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Greek restorer Venizelos Gavrilakis brings artifacts back to life

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English

For eight years, Greek restorer Venizelos Gavrilakis and his colleagues have preserved artifacts, icons, frescos and paintings in 25 Greek Orthodox churches in Istanbul.

Their latest restoration- a 16th century depiction of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ – which took longer than planned due to coronavirus-related restrictions.

“The pandemic will pass, in order to fight it we all should remain spiritually united,” Gavrilakis told Reuters.

“Our work on these precious and timeless artifacts will always be there for the people to see it and get inspiration and strength from it.”

There are more than 435 churches in Turkey, which house many works of Christian art.

Throughout history, many of these religious and cultural works have been destroyed, altered, damaged or lost during wars.
Gavrilakis who trained in Italy and Greece, said the restoration is meant to send a message of unity and longevity at a time when the pandemic has temporarily kept many worshippers apart.

He uses microscopes, cotton swabs and a delicate touch to bring artifacts back to life.

In Istanbul the oldest icon he and his team, called Ieri Parakatathiki Labs, have restored is a Fayum portrait from the 2nd or 3rd century B.C.

The artefacts, he said in the interview, “remind people of the unlimited possibilities of the human mind that can create such wonderful things that live though the centuries.”

Last year, after Hagia Sophia, Turkey’s historic Chora church was also converted to a mosque. There was an international chorus of condemnation.

Experts are worried that the conversion could harm frescos and other artefacts in the 6th century Hagia Sophia.

*Images Sourced from Chris McGrath

greekcitytimes.com

Πηγή: www.orthodoxianewsagency.gr