



# Heart of Ithaca

2026 Exhibition

Artist David Jackson

Venue: To Kentro

"Janeto's Cafe  
& Bar"

Mid May - Oct 2026  
Stavros, Ithaca, Greece



# Heart of Ithaca Summer 2026 Exhibition

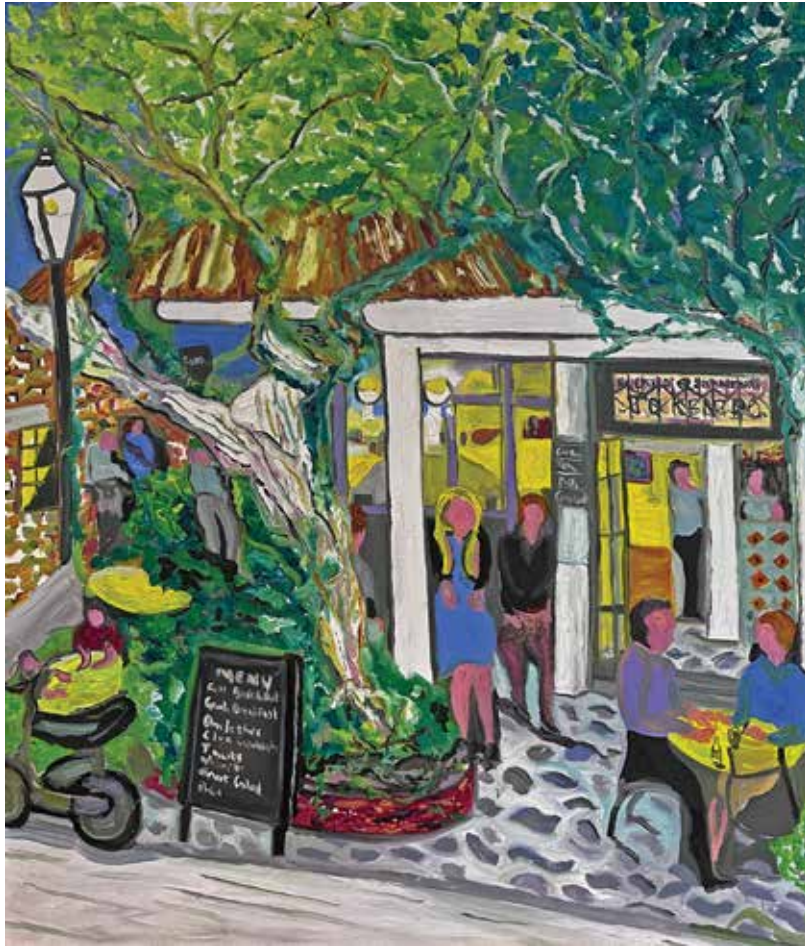
MID May 2026 - OCTOBER 2026 ART BY DAVID JACKSON | JANETO'S CAFÉ & BAR, STAVROS, NORTH ITHACA, GREECE

Welcome to our exhibition, which you will see displayed on the walls/easels at Janeto's Café & Bar, (To Kentro). Ultimately, we will sell the pictures, but the exhibition will stay up until early October 2026.

Travellers to Ithaca are following in the footsteps of Homer's Odysseus and his fated journey back to his home and his wife Penelope and son Telemachus. Stavros and the Mycenaean archaeology nearby, and the now collapsed cave at Polis beach, where votive trypos were found, are the likely sites featured at the end of the Odyssey. Searching for the archaeology of Odysseus. Mycenaean Greece is not so easy, and this is not helped by the fact that the island sits on an active tectonic boundary, which often creates earthquakes that destroy archaeology/modern buildings (12th August 1953 being notably destructive, leading to many leaving the islands).

Even with this incredible Homeric legacy, there is much more to Ithaca than simply this; this tectonic activity still plays its part in creating the towering scenery. The high peaks, wonderful indented coast, and olive groves are matched by island people, fiercely proud of their own village traditions and culture, local fishing, cheese making, olive oil production, honey, herbs, all wrapped up in a sort of filo pastry of stony beaches, ornate churches, sun and sea. The recent influx of tourists enjoys the café bars and restaurants at Vathy, Stavros, Filiatro, Kioni... Exogi and Anogi.

The lack of a large airport means it remains rather authentic especially so at Janeto's, even though you might sense modernity, EU taxes, and conformity are knocking on the door. Creativity and AI should be exorcised. Never mind the T word.



## Outside the Front of Janeto's

Oil on Canvas

Here we have an early evening scene looking into Janeto's. I have tried to give the people 'life' and in that way convey dynamism. Unlike a photograph you can convey different plains in a picture. So the part to the left with the children at the table and the bricks are for artistic purpose rather than 'reality', I have tried to convey a reflection in the windows of the café/ bar..so again you get a disappearing point which is a reflection.

Anyhow I am taking the black and white of the bulk of the exhibition and conveying it in colour.



## **The Tree of Life**

Oil on Canvas

This idea of the tree of life appears extremely important when you traverse Ithaca. The marvellous olive trees with their incredible age.

In this highly colourful depiction, I have used oil in a profusion of pink and white against a blue sky. The thousand-year-old olive of course has several faces, and it has many personalities.

The profusion of colour seems to suit Ithaca in Spring when the exhibition opens.



### **Landscape of Stone Walls & Trees** Oil on Canvas

As we travel round the island you can see the way the stone walls have almost woven into the landscape. The trees in this scene are alive with different colours reflecting their life. You can imagine them all talking to each other as the humans stomp about. Ithaca is an island, so you are never far from the sea. It is also a green island because at certain times of the year it does get lots of water. In summer, of course you think it is arid.

# The Inspiration

My inspiration for coming to the island follows in the footsteps of another Englishman, Byron. He landed on 4th August 1823 at Argostoli, Kefalonia. He writes that the coast opposite near Patras is blockaded by a Turkish fleet, while Argostoli has a King's regiment in the fortress. While unable to further the Greek cause of independence at this point, he journeyed to Sant Euphemia, where he embarked for Ithaca. It is clear to me he landed at Polis or near Lefki. Byron mentions being conducted to the 'fountain of Arethusa' mentioned in the Odyssey.

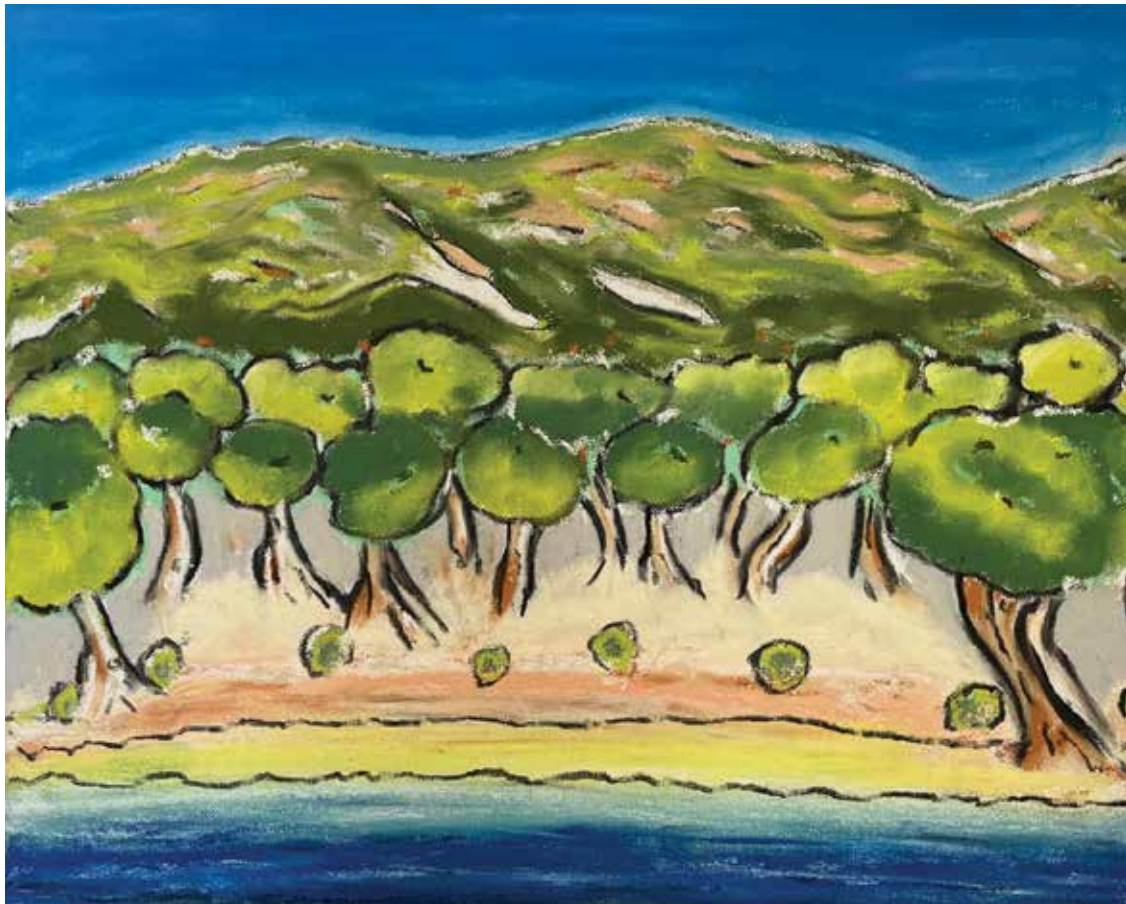
Byron has visited Ithaca before (possibly on the grand tour) and found it beautiful. He spoke of the earth tremors and even mentioned that the Trojan wars and the location of Odysseus' palace were disputed by antiquaries. It appears not so much has changed in the two hundred years. Byron died on the 19th April 1824 at Missolonghi on the mainland of Greece, having spent a good deal of his inheritance latterly helping Greeks their gain independence. There is no doubt that Ithaca was one of his favourite places, and he would have stood in the area in front of Janeto's café, opposite the imposing Church.



## This Fisherman's Boat at Polis Bay

Pastel on Canvas

Looking straight up the beach to Stavros on the hill. This bay has the famed cave where they found the trypos which featured the Odysseus. Polis Bay is home to a thriving fishing community. The wooden structure on the left was for the lifeguard and has now gone.



## **Trees at Filiatro Beach**

Pastel on Canvas

Of course if you go to Filiatro you now see the beach umbrellas and the local beach bar. But if you go in October say, the umbrellas are gone and you do get a very nice beach. Increasingly you now get permanent fixings for the broolly and the creep of commercialisation. The tourists demand it, but the bar tenders also want to make a bit. Anyhow we capture Filiatro as we hope it might look.

# The Inspiration

(continued...)

Also, in any mention of Ithaca, you cannot forget the famous poem by Constantine P. Cavafy, which is a meditation on life's journey, a metaphor for wisdom, experience and purpose. Ithaca is for the romantic. Originally titled 'A second Odyssey' in 1894, it was amended and published in 1911 (Journal of Grammata in Alexandria).

## **'When you set out for Ithaca, Pray that the road is long'**

A small excerpt above and below, but I would encourage everyone to read the full verse from Constantine.

**Ithaca gave you a marvellous journey.  
Without her, you would not have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.**

It is really saying that you have got to the best place, so be content.

Everybody will have a different journey to Ithaca. I am sure you agree that reflecting on your past emboldens

your future. As Cavafy says, it won't make you rich, but you might feel enriched, lucky to experience it, something from the heart, a love of the occasion and life.

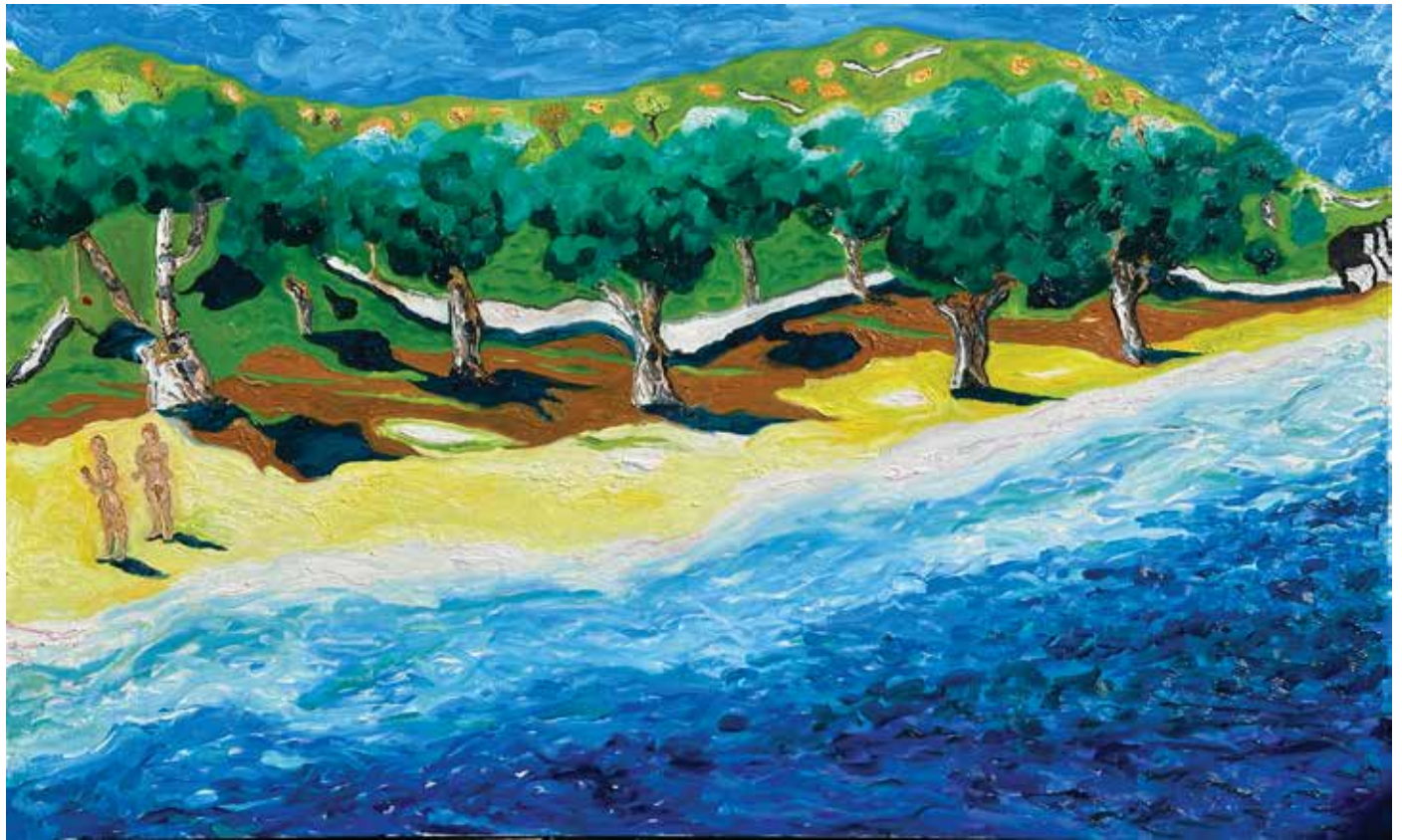
**He is quietly saying. Stop trying to prove Ithaca. Stop trying to possess it.**

Let it remain small, elusive, with its mystery intact.

Archaeology has proved that Troy was destroyed 1250BCE. Homer wrote poetic records of a real Bronze Age world, but some 450 years after they occurred. The Iliad and Odyssey are based on fact, but are an amalgam of fact and fiction from an oral tradition.

I hope you like the feeling of my art and words at Janeto's Café and bar...enjoy the love of cats (Susie), plants, a good cocktail, under the watchful care of the titan Janeto. I have often thought of Janeto's as a sort of Zeus, overlooking humanity as it arrives at Olympus by car, bus, or even walking!. For sure, there is a lot of love at Janeto's as the family tends the flock.

**The Soul of Ithaca art exhibition to appear in 2027...  
by the gods' will.**



**Adam & Eve on Filiatro Beach**  
Oil on Canvas

# ABOUT THE HEART OF ITHACA ART

**You might have heard of Impressionism in the art world  
Here I am trying to conjure the feeling of  
Ithaca...FEELING ..ism**

When I travel, I take the inks, paper, and oil pastels. It does tend to limit the size of pictures. I had started with oil pastels on early trips. I then went on to the Japanese inks; the paper is fairly absorbent. Speed of execution, getting down what you see in a non-formal manner is what drives the black and white pictures of people. The essence is to try to capture the scene. The landscapes are various sketches done on the island. Bigger pictures in oil were finished at home on a bigger easel.

FEELING ISM is therefore a sort of brain to paper grope at conveying something about Ithaca which isn't dragged out of a digital app.

The giant limestone formation (IRAKLIS..HERCULES) at Anogi is a natural geological phenomenon. But I feel it

must have been worshipped in a spiritual sense in the past, and has in itself a very interesting and important story which might be lost to us. This place I hypothesized might have been a place of worship/veneration in the Mesolithic/Stone Age. It is highly likely such a place was a focal point for looking to the heavens/sun, not dissimilar to Carnac (France), Avebury (England), and the Isle of Lewis (Scotland).

While not substantiated by archaeology, you sense that Anogi has pre Mycenaean through to Byzantine Archaeology. It is a high place near the gods. a protected place...a rare place which has a special soul.

**Ink on Paper Sketches**





### **Across to Sami & Kefaloni**

The view from my Lefki Villas across the Odysseus channel separating Ithaca from Kefalonia.



### **Across to the Headland on Kefalonia**

A closer sketch of the headland



### **Stones at Odysseus**

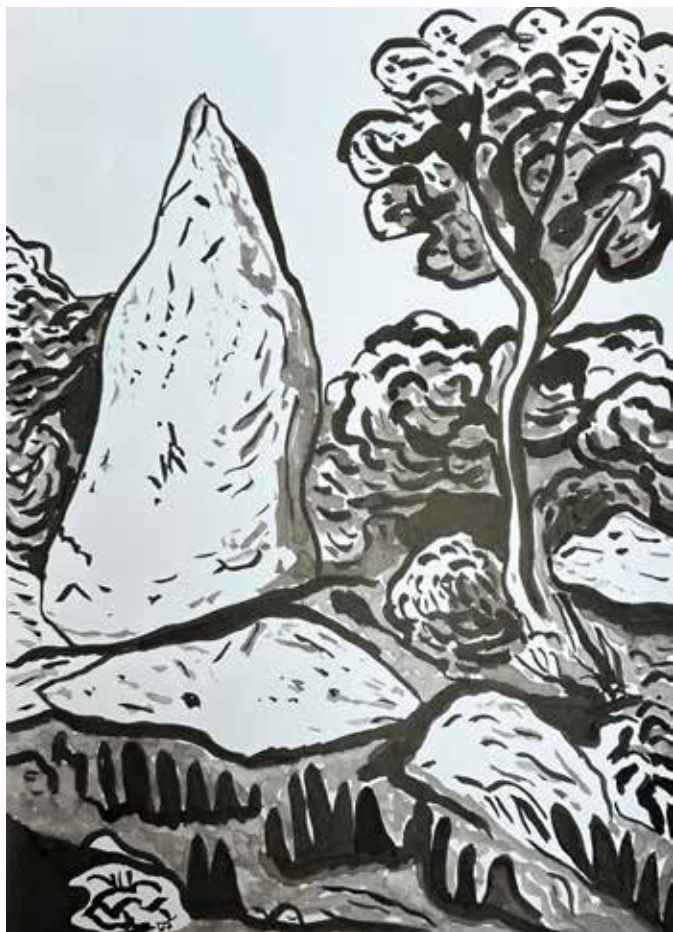
The contrast of the completely black silhouette gives this an intensity. 1600-1100 BCE is the Homeric world.



### **The Table Has Been The Scene of Many a Sketch & Drink**

The stand stone Araklis (the giant) Anogi

These karst landscape features are the result of erosion. They resemble menhirs like you see on the Atlantic coast, but they are natural. To date however no Mesolithic or neolithic activity has been found in Anogi. That said natural features often become cult loci. So my view is that Araklis must have been a significant ritual site...sea farers from Levant, Anatolia after the ice age likely climbed into this area and spotted this 'giant'.



## **Araklis in its Landscape, Anogi**

There are two pictures which feature the great stone. The trees nearby, while youthful compared to the eroded cretaceous limestone sway in a sort of dance.

Around 5000-3500 BCE we find cult caves, figurines (the mother goddess type), shrines in Kefalonia.

The only reason habitation might have been scarce up here in this period is climatic conditions. So quite naturally better alluvial soil exists on the coast and it is a few degrees warmer.



### **The Café Anogi before the Current Redevelopment**

Here we see Lefteri in front of the central shelves partly owned by the church.

The shelves stood frozen from the 1950's. Fresh lemonade on the counter, many tinned products.

The floor with its incredible tiles. In many ways it was an important museum, now unfortunately or fortunately modernised.



### **Early Sketch View from Extra terrestrial at Exhogi and the Main Church**



### **Boat Repair on Kefalonia (Athena)**

This sketch shows your typical fishing boat you see at Polis bay, Vathy. I did this while hopping over to the north west of Kefalonia.



### **Wild Woods and Walls on the Way to Anogi from Stavros**

As you climb up from Stavros to Anogi you come across the most wonderful man-made walls and clearing near a small isolated Greek orthodox church. The place feels like it has a story to tell.

Is this recent tragedy from the second world war or simply years of gatherings of local shepherds and their families? Even though Anogi is clearly high in the centre of Ithaca, it is amazing how many people have gone to sea to seek their fortune.



### **The Old Olive Tree Lefki Villas**

This wonderful tree is the inspiration for the tree of life oil. It has got so much character. Michalis of the Mentor Hotel had the forethought to save this lovely tree rather than clearing it.



### **Janeto's Cafés & Bar**

A very loose sketch of the creepers that grow around the sign.



### **Locals at Janeto's**

Looking out to the conservatory, I espied these two characters putting the worlds to right.



### Early Sketch of Janeto's

I guess my sketches improved a bit..but you get the idea of how people gravitate to the bar area.



### The Card Players

I have a confession to make. The person the right of the group also became the person lying on the left. That's what happens when you have a live situation.

# Feeling-ism, AI & Ithaca

Well, they sit at opposite ends of the spectrum. We have a human spiritual perspective on a place that has always drawn travellers, poets and dreamers. Its true romantic human beauty lies in its quite enduring history and deep soulfulness. It is a natural place which does not deserve to be contaminated. For those who want to escape, it offers solace.

## The Future

We hope to expand the heart of the Ithaca exhibition and exhibit the soul in 2027. We start with the heart of the Ithaca exhibition. With this exhibition, we open another chapter: one that celebrates the living heart of the island, its people, and its timeless, enchanting light. Stavros is at the crossroads in the north. Janeto's Café and bar serves as a home from home for locals... This art will create its own tiny footprints.

As the traveller is drawn to the beaches, one is often reminded that you need to view the centre of Ithaca, places like Stavros...Anogi, Exoghi and the ancient churches and olive groves or you miss out on a lot...FEEL IT.

David Jackson - 2026



**Lady at the Bar with Tall Man**

This couple are loving the bar area!



### **Janeto & Customer**

Always making a coffee or cajoling a new assistant to pick up the customers' glasses.



### **Sketch from Delicious Restaurant of the Patio at Janeto's**

As much as I describe Janeto as a Titan, his day is titanic and his contribution to the local community immense. The columns make me feel we are in a sort of café Olympus. Delicious is a sort of canteen serving up delicious, no frills, but superb fresh food.

# Dead of Night

On one of my frequent trips to the island of Ithaka, I created some pictures.

The medium is Japanese ink on cartridge paper. It was my first use of the brush!

In the process of creating the sketches at the beach of Filiatro, I started to wonder what the place might be like late at night, specifically when the full moon had risen.

So I created what you see here, a woman reclining on a lounge looking over the beach in the day is replaced by a giant gruff rat with a pipe on this full moon evening. In the final scene, the skeletons are rocking to the melody played out on the steel drums. A wreck of a boat is washed up on the shore and the olive trees have transformed into ghoulish spirits.

The only thing remaining when the dead have departed is the love transferred by some magic on the breeze.

So it was the rustle of olive trees  
Gave melody to the sweet gentle breeze  
The moon had risen to its full glory  
Casting unearthly shadows which tell their story  
Each spirit gathers to frolic on Odysseus' beach  
Paying homage Homeric to heroes they beseech.

Gathering timely each month to live a life  
Taken from us in a world of strife  
That someday humankind will learn to cope  
These moonlit rays fill our souls with hope  
Life's wondrous benevolence bestowed from above  
Is not squandered from lack of earthly love.

So unknown to our bereaved descendants  
We dance with joy on this full moon ascendant  
Ghouls, ghosts, skeletons, the living half dead  
Making the most of these hours we tread  
No visible trace is left when we have departed  
Except for faint memories, we have ignited

The rustle of the Olive trees  
Serves up love for the gentle breeze





THE  
NATIONAL  
GALLERY

# FEATURED IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY!

As an amateur artist, one might dream that their work could be displayed. You can imagine my delight when I turned up for a course at the Rodin Centre for Art at the National Gallery in the UK, only to find two of the pieces I had created printed large over the entrance (2 metre by 3 metre prints).

Between the two pieces is a third image which, by some fate or karma, is a picture of me painting at the easel, painted by a fellow attendee of the Van Gogh course we took over three days in late summer 2025.

The course tutor had asked if we minded our work being used by the gallery to advertise what might be achieved by the general public. I had never used oil paints before, in fact, most of my work had been done with oil pastels. I had only ever used a brush with black ink.

It also demonstrates something of the open approach of the Rodin Centre. I had no idea my two pictures would be emblazoned so prominently over the entrance.

Of course, I am absolutely elated.

When you take a course, you have limited time to create something, are given exercises and taken into the gallery to study the work of Van Gogh.

The artist, or at least this amateur, never truly knows if their work is any good. It is easy to stop, because your own perception tends to be critical.

And yet... somehow my pictures and even an image of me painting are displayed on a grand scale at the Rodin Centre of the National Gallery!



David Jackson

If you would like to see more of my work, visit:  
[www.art-amis.co.uk](http://www.art-amis.co.uk)



**Art-Amis**  
Organic Writing & Art



Janeto

*Ithaca is a wonderful place and part of an obsession of mine with islands.*

*I first experienced Samothrace as a teenager, and I guess I got the travel bug.*

*Having an interest in history and story writing, it was an obvious extension to start creating sketches. If you want to see some of the other creative work.*

*Look at [www.art-amis.co.uk](http://www.art-amis.co.uk)*

*Janeto pictured works tirelessly at the heart in the café in the main square of Stavros called To Kentro. A great team serves up Greek snacks, pastries, coffee during the day. In the evening, why not try an expertly made cocktail or designer beer? Opposite To Kentro, if you want a honest Greek meal go to the restaurant Delicious...*

**ENJOY THE HEART OF ITHACA IN 2026**

**In 2027 we will launch the SOUL.**

**If you would like to donate to printing costs a €5 donation would be much appreciated**



David