

# Katya Vadim Greco Art

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# Katya Vadim Greco Art

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# Art, Culture and Immigration - Katya Greco Story

## Art

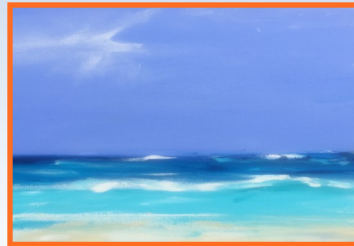
Swissvale PA, a community of Pittsburgh, is the home of Katya Vadim Greco Art Studio/Gallery. Katya (Vadim) Greco, a professional artist, Studio/Gallery owner is a native of Kiev, Ukraine and has celebrated her 24th Anniversary as an immigrant and US Citizen. Katya has been settling into her newly built art studio located in the back of her residence, where she now creates her colorful works of flowers, landscapes, seascapes, portraits and specialty works; such as her *Venetians*. She has produced over 100 paintings in the past three years and has hosted eight successful exhibitions since the completion of her Studio/Gallery.



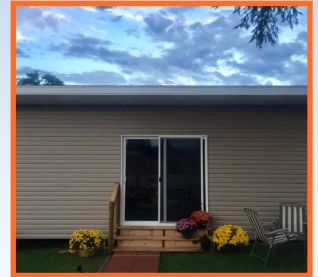
*My Venetians-Under the Mask*



*Art & Pizza Party*



*Summer Seascapes & BBQ*



*Studio/Gallery*

In January of 2015 Katya officially started her business, *Katya Vadim Greco Art*, to create her vision and paint again. Setting up easel, paint and canvas in a make-shift studio in a cramped room in her house, she began creating a variety of still life flowers. Katya didn't have to look far for inspiration, her neighbor Fran's garden was beautifully landscaped and provided the inspiration for "*Magnolia in Spring*," "*Midnight Lilac*" and "*Evening Lilac Dusk*", all displayed at her first exhibition "*Garden of Joy*" at Shaw Galleries. Shortly thereafter, Katya connected with Pauline Rovkah, head of the piano program at Chatham University, and together coordinated several exhibitions there throughout the year with the Chatham University music programs and other Ukrainian and Russian women artists.

With growing confidence and ambition, Katya decided it was time to grow her business and built her Art Studio/Gallery in October 2016. It was a great achievement and is another chapter in Katya's amazing 24-year story as an immigrant and US Citizen. However, it was her life and upbringing in Kiev that provided the roots that would allow her to develop as a professional artist and Studio/Gallery owner.

*Shaw Gallery: Garden of Joy*

*Chatham University*



**Exhibits Chatham University** - *French Liaisons-Concert & Art Show* • *Rachmaninoff and Ragtime- Consonance Art Exhibit- Russian and Ukrainian Women Artist of Pittsburgh* • *Classical Music- Music Under the Stars- Music and Nature / Art Show*

# CULTURE

## Kiev, Ukraine - Katya's Childhood



Living in Kiev, the landscape and fabric of the city is covered with beautiful ornate architecture; museums, theaters, lush parks, statues, golden domed Orthodox churches and an opera house. Kiev, located on the Dnieper River, has a population of 2.8 million and is about the size of Chicago. It is a very old city and is the largest city and Capital of Ukraine. As an agricultural country, Ukrainians are very proud of their art, culture and traditions and always enjoy family and friends gathering together to celebrate any occasion with Ukrainian cuisine, drinks and a commemorative toast to health and honor.



*Katya's Personal Photos of Kiev.*

It wasn't by chance that Katya had a natural talent for art and desire to become an artist. Her family's bloodline provided a rich history of talented artists, art historians and musicians that had their place in the Ukrainian/Soviet Union art world. Katya inherited her talent and skills from her mother, Yelena Ovchinnikova, artist, illustrator, teacher and author, who for her part carried on the tradition of her father, Vasiliy Ovchinnikov, artist and 42-year Director of *Kiev Museum of Western and Oriental Art*. His achievements and mosaics are still on display in the Museum courtyard. His wife, Katya's grandmother, was Raisa Margolina, Art Director of the *Kiev State Puppet Theater*, famous for her artistry with her puppets, and decorated with a Silver Medal Award in the *International Puppet Exhibition* in Brussels.

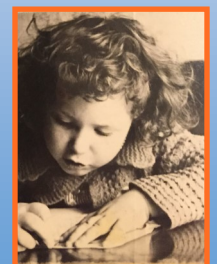
Katya had another group of talented artists on her father's side of the family that shaped her background in music. Her father, Vadim Pukst, had degrees in Art History and Law. He was also a talented musician and would teach Katya piano as another discipline to add to her talents. When visiting with her grandmother in Minsk, Natalia, a music teacher, would spend time with Katya at the piano listening to her play and giving instruction. Katya's grandfather, Grigoriy Pukst, who passed before she was born, was a talented Belarussian musician and composer, and Katya would listen with great pleasure to his scores of music. This combination of family talents introduced Katya to a broad range of artistic backgrounds for her to develop as she pursued her studies.



At a very young age Katya started learning from her family how to draw and paint. Katya had three major family influences that shaped her talent as an artist. Katya's family noticed that she was a quick study and had natural ability that needed to be developed. With support and encouragement from her family, Katya was accepted and later graduated with a Fine Arts Diploma from Shevchenko State Art School, which, after stringent testing and a highly selective admission process, offered academic education of art for gifted children from all over Ukraine. In addition to the general coursework required at middle and high school, students here were schooled in painting, drawing, composition, plastic anatomy, architecture, sculpture and art history.



*"I remember how my mother would sit with me at the table. I would start my drawings as she would give me instructions, explaining the history of techniques and the depth of composition. I found out how important discipline is to an artist and how successful I was when I went to school and it showed in my work."*



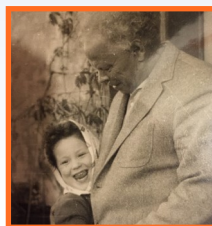
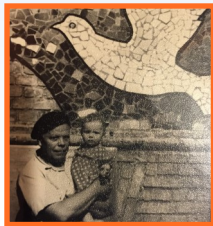
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Katya lived with her parents in a residential area located on the Dnieper River called Rusanivka, in a small apartment with room for a piano, library and a small workspace where her mother, a petite woman with bright blue eyes and blond hair, would produce her works. Yelena was a graduate and teacher for 13 years at the *State Art Institute of Kiev*, and worked as a graphic artist producing lithography, engravings and book illustrations. Katya had first-hand experience into the sights, sounds and smells of a talented, educated and passionate artist and teacher .

The *Kiev Museum of Western and Oriental Art* was an experience of a lifetime for Katya. Not only was her grandfather the Director, it was a place that captivated her as a child and opened her eyes to the history of art. Vasiliy Ovchinnikov was larger than life to Katya. He was a big man, more than six feet tall, with massive curly grey hair and blue eyes with a gentle air. Having graduated from the *Kiev Art Institute* and been appointed as director there in 1936, he was well-respected by his peers for having restored the museum after the war.

Katya's grandmother, Raisa, would take her regularly to visit "dedushka" (grandpa) or "ded" as she called him affectionately. He was always dressed in a suit and tie and sat behind a massive antique desk with carved legs, in an office with Dutch paintings adorning the walls. Katya was welcomed by all that worked in the museum and was allowed access to the exhibits and art books.

Katya & Vasiliy spending time together.



*"I would sit in his office as a little girl and he would spend his time on the phone working. As I paged through the art books, I would wait for him to stand up, I knew it was time for a break and I would get the Italian pencil and sketch book so we could go to the park across the street. He would take my hand in his big hand and draw flowers, chestnuts, trees and people. It was one of my favorite things to do and I felt so happy as we spent this time together."*

*"I was about eight when he introduced me to drawing people and the human form. He would take prints off the shelf of *La Primavera* by Sandro Botticelli that he brought from Italy. You could unfold the whole painting. It had plates of large printed details of figures, faces, hands, feet, flowers and trees. He had me copy it with pens and watercolors on watercolor paper."*

At twelve years of age, Katya started spending more time with her grandparents to make room for the new addition to her family, her little brother Alexey. After her grandfather's passing a couple years later, Katya made her residence with her grandmother. She now lived in the historical center of the city at The Union of Artists apartment building, just a street away from the Khreschatyk, the main street in Kiev's cultural district. She regularly visited the building's first floor gallery and penthouse studio. Many of the residents were well-known artist and friends of Katya's parents and grandparents.

*"I didn't give it much thought about my families friends or the people that lived in our building. It was typical for me to be around and visit with other artists, musicians, writers and poets. I would see all the different personalities and listen to their conversations but it wasn't interesting until they would start talking about art or ask me about my projects at school. I was very fortunate at that time to be surrounded by such a group of talented people."*



Museum of Western & Oriental Art.

Continued

It was an exciting time for Katya living with her grandmother, Raisa, the Art Director of the *Kiev State Puppet Theater*. Katya was with the woman who created and orchestrated beautiful puppet shows and as a child that made a big impression. Katya watched from behind the scenes as her grandmother sketched the puppets before passing the design on to an assembly line of skilled craftsman that would transform the individual materials into a finished puppet, and as others brought all the pieces together with stage scenery, dialog and music for the performance to finally begin. Katya would sit with great anticipation waiting to watch the magic of animation, as she knew who created these masterpieces.



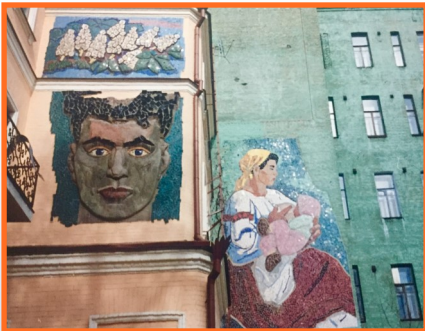
*“I was so impressed being by my grandmother’s side and watching her drawings being transformed into puppets. She was so meticulous and precise and knew how to create the best depictions of her characters. I always noticed how she would take the puppets and make the finishing touches with a couple strokes of the brush.”*



*“The Conductor” Silver Medal Winner Brussels*

*Katya, Alexey and Raisa*

Favored by so many influences and by the individual teachers that personally guided her skills, Katya achieved a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theory and History of Arts from the *State Art Institute of Kiev*, which is now the *National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture*. After completing her Bachelors, Katya made it full circle and accepted a position with *Kiev Museum of Western and Oriental Art*, now known as the *Bogdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art*.



*Vasily’s Mosaics in Museum Courtyard*



*At the Museum*



*Vasily’s Mosaics in Museum Courtyard*

*Katya at Shevchenko Park*



# Immigration

## Pittsburgh, PA U.S.A. - Katya's New City



In 1994 Katya found herself at a crossroads with the changing environment in Kiev at the collapse of the Soviet Union and a future full of uncertainty. As the borders opened under the Refugee Program, Katya and her relatives made the decision to move to the United States with her pure-breed Skye Terrier, Archie, in tow. Katya began this period of her new life in Squirrel Hill, where with the help of the Jewish Community Center she navigated the federal immigration process to maintain a Green Card and later achieve US Citizenship. Katya connected with other immigrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to communicate and make a new network of friends that shared her cultural background. Attending class, watching TV sitcoms, like Saturday Night Live, and practicing with friends, Katya started to learn English.

*"Saturday Night Live was my introduction to American comedy and English. Will Farrell and Chris Kattan's characters made me laugh even though I didn't completely understand. When I see old SNL clips, I get a big smile and laugh because I now get the humor."*

*"What was even more amazing was when I started reading in English, I took two of my favorite books, Tristram Shandy by Laurence Sterne and The Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens, I would put them side by side in Russian and English and was so excited that I could understand the text in their original language."*

Exploring Pittsburgh, Katya found solace and comfort in visiting the cultural settings of the Carnegie, Frick and Andy Warhol museums in her new city. She enjoyed concerts at the Pittsburgh Symphony and Opera's at The Benedum Center as she had previously in Kiev. Katya found Pittsburgh's ethnic identity during her visits to the "The Strip" and Station Square. Mt Washington's beautiful scenic view and long walks with her dog Archie in Schenley and Frick parks helped her to overcome the loneliness of being displaced. Even taking in Penguins hockey games at the Civic Arena helped, as hockey was one of the main sports in Kiev. Never drifting away from what she loved, Katya always found time to paint or draw.

*"Archie was my life saver as I walked in the parks and neighborhoods. He was my conversation starter. Everyone approached me because of this short, hairy, big eared dog. Always asking: What kind of dog? With my broken accent I would shout out: Skye Terrier !Immediately they would ask where I was from and we would start talking about Archie."*

*"I remember the first year in Pittsburgh, I wanted to make myself a gift. I found a piece of cardboard, some crayons and made my first drawing of Archie. It is proudly displayed on my wall and brings back so many memories."*



*Katya's favorite subject to paint and draw.*

*Right- Crayon on Cardboard*

*Below-Water Color On Paper*



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Settling down in Greenfield and finding direction, Katya set her sights on becoming a US Citizen with art as her career goal. To initiate her plan she reached out to the *Art Institute of Pittsburgh* to secure her credentials as a transplanted artist. With assistance from Hebrew for Loan, Jewish Women Association, Scholarships and friends, she secured funding to begin her enrollment. She was accepted as a student and started night classes as she worked data entry at UPMC during the day. With a difficult challenge with intermediate English, Katya worked very hard to graduate with her degree in Graphic Design. After graduation Katya secured her first job as a computer game artist for an internet provider company. She created original hand drawn images to be transformed into computer generated images for children's educational computer games. The experience helped her sharpen her animation skills.

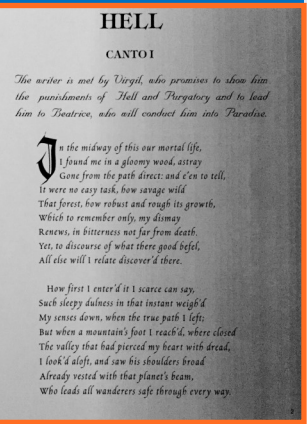
*"I was still learning English and I had difficulty understanding the commands from the instructors but by watching other classmates doing their work I was able to immediately pick up the task. The hardest part was doing homework. I didn't have a computer and I would have to take a bus downtown on the weekends to the lab. The instructors and other students helped me so much to complete my assignments."*



Graduation: Art Institute of Pittsburgh

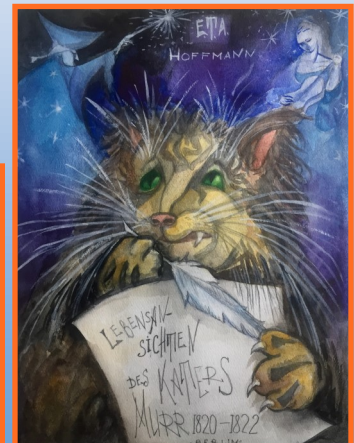


Dante: Illustration from Art Institute



In July of 2000 Katya met all the requirements and through Naturalization finally became a United States Citizen. With great excitement, she received her US Passport. Katya returned to Kiev after eight years away. No longer did she have to get the pre-paid phone cards to call and hear her parent's voices on the phone or receive letters to read news about the family or prepare care packages to help her family. Katya's trip was to reunite with her family and to prepare her parents for immigration to bring them to Pittsburgh.

*"It was such an exciting time for me personally, I just became a US Citizen and graduated from Art Institute. I was returning to Kiev a different person. I didn't know how I would feel about seeing my old city but I knew how happy I would be seeing my family!"*



Notable works: Red Iris, Basket of Lemons, Comedia Del Arte and E.T. Hoffmans: Tomcat Murr.



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After Katya's parents were settled in Pittsburgh, she had to make a tough decision for a career change because of the decrease of jobs in graphic design with new software technology. In 2004 Katya accepted a position and worked for 11 years as an International Patient Relations Liaison/Interpreter for UPMC. Katya built strong relationships with a smile on her face, providing detailed interpretations for doctors, staff and patients. She was well known and liked by all she served. Taking advantage of the opportunity, she bought a home in Swissvale that was close to work, Frick Park and ten minutes away from her parents who moved to Homestead. Katya is proud of her neighborhood and you can find her walking her dog Boba, Archie's grandson, on the sidewalks of Swissvale or at Frick Park.

All seemed well for Katya and her parents until May of 2011 when Katya's world came crashing to a complete stop. After an Emergency Room visit for a severe headache, Katya was diagnosed with a brain tumor and required emergency surgery. Katya's instinct was to make sure that her parents and Boba would be taken care of before she proceeded, not knowing how close to death she was at that time. In shock from the diagnosis and preparing for the worse, Katya told Carmen Lugo Lindsay, a friend and coworker, of the situation. Carmen immediately emailed the information to Dr. Dade Lundsford, the head of Gamma Knife at UPMC. He reviewed her records and scheduled her for appointment upon his return from being out of the country. Dr. Lundsford performed a successful life-saving craniotomy with minimal physical damage to her brain. Now with an A.B.I., Acquired Brain Injury, titanium plate and screws in place Katya prepared for recovery and a fight for her life.

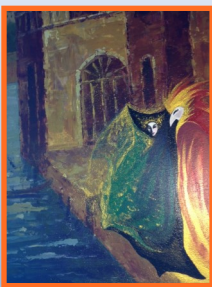
*"I can't even begin to show how grateful I am to Carmen and Dr. Lundsford. They both saved my life with Carmen's quick thinking and Dr. Lundsford taking my case being out of the country. I would not be here today and for that I say: Thank you!"*

With the support of her parents and soon to be husband, Anthony Greco, Katya found her security and comfort in her backyard with her dog Boba by her side. Always being under constant watch in case of seizures, Katya resorted back to painting to distract herself both from her pain and situation. As each day passed she regained her strength and after two months she decided that she could return to work fulltime. Katya progressed well after her surgery and got married in 2012 which changed how she viewed her future. However, her health struggles kept slowing her down. The constant headaches, medications and the demanding requirements of her job started to take their toll on her body. After many setbacks to her health, with the support of her husband, Katya resigned from her position at UPMC in February 2015.

Which brings us back to Katya Vadim Greco Art Studio/Gallery. A place built for her art and soul, accommodating her abilities but letting her grow and share the beauty of life as seen through her eyes! Katya is celebrating a road that she has traveled with grace, dignity, pride and survival because **ART** has no limits nor does she.



Boba & Venetians: Therapy for recovery



Dr. Lundsford



Joseph & Florence Greco



Katya's Painting Self Portrait

*Art treats your heart with the comfort of feeling ! Art treats your soul with the gift of expressing !  
Art treats your mind with thoughts of pleasure.! Art treats your eyes with the beauty of the world.!*

*Most important of all, Art teaches and tells the story...*

# Katya Vadim Greco Art

## Letter from Katya



*Dear Friends,*

*I would like to take this time to share my thoughts with you as I prepare to celebrate my two-year anniversary at my Studio/Gallery. I hope you appreciate my personal story as I move forward as a professional artist and Studio/Gallery owner. I am always learning and exploring my ideas with great enthusiasm as I create each new work and exhibit. Generations of my family have created a foundation for me to live by as a person and an artist. I am always dedicated to the preservation of art in our communities and daily lives as I have been very fortunate to be bestowed these talents to share with you.*

*The past two years have been amazing for me as I opened the doors to my Art Studio/Gallery. I am very grateful for all the support that I have received from family, friends and patrons. It gives me great pleasure when my paintings find a home and I can bring joy with my creations. I will always strive to be the best artist I can, to represent and support all artist and the art world.*

*My Art Studio/Gallery is my gift for you to enjoy! You are always welcomed to attend an announced event and exhibit to socialize and experience my creations. I am also available to provide private gatherings or viewings upon request.*

*Thank you for allowing me this opportunity and I look forward to being your artist!*

*Best Regards,*

*Katya Greco*

Professional Artist-Studio/Gallery Owner

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# Katya Vadim Greco Art

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## Sun Flowers

Inspired by Ukrainian Culture



# Katya Vadim Greco Art

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## Orchids

Inspired by Phipps Orchid Show



# Katya Vadim Greco Art

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Roses

Inspired by Swissvale Neighborhood



# Katya Vadim Greco Art

My Venetians:

Under the Mask





# Katya Vadim Greco Art

## Studio/Gallery



*I dedicated my Studio/Gallery to my family for all the support and confidence in letting me pursue my dream*

Opening of Studio Gallery with Family

Katya & Anthony - Yelena & Vadim (Parents) - Alexey (Little Brother) - Artem (Cousin)

