

HERITAGE TRAIL

“Mosaic as part of Cypriot patrimony, Hellenistic, Roman, Medieval and into the modern era”

Introduction

Cyprus is blessed with some of the best “Classical Period” (Ancient Greek through to Byzantine) mosaics in the world. Visitors are able to trace the development from simple arrangements of flat black and white pebbles, through stone ‘tesserae’ to purpose made and brightly coloured glass. The reason the ancient mosaics are so intact, is geological. Cyprus suffered terrible earthquakes, some of the most devastating occurring in the 4th century AD, particularly in 332 and 342 AD, which led to the destruction of ancient cities like Salamis and Paphos. Whole cities were flattened, and the survivors just walked away and built elsewhere. Partly due to the fantastic archaeological legacy, contemporary mosaic has flourished, with Limassol’s ‘Mosaic Collective’ becoming well known. Also because mosaic making is such an important part of Cypriot patrimony, the state has trained many new practitioners and that’s where Kato Drys Community Council and partners come in.

This ‘Mosaic Heritage Trail’ in Larnaca, Limassol and Paphos district’s coastal region, is offered by Kato Drys Community Council and their stakeholders, Mola Culture Factory. It links to opportunities to learn the art of mosaic making. The trail includes the following visits and activities:

- The Old Olive Mill, Pano Lefkara and modern mosaics in Pano Lefkara and Kato Drys (Day 1).
- The ruined Roman city of Kourion near Limassol (Day 2).
- The temple of Aphrodite in Kouklia near Paphos airport (Day 3).
- Paphos Archaeological Park, UNESCO World Heritage site (Day 4).
- Return to Pano Lefkara for a day of mosaic training (Day 5), with an option of a second day.

Find the link to the map of the trail below, or contact the Mola Culture Factory for more details.

What you’ll discover

- How the art and craft of mosaic has developed over the ages from simple pebbles to tesserae to modern materials.
- The purpose behind mosaics – hidden messages.
- Cypriot mosaics – the link to lace making.
- Mosaic as a way to draw attention to environmental issues.
- The creativity that lies within you through an optional training course.

Stop 1: The Old Olive Mill – Mola Culture Factory, Pano Lefkara

The Old Olive Mill – Mola Culture Factory is an outreach centre for Kato Drys Community Council. It is where induction and orientation occur. If participants do add-on skills training, this is the venue. The Mill has many mosaics using a variety of media.

Stop 2: Kato Drys Vintage Emporium

At this stop you will tour local mosaics in Kato Drys and see some made from a variety of waste materials.

Stop 3: The ruined Roman city of Kourion, near Limassol

At stop 2, you'll see Roman and Byzantine mosaic and witness how themes and focus changes. If time allows, you can also visit to shops in Limassol to see mosaic making supplies.

Stop 4: The Temple of Aphrodite at Kouklia, Paphos District

Stop three is in about 1.5-hour drive from Pano Lefkara or Kato Drys. At this stop, you'll visit the **Temple of Aphrodite at Kouklia**. In the Medieval Venetian villa there, a Roman mosaic floor is preserved and it is a good place to discuss the link to Cypriot lace patterns. There is also a fine example in mosaic of the Classical theme 'Leda and the Swan' - it is a remarkable Roman period original.

Stop 5: The Paphos Archaeological Park

On the same day trip, you visit the Paphos Archaeological Park to see the UNESCO protected mosaics that are Hellenistic, through early and late Roman periods. We will talk about symbolism in mosaics and touch on the issues of protecting them.

Heritage stories

Story 1 “Old Olive Mill – Green Take on Mosaic”



Some people think of mosaic making as a craft but really good mosaicists can introduce perspective, depth of field, movement and ‘life’ into mosaic. Of course, in Cyprus, that’s been happening since the Mycenaean Greeks settled on the island 4,000 years ago and was at its height in the Roman and then Byzantine periods. The mosaics at Paphos, Kourion, Salamis and Soli

are known all over the world and we really love the Roman ‘Leda and the Swan’ at Kouklia. Even in those long-ago times, mosaic used a lot of local and natural materials, so was sustainable even then. The Ancient Greeks used black and white pebbles and the Romans were delighted by the rock colours in Cyprus and cherished the hard (green) “terra verdae” stone, making mosaic tesserae out of it. They brought a bright red from Egypt, called ‘Porphyry’.

Many members of our team worked before with famous and sadly missed Cypriot artist, Stas Paraskos, whose influence on our work, we have mentioned before in the pages of the Cyprus Mail (Weekly newspaper). Stas was a great teacher and champion of using waste in art and his mosaics in the Lemba Wall near Paphos were ground-breaking.

In modern day Cyprus mosaic continues in the mountainous area of Larnaca district, in Kato Drys and Pano Lefkara. Our ‘Green Village’ partnership likes to make mosaic art, which is even more sustainable. It all began over 10 years ago when we found thrown away concrete flooring slabs on the beach by Paphos airport. At some time in the past, heavy builders waste had been used to help stabilise the shoreline and reduce erosion; many years later the slabs were strewn along the beach. What first attracted our attention was the round indented ‘frog’ on the underside of the slab, which holds the cement and creates a suction pad when laying the slabs. We thought, “this is ideal for holding mosaics”.

Now our mosaic work, led by Panayiota Demetriou, can be seen in many villages in Larnaca district and has attracted the support of Larnaca Tourism Board. This year, we created a series of mosaics featuring bees and they are displayed in Kato Drys, Kato Lefkara, Layia, Melini, Odou, Ora, Vavla, Vavatsinia and Agioi Vavatsinias

Even more modern, contemporary and environmentally sustainable are mosaics made from snipped up beer and soft drinks cans. One of them is on a heavy plastic ‘bleacher’ from a

redundant skateboard park, Hashini, the artist, created a wonderful traditional 'Lefkara Lace' pattern, complete with eight-pointed stars ('margarites' in Greek), which represented the Roman Goddess of Love, Venus.

We got some really great ideas from Katy Galbraith, a Scottish master mosaicist, who visited us here in Cyprus. Katy helped us design and create a sci-fi style tree, made entirely from broken crockery, beads, bark and pieces of shiny metal smelting slag. Pods made from plastic bottles stuffed with non-recyclable waste and covered with all manner of discarded objects, hang from the branches and look like something from Isaac Asimov novels. The tree is displayed inside the Old Olive Mill – Mola Culture Factory and is intended to give a strong environmental message about doing more recycling and re-using of materials.

Story 2 "Kato Drys Vintage Emporium"



One mosaic of "engineered fish" is called 'Savage Future' and uses lots of waste materials. An accompanying poem predicts a dire future of climate change and polluted oceans. The cultural and creative industries are perfect for raising awareness about the need to be less wasteful. Recycling, re-using and upcycling in art are becoming more and more popular and the 'Green Villages' of Lefkara and Kato Drys are lead-

ing the field, with much needed support from the community councils and Larnaca Tourist Board.

Savage Future

Last night I dreamed a strange savage future
The world had warmed and most had died
We lived with camels that lived on spiny cacti
Whilst we ate dates, goats and salty cheese

The land is seared and burned so we must swim
A fetid ocean that teemed with fish in my youth
Now only dreadful, Godless creatures live there
Bred by scientists to gobble up our awful waste

With good but flawed intent they created new life
Mindless of sowed seeds of dreadful doom
Swapping genes and installing gleaming chips
Gobbling fuel in their great whirring machines

These engineered fish now are feral, escaped
Uncontrolled they eat metal and glass and oil
Mimicking beauty with patterned shining flesh
They flash into the bay cutting water with a whine

Boiled and limpid under the burning noon sun
We must swim there, to escape the fizzing heat
Gambling their lives some shrieking feed the fish
They eat our waste but now eat the wasted people

Story 3 “Kourion Roman city: Understanding Venus”



Time to talk about symbolism in mosaics. Venus is in the sky all over the Levant and on the clothes worn by the historical characters, even though they may be deadly enemies of the day! The 8 bladed flower / star pattern came from the Greeks and was perfected by the Romans, but the legacy is worldwide. Ottomans, Cypriots, Venetians, Balkanic peoples (even Vikings). It's VENUS, the Goddess of Love, so the Romans

believed. It was also meaning 'passion' and it is possible that the 8-pointed star mosaic at Kourion is on the floor of the ancient brothel. It even has elements that may be 'yonic'. It seems certain that the star (in Greek a 'Margarite') advanced through history as a love symbol on mosaic and then embroidery lace on tablecloths and sometimes on clothes.

The geometric patterns in the Paphos mosaics are the starting point for the world famous 'Lefkara lace' (Lefkaritika) diamonds, zig-zags and (of course) the eight-pointed star. "Margarite" from the Greek, a symbol of "Venus" (Greek, Aphrodite) for the Romans, a symbol of love and passion.

Another starting point in the mosaics, the "GREEN MAN" emerging from classical characters – Dionysus, Oceanus, Silvanus, Apollo Hylates, a leafy cast of actors/ players from Ancient Greece, catapulted to fame across the known world by the Romans.

Story 4 "The Temple of Aphrodite at Kouklia"



Aphrodite is an ancient Greek goddess associated with love, lust, beauty, pleasure, passion, procreation, and as her Roman counterpart, Venus, desire, sex, fertility, prosperity, and victory. Aphrodite's major symbols include seashells, myrtles, roses, doves, sparrows, and swans. The Romans added the 8-pointed star to her symbols and it's found in textiles and suggests a loving gift. The cult of Aphrodite came from the Phoenicians,

who at one time, ruled Cyprus. She was also the patron goddess of prostitutes, and our 'Green Village' team found symbols of the goddess in ancient brothels in Italy and in Cyprus. From Homer's Iliad and Sappho's Ode to Aphrodite, she is described as the daughter of Zeus and Dione. Her birthplace is disputed; it is either the Greek Island of Cythia or the island of Cyprus. Cypriots firmly believe she was born in Cyprus at the 'Rocks of Aphrodite' between Limassol and Paphos. Certainly, in nearby Kouklia, a temple was built. Even before the temple, sacred groves existed and statuettes of a fertility goddess have been found. The most common belief is that after the fall of Troy the storm that overtook the Greeks on their return home carried Agapenor and the Arkadian fleet to Cyprus, and so Agapenor became the founder of Paphos, and built the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Palaipaphos (Old Paphos), around 3,200 years ago. The Romans renamed her 'Venus' and rejuvenated her worship at the sanctuary, and it was them who introduced mosaics. An interlocking geometric pattern is cleverly done and has inspired some modern art. The most famous mosaic at the sanctuary is an original version of 'Leda and the Swan', where Zeus, disguised as a swan, is plucking the peplos off the nymph Leda, in an attempt to seduce her. We can assume the choice was made because it depicts lust and passion plus the association with swans.

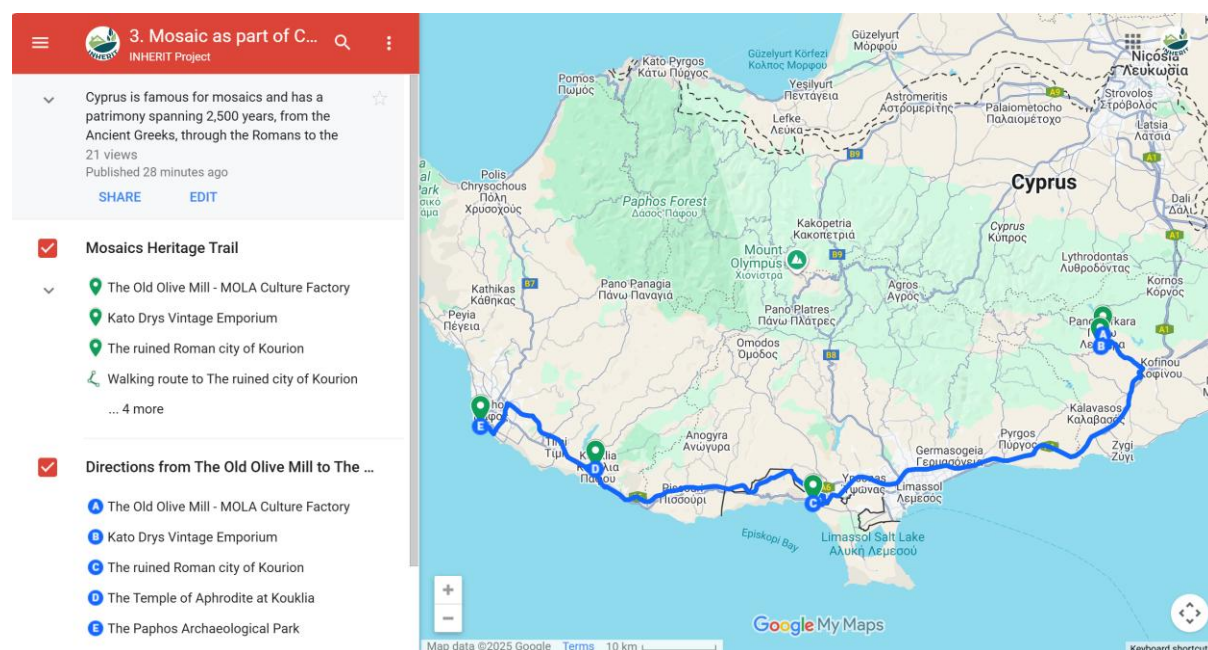
Why this trail matters

- The story and the experience will help to stimulate the local economy in a sustainable way
- Visitors will learn more about the local cultural landscape that few tourists see.
- Discovery by tourists, from Cyprus and abroad, will raise awareness of the need for recognition and protection of patrimony, as it applies to the traditional skill of mosaic making.

Although many themes of mosaics are religious, the art/craft itself is secular and useful to bring people together in a creative and open way through social mediation.

Trail map

Cyprus is famous for mosaics and has a patrimony spanning 2,500 years, from the Ancient Greeks, through the Romans to the Medieval period. This Heritage Trail takes you to four heritage sites, all showing special mosaics from across the ages.



Link to the map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/2/edit?mid=1v01Q7MtI6n8PvI6ORKv-i9Z5ub5e3cQ&usp=sharing>

Starting point	Mola Culture Factory https://www.facebook.com/molalefkara/
Stop 1	The Old Olive Mill – Mola Culture Factory, Pano Lefkara Google map link GPS: 34.86466, 33.30675
Stop 2	Kato Drys Vintage Emporium Google map link GPS: 34.8512165, 33.3029375
Stop 3	The ruined Roman city of Kourion, near Limassol Google map link GPS: 34.66444, 32.88802
Stop 4	The Temple of Aphrodite at Kouklia, the Paphos District Google map link GPS: 34.706, 32.57309
Stop 5	The Paphos Archaeological Park Google map link GPS: 34.75817, 32.40624

Trail details

- Length (km):
 - About 132 km
- How it could be undertaken:
 - Driving
- Special notes (clothes, equipment, weather, etc.):
 - Between the end of October and the end of March, rain is possible and a light raincoat is needed plus a warmer jumper of fleece. At all times wear a hat, even in winter the sun can burn and in Spring, Summer and Autumn, sunburn is commonplace. You should also wear sun cream of over factor 40, especially if not between end of October and end of March. If walking you need strong shoes with good ankle protection. Do not walk into the ‘maquis’; it is prickly and

unyielding.

- Safety guidelines:
 - Follow the rules about clothing and staying on the track. Cyprus has a few quite dangerous examples of wildlife but injuries are extremely rare. There is one very venomous snake, a blunt-nosed viper. Snakes lay in the sun to warm up, you spot them on the track; stamp your feet and they slither away. A black whipsnake is common and is not venomous. None of the 6 types of lizards that you might see, are any problem. Do not randomly turn over stones because there are venomous centipedes and scorpions but their bite is not worse than a bee sting. Do not walk off into the maquis, in case you come suddenly upon a snake. All in all, the wildlife is fascinating and if you take care, is not a threat.
- Guiding:
 - This trail can be completed alone, or with a guide.
 - To book a guide, please contact The Old Olive Mill – Mola Culture Factory

- Contacts for more details:

Mola Culture Factory

<https://www.facebook.com/molalefkara/>

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Quests / Chances to be creative

Quest 1 “Contemporary mosaic making”

This is either a one-day or two-day course (depending on the complexity of the mosaic design), with breaks for lunch and tea/coffee. The venue is the Old Olive Mill (Mola Culture Factory). We use previously sourced stone or concrete slabs or cement board cut to size. The teacher is Cypriot crafter/artist Panayiota Demetriou, who was trained through a Government programme and





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has 10+ years of training experience. First you sketch your design and then select colours. Then cut tesserae and apply. Panayiota guides you at each step.

Disclaimer:

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