

The Arts

A short walk in time and space may be enough for a visitor to appreciate some of the most important works of art from the Byzantine period up to the twentieth century found in Corfu Town.

Representative of late Byzantine art from the 1300s, are the holy icons of the Virgin Demosiana from the Metropolitan Church, and of St Anthony from the church in Spilia dedicated to the same saint. Most churches in town display icons from the post-Byzantine period (after the year 1453). The largest collection is to be found at the Byzantine Museum of Antivouniotissa. Then, starting in the middle 17th century, western elements in painting became more influential and finally prevailed, forming the artistic current later called the Ionian (or Heptanesian) School. The oil painting technique replaced the older Byzantine standard technique of gouache on wood, and the western secular style asserted itself even in religious painting. The famous painter Panayiotis Doxaras decorated the ceiling of St. Spyridon Church and enthusiastically supported the substitution of western painting for the Byzantine style. The growing economic power of the middle class by the 1700s brought about a flowering of portraiture.

Important works by Ionian School artists are on display at the Municipal Gallery, and the Corfu branch of the National Gallery of Greece in the village of Kato Koraikiana.

These collections also include oil paintings, watercolours, engravings and sculptures by those working in the tradition of the Ionian School, and famous later artists across Greece. Contemporary art is presented at temporary exhibitions of the Municipal Gallery and the Corfu Art Gallery.