

MURMUR kairos departs from the idiom 'canary in the coal mine' to speak of murmurs that heed a response at such a decisive time. Coined in the early 19th century, the expression stems from coal miners relying on caged canaries and their heightened sensitivity to toxic fumes to alert them to evacuate before suffocating. This is why the expression has been used to describe either an event or a person who signals oncoming danger. More specifically, it has been used to describe climate justice movements that have demanded meaningful systems change and behavioural shifts for the last five decades so we can avoid the climate collapse we are living through today. But are we living through it? Who is living through it?

Kyriaki Costa's practice is always informed by a careful observation of the sites she will be speaking from and about. Following Velychko Gallery's invitation to collaborate on a solo show, Kyriaki visited the gallery still in the stages of renovation and what particularly struck her was not the space itself, but the space in relation to the scale of the surrounding built environment and the ant trail traversing the entire length of the gallery wall. A gentle reminder that, despite the upheaval and uprooting taking over the urban fabric, currents below the surface persist and resist — aquifers, ant nests and weed flowers eat away at the concrete. Rising skyscrapers now define Limassol's skyline and have reshaped the city's demographic and ecological fabric in ways that can only be described as aggressive. Limassol's new patina is polished, it consumes the layered heritage and the handcrafted details of this seafront city, slowly turning it into a homogeneous space devoid of its site-specificity.

On the other side of the proverbial coal-mine tunnel, ants excavate to build worlds based on sufficiency rather than excess. Their nests are the outcome of collaboration and are considered by scientists to be the external organs of their builders — a material extension of the superorganism that produced them. Nest builders do not rely on direct interaction to know what to do next; instead, each is affected by the other's activity and responds accordingly. Even when the builders change, they respond to what has already been made. Therefore, nests arise from that which has come before and from the environment they are made in. Once the nest reaches a plateau in scale, the ants know to stop growing it. Limits are recognised and respected. How does our built world shape how we interact and relate to one another? And how do our relations inform what we build and how we inhabit space?

Excess is fascinating in that it can be hard to grasp at planetary scales, yet remarkably easy to identify when the body encounters it daily. A fine line separates growth and excess. So a follow-up question could be — what are societies focused on growing, and for whom? What do we understand as growth and progress, and when should growth stop? As seven of nine critical global processes that allow life to exist on this planet have breached their safety operating zones we should wonder how many canaries have been ignored for humanity to reach such a critical point. And although it is clear how certain values and economic systems have directly caused these overshoots, radical changes have not been made

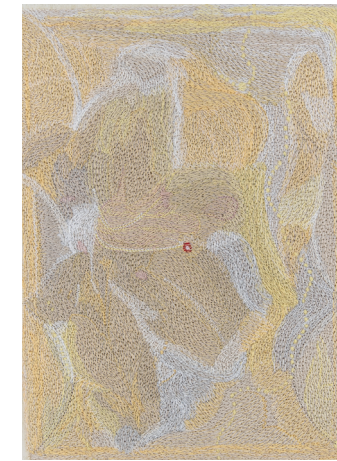
on a scale necessary to return within our planetary boundaries. Bigger is better, more is more, while the ripples become waves and the canaries continue sounding the alarm into the void. As environmental author and essayist Edward Abbey famously said, "Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell." Even though the scale of devastation is crystal clear, many choose to turn a blind eye, avoid the canary's call, and instead find solace in beautiful distractions.

Perhaps the soft materials and pastel colours in Costa's work make the underlying messages of mutations, poisonings and unnecessary loss easier to process. The worlds Costa weaves are abundant, but unfold within limits. These limits at times are imposed and behave as cages and other times they are boundaries that hold and make sense of complexity. The embroidery pieces think in additions rather than extractions. Slow, deliberate minor gestures form stratas over materials used for construction, warmth, and recovery, including synthetic insulation, plastic sheets, sheep's wool, and gauze, each associated with varying degrees of embodied toxicity and energy.

The instrumentalisation of the canary in the mining industry raises questions about how certain systems dictate which bodies get to live or die first. More to the point, who is sacrificed and who is made to suffer so that others may continue to live unharmed? These questions are pertinent more than ever as this necropolitical logic has become normalised and the violent extraction of bodies, lands and life continues unhindered. The 'safe' distance enjoyed by the sheltered is an illusion; a thin veil that will sooner or later tear, revealing long-ignored interdependencies.

After having lost their pheromone trail, the ants come to the surface and attempt to carve new pathways. Their senses guide them to safer places to nest. An attunement to senses is vital for all, as the canary in the mine reminds us. The handrail extending across the gallery space, engraved with a procession of ants, acts as a metaphor for support, guiding careful, deliberate movement through the space. At the same time, the fragility of this sculpture barely floating against the wall is also a reminder of the need for cooperation and the precarious nature of structural support, both political and institutional in moving through these chaotic times. The species prevalent across Costa's work are an ode to organisms that, albeit small, behave with more intelligence than humans because they are attuned to their environment. What is any organism's intelligence, after all? To perceive and learn from its changing environment, adapt its behaviour and thrive within the boundaries of its ecological carrying capacity; breach that, and the organism becomes extinct. These more-than-human messengers aside from harbingers, in this body of work, they are understood as guides in transforming our material and social relations before the worlds we have built are also the ones that suffocate life.

Denise Araouzou



“Ετι

2026
22x15 cm
Hand and machine embroidery with cotton, silk and synthetic threads on gauze, glass wool and cotton fabric.



Σήμα

2026
35x27 cm
Hand and machine embroidery with cotton, silk and synthetic threads on cotton fabric. Copper.



Nondum

2026
37x37 cm
Hand and machine embroidery with cotton, silk and synthetic threads on pure wool fabric.



Avri

2026
47x67 cm
Hand embroidery with cotton threads on printed synthetic mesh.



Limen

2026
30x27 cm
Hand and machine embroidery with cotton, silk and synthetic threads on gauze, glass wool and cotton fabric.



Ερεισμα

2026
Length 4 m × diameter 4.7 cm
Hand-engraved copper pipe.

PUBLIC PROGRAMME

Kitiou Kiprianou 2
(corner of We Space)

13 NOVEMBER, 18:00-18:45
Guided tour of the exhibition with curator
Denise Araouzou

22 NOVEMBER, 15:00
"The path appears anyway"
With Evagoras Vanezis

11 DECEMBER, 18:00-18:45
Guided tour of the exhibition with curator
Denise Araouzou

FINISSAGE, 15 DECEMBER, 18:00
Screening of a short film on the making of MURMUR
kairos with Kyriaki Costa. Produced by Velychko Gallery
and SPM Production.

VELYCHKO GALLERY
Grand Opening of the
gallery in Limassol

9 OCT-15 DEC 2026

MURMUR *kairos* Kyriaki Costa

Curated by Denise Araouzou

Gallery working hours:
Wednesday – Friday: 16:00-20:00
Saturday: 11:00-14:00

Or by appointment +35796855580

🌐 velychko.gallery

With the support of Serge Polivar

VLCHK
GALLERY



All artworks courtesy of the artist and Velychko Gallery.

Collaborators: Koulla Papageorgiou, Alekos Christoforou,
Eleftheria Filippidou, Evgenia Ioannidou, Mildret Monjano,
Preeti Rani, Michalis Stialos.