**Opa**

"OPA!" is a Greek word that is heard often in the celebration of life. On our travels to the Greek islands I combined aspects that I enjoyed the most. As an artist I have always found inspiration in nature as an emphasis, and a story to objects past. Within my mixed media of oil and acrylic I focused on many elements and principles in an expressionist style of art. The color scheme I wanted was a cool, calm, and mystical feeling. Using a black canvas your eye immediately emphasizes the mint green antique fishing boat on the beautiful sandy beach. The viewer can immerse themselves in the texture even through touch. Outdoors, the lake, and fishing are a large part of my family’s life. So naturally I was drawn to this feature.

A wonderful part of the islands is the crystal clear water. As the moon reflects a pattern on the sea over the peninsula you get an enchanted feeling from the constellation of Pegasus who is watching over the acropolis of Athens. The Parthenon is a former temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens considered their patron . As an educator I took interest in Athena who is the goddess of wisdom and education.

Greece plays host to religious festivals with deeply rooted customs and centuries-old traditions all year round. One of the greatest celebrations of Christianity is Easter and we were able to experience this Holiday in Greece. The faithful Christians all over Greece follow the Holy Week ritual devoutly, giving themselves body and soul into the culmination of the Passion of Christ and finally rejoicing in His Resurrection. Rouketopolemos (Greek Рουκετοπόλεμος, literally Rocket-War) is the name of a local traditional event of throwing fireworks during the celebration of the service at midnight before [Easter Sunday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_Sunday), the church congregations perform a "Rocket War" by firing tens of thousands of home-made rockets across town.

An ending touch to this work of art is an image of the evil eye on the boat. I added this amulet because of how well known it is in Greece. It is also something I brought home as a souvenir and gifts for my friends, family, and graduating seniors. The legend of evil eye is thought of as a look given to inflict harm, suffering, or some form of bad luck on those that it is cast upon. It was thought that the gods and goddesses were punishing those who had become too proud of their achievements, and destroyed them with the power of the evil eye to restore them to the level of mere mortals. This amulet is meant to “reflect” the power of the evil look. The evil eye amulet originated in Greece, where it was known as an “apotropaic” amulet, meaning that it reflected harm.

Through this educational journey I was able to retain more about Greece and Greek Mythology then ever would have through a text book. Creativity is the highest form of organized thought. Philosopher John Dewey states the school is not a single-purpose institution with a well-defined purpose, it is rather a multipurpose social institution connected to and related to the society of which it is part. He is saying that you do not have to stay within the four walls of the schools that separate us from the rest of culture and society, rather open the doors to the larger society, the community. I believe the best way to learn is to be directly placed where the subject it is that you are learning. Experience, Imagine, Create.

~Worden