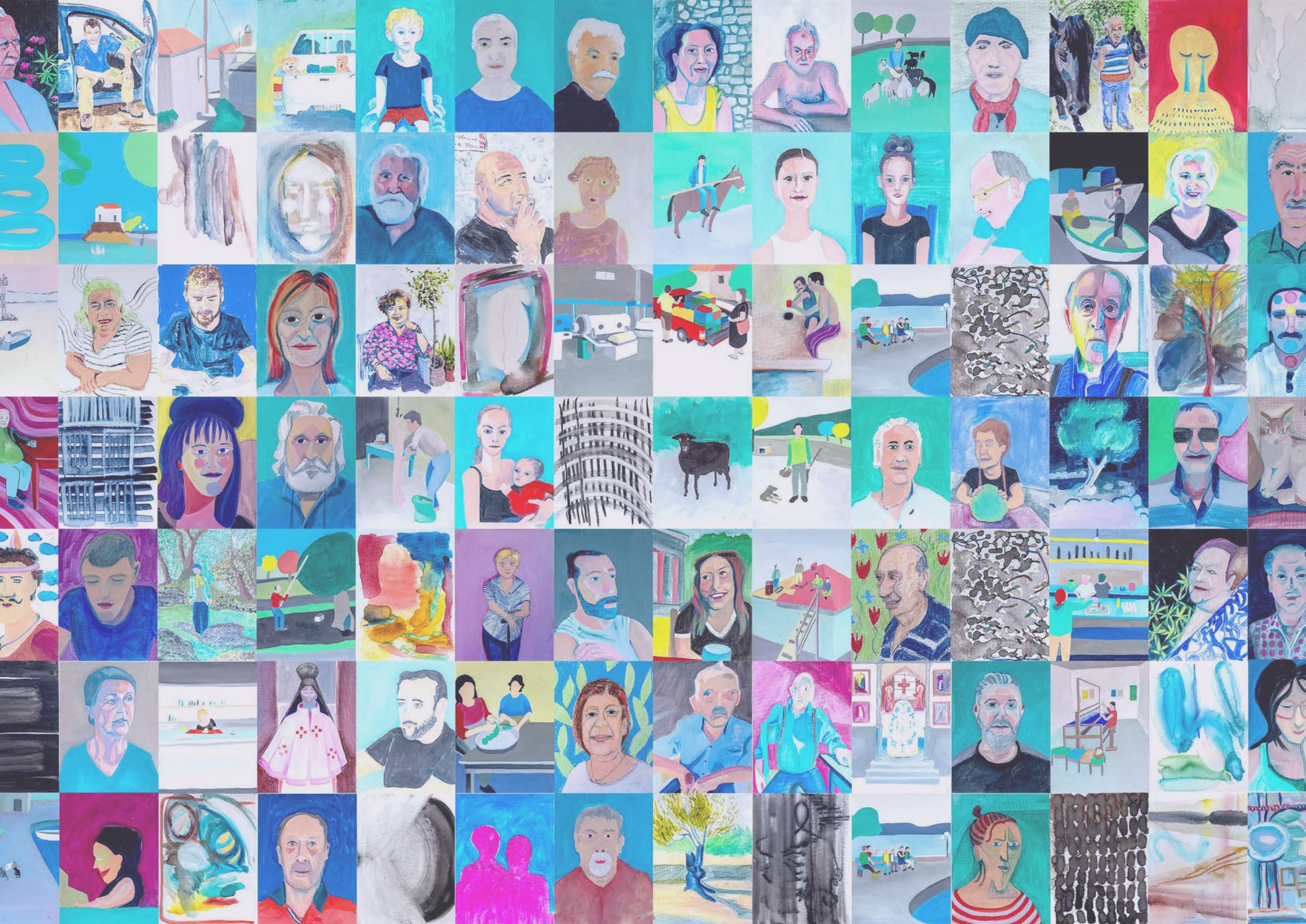
07 October 2023, 6pm

The project was supported by:

Culture Moves Europe for Individuals

During their three-week stay at the Hermitage Sykaminea the art group IZZI has been portraying residents of the villages Skala Sykamineas and Sykaminea and exhibited the paintings in the old village school in Skala Sykamineas. After the exhibition the paintings were then given to the villages where they are permanently presented in the school of Sykaminea.

In this way, the group interacted with the villages and experienced the hospitality of the villagers. It got an insight into the history and social structures of the villages. By exhibiting the portraits, the group not only contributed to the cultural life, but also made acquaintances that will hopefully be a catalyst for future encounters.



The intention of the art group was to get to know the villages of Skala Sykamineas and Sykaminea and to get closer to the inhabitants through portraying them.

In 2015 the villages were at the center of the refugee crisis. In Skala Sykamineas, thousands of people arrived every day. It was one of the most frequented entrance points into Europe. The residents of the villages have seen a situation that has not been fully portrayed anywhere in the media. They have shown enormous initiative in the beginnings of the crisis. After the NGOs, journalists and refugees disappeared and the extreme situation stopped, the people were left alone with what they had experienced. Because of these events, relationships between villagers changed and further more a scepticism towards things from outside grew, which could have to do with the threat to their own traditions posed by the many people who came to the villages.

During their stay, the group found out more about the people and events in the villages.

The villages of Sykaminea and Skala Sykamineas are shrinking villages. The population consists of

older people whose coexistence is characterised by traditional forms. Patriarchal structures exist and the separation of men and women is noticeable. Unlike sixty years ago, there is less collective behaviour and each family takes care of its own tasks.

The fishermen have problems with overfishing by large-scale fisheries and many olive groves are no longer cultivated. In these slowly dying villages the community is disappearing and one wonders what will happen to the many empty buildings and uncultivated lands.

MEETING
SYKAMINEA AND
SKALA SYKAMINEAS

PORTRAYING
THE VILLAGES

EXHIBITION
PREPARATION

EXHIBITION

THE ARTIST GROUP

MEETING SYKAMINEA AND SKALA SYKAMINEAS

When a group of foreign painters comes to a small village and wants to paint the people, the residents are initially sceptical. In order to build up an understanding for the painters' concerns, Andreas Sell, as a mediator, was next to the artist groups' approaches to the people important. There were interested people and uninterested people. Some villagers began to tell stories and were happy to be painted, others were not. During their three-week stay, the group managed to gain an initial insight into the villages and probably created a sketch rather than a fully developed portrait. It is hoped that this project will become a long-term project and that the group will accompany the villages over the years.

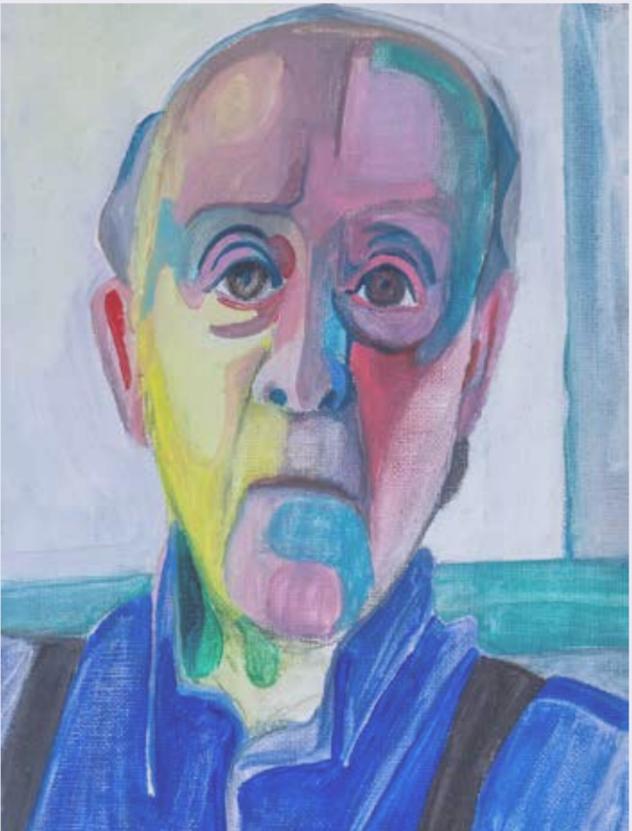


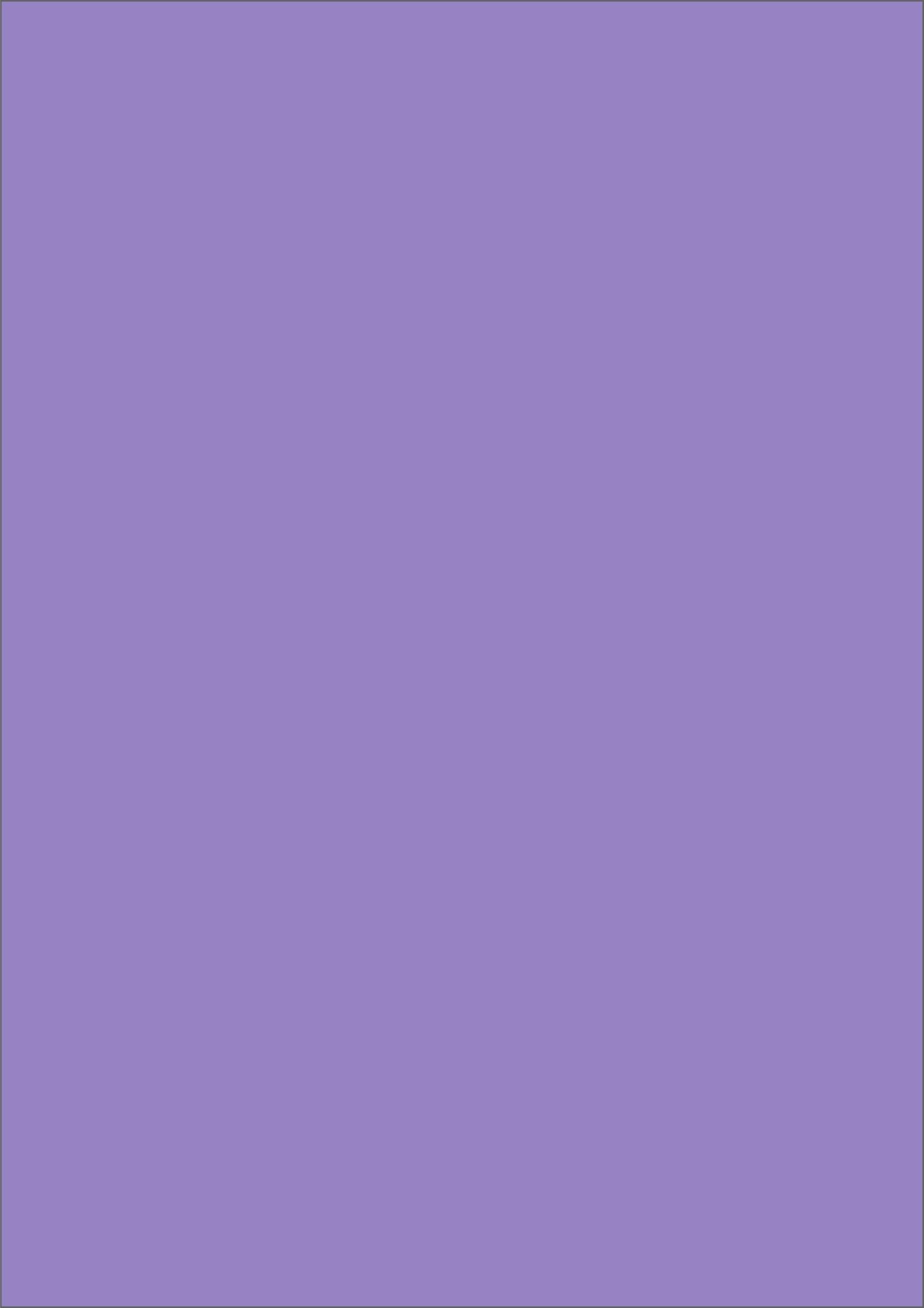
PORTRAYING THE VILLAGES



By organising an exhibition, the group intended not only to make a cultural contribution to the villages, but also to create a reflection of the villages' identity.

The six artists painted in oil, acrylic, watercolour and wax crayon on 18 x 24cm fabric-covered cardboard. Each artist portrayed the villages in their own way. This resulted in abstract pictures, images of people at work and their faces.





EXHIBITION PREPARATION

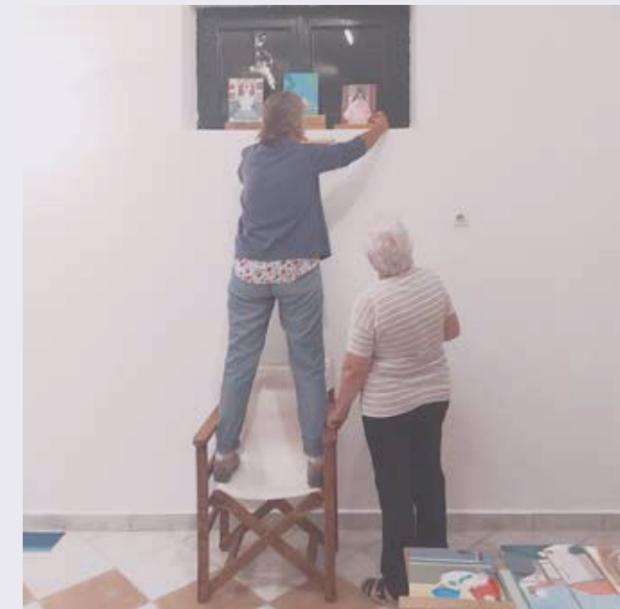


After making 120 paintings, the group brought the paintings together and reflected on what each one painted and how that creates an all over image. As an exhibition concept, the group decided to present the paintings in the courtyard of the old school and ask visitors to bring the paintings into the school building during the opening and arrange them as they saw fit.

EXHIBITION

The portrait of the villages is an outsider's view of the villages and shows the impression of the group at a particular moment. The faces of predominantly older people and their activities can be seen. The images are kept as a trace of this moment for other generations.

The exhibition opening was like a celebration were besides arranging the paintings the people listened to music, drank and ate.



ARTIST GROUP

The group 'IZZI' consists of the four artists from Berlin and the surrounding area, who have known each other for many years from their time studying together at the Berlin Weißensee School of Art. Since 2018, the group has been meeting regularly every week on Thursdays to work together and to develop and exhibit artistic projects. Although all members work in different media, painting has emerged as the focus of their joint work. The aspiration of the group is to create works of art together and to combine the personal handwriting of the individual members with that of all the members. In this way, all the group members always work on a painting, either simultaneously or one after the other. Thus, not only a new artistic handwriting is created, but also the communication between the members of the group is depicted on the medium. Their first series of paintings consists of large formats up to 10m x 3m. Since 2022, they have also been painting on smaller formats. A characteristic of their work is that they do not have a fixed studio and therefore paint in different locations. In the past, these have included bridges and streets in

urban spaces, a corridor in a warehouse, a bower, an old paper factory and multiple flats. In the course of their joint work, essential principles have developed: Continuity, openness and voluntariness. These are the three pillars that have proven sustainable in their collaboration. Their personal ideas of professionalism and their personal standards are constantly put to the test and in this way 'social painting' is created.