JUVENILIA

FROM EARLY STYLE TO MATURE WORK

VASSILIOU • HADJIKYRIAKOS-GHIKA • TSAROUCHIS
MORALIS • A. TASSOS • KATRAKI • SPYROPOULOS
KONTOPOULOS • MYTARAS • GAITIS • ROMANOS

BANK OF GREECE
EUROSYSTEM

CENTRE FOR CULTURE
RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

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Organisation of the exhibition

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Benaki Museum

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Constantinos Papachristou (Benaki Museum)

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Charis Kanellopoulou, Irene Orati,
Constantinos Papachristou

Contents

Yannis Stournaras
Governor of the Bank of Greece

Address

In every field of professional activity, the work usually distinguished and praised is the one produced during its creator's period of maturity. Observing the culmination of creative efforts, in most cases we are faced with the peak stage of development of that work, which reflects elements such as skill, mindfulness, stability and a crystallisation of values.

However, alongside this last phase of the creative journey where maturity often meets recognition, it is equally worth noticing how particularly important the period of a creator's early activity could also be considered. Early works of course—preliminary and sometimes unrefined—are typically seen as marked by experimentation, wavering, risk-taking and possibly even weaknesses. Yet at the same time they contain precious hidden treasures: the unpretentious boldness and enthusiasm of a beginning, as well as a mindset of continuous shaping, wherein influences and emerging personal capabilities are stirred and may later feed well-informed decisions throughout a lifelong creative career.

From this perspective, the exhibition "Juvenilia. From early style to mature work" and its accompanying publication shed light on the oeuvre of eleven 20th-century Greek artists, with an emphasis on their early tentative steps and the pivotal role they played in their course to maturity. The research is distinct in terms of both concept and implementation; because the exhibition's three

co-curators have invited art historians and theorists to each highlight, individually and from their own specialised perspective, the work of an artist assigned to them. Thus, close attention is paid to the premature features of the artists' expression, which the scholars identify while exploring the conditions under which these were shaped and the ways in which they return and ultimately take root in the mature work.

This original and multifaceted project was based right from the start on the invaluable power of synergy. Therefore, we warmly thank our co-organisers, The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation and the Benaki Museum, for the excellent cooperation at all stages of our joint effort to bring the exhibition and the publication to life. It is our pleasure to contribute, alongside esteemed fellow partners, to a cultural event that showcases aspects of the wealth of Greek art, this time underlining the importance of starting points in creative processes, which provide inspiration and impetus to the evolution of visual work.

Demetrios P. Mantzounis
President of the Board of Trustees
The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation

Address

For The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, taking part in exhibitions and events that establish a new perspective on the Greek art scene is neither unprecedented nor rare. As early as 1987, the Foundation had been actively engaged in international exhibition events and the support of artists and, later on, in organising and exclusively financing major exhibitions by its own know-how. This practice continued on many additional levels, primarily, however, in the area of promoting and supporting Greek art.

The "Juvenilia" exhibition, a co-production of The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation which inaugurates its new arts programming, serves additionally as an opportunity to underline an equally new understanding for the Foundation: the value of collaboration on a major exhibition and publishing venture.

Organisations with a long presence and experience in exhibition events, such as the Bank of Greece and the Benaki Museum, represented by visionary and knowledgeable curators, became co-organisers in an exhibition jointly decided on in 2022. The concept, as well as its implementation, relied from the start on the trust and collaboration of several people who have experience and knowledge of the ideas and commitments of the forces of art.

Specifically, the exhibition—through its title—reveals and subsequently allows viewers to identify the features that shaped the imprint of each of the featured 20th century artists, who were, again, chosen jointly. An essay has been written

for each artist by a specialised art historian, who also suggested the works that illustrate it and are presented in the exhibition. The selected works signal the paths of these artists, identifying juvenilia concepts and motifs which, down the line, characterised the work produced in their maturity.

A meeting of minds and a shared perspective between the Bank of Greece, the Benaki Museum and The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation created the conditions for realising an exhibition that is not aimed at parallel courses, but reveals, through different interpretations, features and inspirations of major Greek artists.

George Manginis
Academic Director of the Benaki Museum

Address

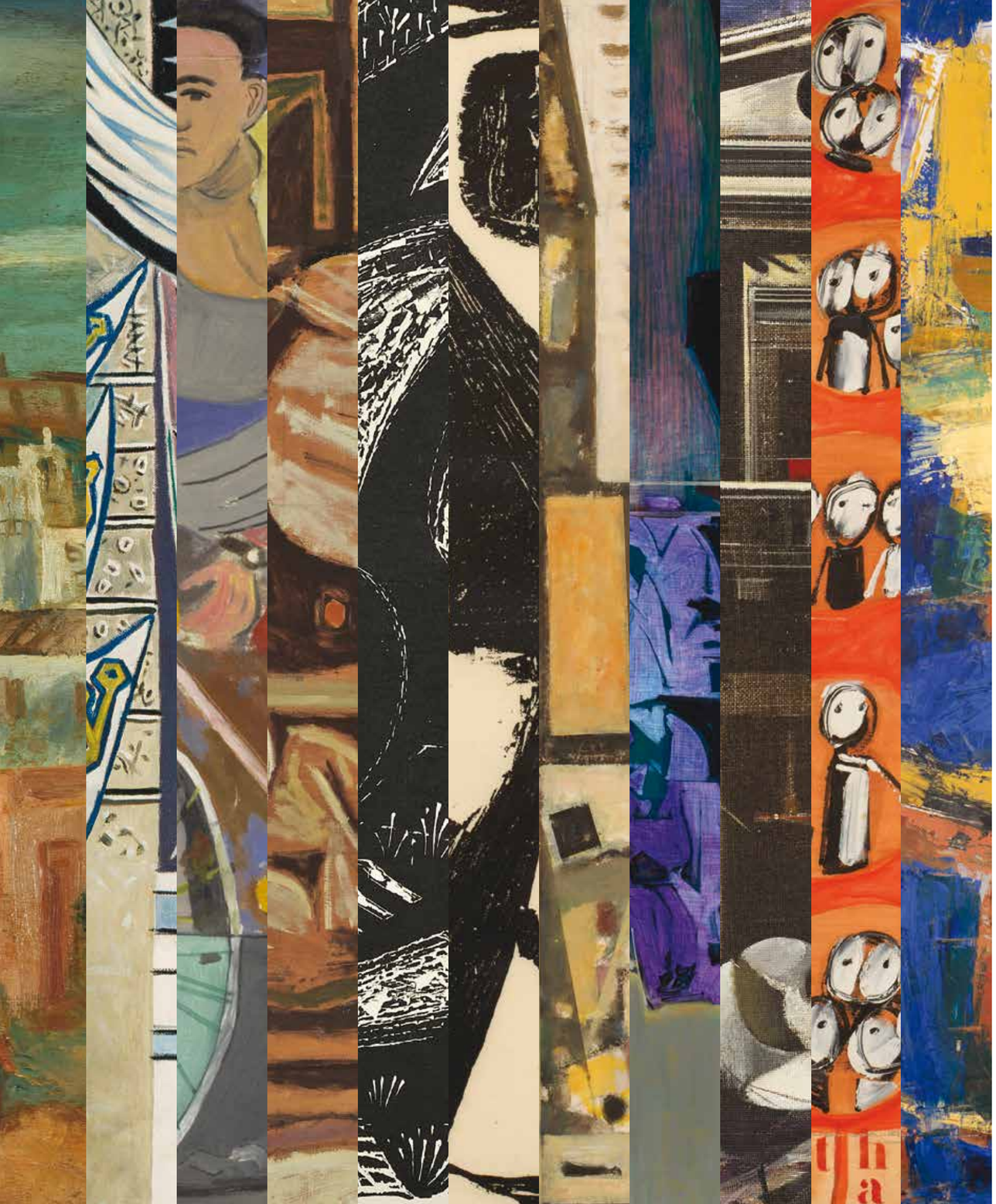
Among the objects surrounding the notorious sultan of the Ottoman Empire Abdul Hamid II, a collection of tools stands out, because it has not been studded with precious stones, nor polished in dazzling gold. Some had been offered—in the hope, perhaps, of a strategic alliance against the Russians—by the Meiji Emperor of Japan, who knew of the Sultan's passion for carpentry. Indeed, the halls of Yıldız Palace are littered with ornate pieces of furniture, made by the ruler's hand. Three and a half centuries earlier, Suleiman the Magnificent had apprenticed—as reported by Evliya Çelebi—as a goldsmith, a fact also attested by his discriminating eye when collecting precious objects. Making by hand, art, was part of the systematic education of rulers in antiquity, the Middle Ages and early modernity: the Huizong Emperor of the Chinese Song Dynasty distinguished himself more as a calligrapher and painter than a ruler, Louis XVI of France forged and assembled locks, and George III of England dabbled in architectural design. Across the globe, handicraft, mastery of the eye, the paintbrush and the chisel, were considered by pedagogues essential skills, in addition to the secrets of governance and warfare. It promoted discipline, obedience to the untamed material, as well as resourcefulness, tenacity, a sense of measure and harmony.

Artistic apprenticeship doesn't seem to have always served the best interests of royalty—Huizong would agree, through the bars of the golden cage where he was imprisoned by the Jurchens after they abolished his Rule. Its significance, however, for the development of those who chose to live in the service of art in their adult lives is indisputable. Just think of how many secondary figures in the margins of multi-peopled compositions have been made by the hand of apprentices, as by Diego Velázquez on the edges of a Francisco Pacheco ceiling fresco, or by Leonardo Da Vinci in the corner of an Andrea del Verrocchio *Baptism*. And how many works of the apprenticeship years have helped to decipher the mature creations, understand the quests, the references, the interactions.

The paths followed by eleven artists of the Greek twentieth century, from their first steps as students of art to their maturity, are traced in the "Juvenilia: From early style to mature work" exhibition and the publication that accompanies it, through the gaze of art historians. Their experimentations with mediums and forms, their attitude towards the prevailing trends in art, their interaction with an important mentor and their stance with regards to important historical events—all of those or each in isolation can be identified in the works of Spyros Vassiliou, Yannis Gaitis, Vasso Katraki, Alekos Kontopoulos, Yannis Moralis, Dimitris Mytaras, Chryssa Romanos, Jannis Spyropoulos, A. Tassos, Yannis Tsarouchis, and Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Benaki Museum, I would like to thank our co-organisers, the Bank of Greece, and especially its Governor Yannis Stournaras and the Director of the Centre for Culture, Research and Documentation Katerina Spyrou, as well as The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, and especially the President of its Board of Trustees, Demetrios P. Mantzounis. I must also offer heartfelt congratulations to the three co-curators, Charis Kanellopoulou, Irene Orati and Constantinos Papachristou, for the conception and flawless materialisation of this project they offered us.

Retracing the fortune of both the historical personalities and the artists I mentioned above, I think of how right the poet was when, almost conceitedly, he pronounced himself blessed for his choice to serve art: "And within art again, I rest from its very toil".



JUVENILIA
From early style to mature work

JUVENILIA. In Greek [πρωτόλεια/protoleia], noun. The word appears in the ancient language to describe the first prey and, in general, the first fruits of a crop, which were dedicated to the gods, thus indicating the nascence of a fruitful course, expected to yield more fruit with each gestation. It was later also used as an adjective—juvenilis work, juvenilis project, juvenilis production—to describe early works, raw, which bear the promise of a subsequent mature development and production.

In art, juvenilia refer to works created mainly during an artist's youth. As early—amateur or student—exercises, sometimes unfinished, or as proven precursor works, they are imbued with the value of some "unconscious boldness" and function as "living archives" of first attempts, risks, and failures, but also successes, in the pursuit of an artistic practice. In that early production of the acclaimed artists of the future, there is a formative logic, which will potentially fuel their work for life.

Juvenilia qualities are sometimes entirely obvious, visible and explicit and sometimes hard to discern, but they are very much present, either way. And, of course, juvenilia works exist, but they are not always visible, utilisable,

or already put to use in studying the artists' overall production. In many cases, the relationship between early and mature works is presumed rather than interpreted. Early attempts may, however, function as a fundamental tool for the art historians and, undoubtably, be considered alongside later works, in the interest of understanding both their early style and their mature work. It is there that the first recognition of talent takes place, the steps in their development emerge, and indications of their consistency are consolidated, which will transform the "trainee" into a professional.

The "Juvenilia" exhibition, unusual and innovative, based on Greek painting, is therefore aimed at precisely that: to seek, study and highlight the ideas, motifs and characteristics that manifested themselves early in the work of eleven Greek artists, in the form of raw features. These initial attributes are sometimes repeated obsessively and at other times consciously reused, while there are also cases where they become elements that entire creative periods are based on. They often take the form of an overall perception of the work of art, thus "grafting" the juvenilia on to the mature works. The intention, therefore, of the exhibition is not simply to identify and reveal those juvenilia characteristics, but to also seek the reasons that cause them to return and take root in the mature work. Juvenilia, therefore, in addition to an introduction to comprehending the work of an artist, are also proposed as a method of perceiving and understanding aspects of the artist's visual language, along with a good knowledge of the work, its place within the broader historical and social framework of the period it was created, and its connection to the age in which it was presented.

"Juvenilia" is the result of collaboration between three organisations—the Bank of Greece, The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, and the Benaki Museum—and a project by their respective curators, conceived of initially in 2022, to gradually develop into its final form. As a curatorial team, stalwarts of joy as well as of a meaningful, equal collaboration that produces results, we were asked, to begin with, to address the question which artists' works could serve as agents for this exemplary study. We then went on to select eleven personalities of Greek art, whose work is completed and runs through almost the entire

20th century and has secured acclaim in its mature phase. We know, of course, that alongside these creators there are many others, present and active over the 20th century of Greek art and just as important in their own right, and we hope that this collective effort will serve as a motive to study the juvenilia of other artists too.

Our selections are ordered chronologically, and we fashioned a journey that begins with Spyros Vassiliou (1902 or 1903-1985) and ends with Chryssa Romanos (1931-2006). An additional prerequisite was the artists' engagement primarily in two-dimensional painting and/or engraving work, and we attempted to include distinct cases from across the spectrum of Greek modernism, abstraction and avant-garde, as expressed in Greek art during the post-war period.

The iconic presence of these artists in the history of modern Greek art, their thoroughly recognisable and acclaimed work served as an expedient opportunity to frame our query: in such a rich journey, full of inversions and repetitions, which were their juvenilia quests, allowed afterwards to seep into their mature decisions, reappearing perhaps in altered forms, but certainly consciously?

To answer this question, we sought for valuable companions. We reached out to eminent art historians and theoreticians, seeking their own take on the issue. We approached the subject by proposing particular artists to our colleagues, knowing their interest in their work, and in the belief that studying distinctive, separate cases could facilitate both the individual and the overall charting of the value of juvenilia as a method for analysing the artistic journey.

They, in turn, applied a scholarly disposition to writing the essays that follow, as to the juvenilis work of each selected artist and its effect on their mature production. In parallel to this approach, each one of them also suggested works which not only contributed to substantiating their arguments, but also to structuring the content of the exhibition itself. We believe that the selection of works is a critical part of their contribution, since, rather than setting up small retrospectives or themed exhibitions for each artist, these works function as a "mirror of verification" for their reported findings on the significance of juvenilis production.

In each small "cell"—body of work designed visually for each artist in the exhibition and transferred conceptually in the catalogue texts, drawings, paintings and engravings, unpublished or unknown but still entirely familiar, decrypt for the viewers and readers the features that fuel our fundamental notion of juvenilia: the motif that returns, the idea that is reused in different contexts, having drawn its power from the early endeavours of each creator.

To focus on the texts that follow, Anny Malama examines the way the Athenian urban landscape—both as a place and a receptor of a particular lifestyle—was the constant that determined the development of the painting of Spyros Vassiliou (1902 or 1903-1985) from 1930 to 1980. Through her examination of the particular theme, she also draws conclusions regarding the experience of modernism itself in the painter's oeuvre and in Greek art at large, in terms of both technique and meaning.

To study the juvenilia of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika (1906-1994), Evita Arapoglou and Ioanna Moraiti chose to engage with the theme of laundry drying on the line, as it appears from the early 1930s and returns in his compositions, in different versions, over more than fifty years of creation. From its figurative presentation to its geometric rendering, the theme appears repeatedly as a motif of intense movement and reflection of light, as well as a symbol alluding to human presence—invisible, as a rule—in Ghika's work.

Anna Kafetsi sheds light on the period of creation of Yannis Tsarouchis (1910-1989) between 1926-1940—from his first adolescent exercises in naturalistic painting to his "chromatic" or "Oriental" style works (1936-1939) and the nascence of the "design" or "naturalistic" style in 1940. The view she takes reveals Tsarouchis's choices and influences towards different and/or opposing directions, with regards to multifaceted aspects of Greek tradition and the impact of his contemporary Western avant-garde, which shape the innermost dynamic core of the painter's visual language.

Evgenios D. Matthiopoulos observes the course of work of Yannis Moralis (1916-2009) from realistic representation in the 1930s, to "Greekness" painting in the early 1950s, and on to an increasingly abstract art that culminated in

geometric abstraction in the 1960s. In that transitional course, Matthiopoulos identifies the morphological features of Moralis's design precision and compositional harmony and balance as catalytic morphologic elements of cohesion on both his juvenile and mature creations, despite the diversification of his artistic style and different influences over time.

Yannis Bolis presents the ways in which the work of A. Tassos (1914-1985), with its figurative style and anthropocentric nature, consistently supports the connection of "art and life" and the social mission of artistic creation. At the same time, he notes recurring motifs and subjects, from the engraver's juvenilia through to his mature work, such as the dead body and mourning; armed young men and young women bearing flowers; as well as the theme of music, connected to the experiences of refugeedom.

Spyros Moschonas, correspondingly, underlines timeless themes in the work of Vasso Katraki (1909 or 1914-1988). At the same time, he points out formalistic and, primarily, thematic costants that appeared in her paintings, drawings and engravings from her juvenilia attempts, and remained evident throughout her long journey to maturity. Ultimately—with reference to figures such as civilian fighters, men and women engaged in daily toil, mothers and their children, and even her symbolically anthropomorphic trees—the central core and protagonist of the engraver's work is man and the monumental dimension of his existence.

Olga Daniilopoulou proposes a "reading map" for the work of Jannis Spyropoulos (1912-1990), in order to interpret the reverence by which he arrived at the concepts of monumentality and immortality, from his early attempts to his mature work. Features such as drawing the subject from the figurative to the abstract, the use of the frame or the symbols of the cross and the ladder, the pulse of movement and architectural configuration, the use of collage, all remain active as "obsessive" choices of an abstract language in the painter's fifty-year journey.

The path traced by Bia Papadopoulou for the work of Alekos Kontopoulos (1904-1975), from the juvenilia of the 1920s to his mature work in the 1970s,

divulges the painter's emphatic relationship with both realistic representation and its "subversion" through aniconic painting. Papadopoulou defines the ways in which Kontopoulos, by means of both discourse and artwork, advocated for the freedom provided by abstract art. But she also reveals the crucial role held by figurativeness in his work, as the objective world serves, at least in the beginning, as a "space" for trials and a primary source of inspiration for his non-objective painting.

Areti Leopoulou isolates the human figure as both the beginning and a point of persistent return in the case of Dimitris Mytaras's (1934-2017) oeuvre. In the stratigraphy of his art, the nascence of an always-anthropocentric painting can be found in the dominant female figures, in drawings from 1950 and thereafter. The human presence is not abandoned but becomes inherent as a reference and a reflection in the mirror theme during the 1960s, as well as later, in the different versions of interior, urban and civil landscape painting that develop in the work of Mytaras.

Elena Hamalidi studies the work of Yannis Gaitis (1923-1984) and identifies, as far back as its inception in 1954 and in the climate of post-war abstraction, the articulation of a pithy and—in part—empirical gestural style, from which hybrid forms "spring up" to evolve, over time, into anthropomorphic figures on the canvas, in constructions, in happenings in public spaces, as a personal signature. From his early style to his mature work, the attributes that prevail in his art pertain to the practice of performativity and the act of painting, and to the viewing of the painting gesture as an artistic practice, as well as to repetition, the multiplication, that is, of motifs and subjects in the work.

Finally, for Polina Kosmadaki, the juvenilia of Chryssa Romanos (1931-2006) allow her to investigate the aesthetic processes and historical conditions that led the artist to transition from expressive, abstract painting to a type of experiential realism, with emphasis on everyday life. In Romanos's artistic language, there is a "chain" of characteristics that persist in her work from beginning to the end. These are abstractness and fragmentation,the splicing of painterly and material elements, ritual, repeated motifs, gesture and, mainly, affect, as an expression

that critically interprets the familiar and the everyday, while also serving as a mirror for contemplations on collective reality.

Through the study of the work of eleven artists, it becomes obvious that early works contain treasures, elusive perhaps at the time of their creation, but certainly valuable and worthy of being re-evaluated in relation to the mature work. Juvenilia serve as a proposal for the study and evaluation of oeuvres as a whole, which doesn't exclusively involve going back to the youthful, "immature" past of each creator to discover it alone, but also to the aspiration that (re)evaluating it will offer us an original, arguably alternative, way of reconsidering an otherwise well-known body of work.

Charis Kanellopoulou
Scientific Advisor and Curator of the Bank of Greece Art Collection

Irene Orati
Art Director of The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation

Constantinos Papachristou
Scientific Advisor of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika Gallery, the Benaki Museum

SPYROS VASSILIOU

Anny Malama

Doctor of History of Art, Publication Editor,
National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens (ΕΜΣΤ)

The urban landscape in the work of Spyros Vassiliou as a means of connecting to the experience of modernism

The urban landscape—the city of Athens, in particular—both as a place and as a distinctive cultural reality, a way of life, a field of action, a grid of relationships and a dynamic framework for contextualising multifaceted urban narratives pertaining to people, groups, social identities and the balance of power between them, is the broader theme that will allow us, as a constant, in its historical development, to compare and understand, in its historical evolution, the painting oeuvre of Spyros Vassiliou, from the inter-war years up until approximately the late 1970s.

In the context of this approach and especially while investigating the correlation between the artist's early works and those of his maturity, two central and interconnected issues emerge. How the choice to engage with the subject of the city reveals the stimuli that Vassiliou incorporates into his work in the wake of the art movements and influences of the first and second half of the 20th century, and how urban geography, both during the inter-war period and after WWII—in terms of space as well as social structures—creates new environments, new lifestyles and types of human behaviour in the personal and the public sphere. Two parallel directions that, in a broader sense and

in historical and cultural terms, define the Greek experience of modernism in the visual arts (as well as elsewhere).

The use of the term "modernism" here subsequently stems from the assumption that we are referring to a historically defined concept which transcends the "modern"; it is not, that is, merely a historical period or a set of cultural features. It is a "conscious stance towards the world" and "a new way of human existence within a new environment defined by change, rupture, progress, technology, the metropolis, crowds, speed, communication".[1] And it is precisely that dimension which ultimately deems the term truly functional on the level of signification—its indissoluble ties to the particular texture of "modern life", the way that it "defines, encodes, homogenises, restricts the sum of its characteristics, Baudelaire's *modernité*".[2]

Vassiliou joins the "urban blender"[3] of the Athenian inter-war in the early 1920s, coming from Galaxidi. A small and short-term scholarship sponsored by the local authorities in his hometown allows him to experience his own version of the peculiar[4] Greek *modernité*, as a student of painting at the Athens School of Fine Arts initially, and as an active professional artist over the years that follow.

In his *Lights and Shadows* publication, edited by Frantzis Frantziskakis and Vassiliou himself, a sort of autobiographical album and a retrospective of his work up to 1969, painted depictions of different aspects of Athens are displayed in large bodies of work, as the decades succeed one another on the pages of this book, and the city is transformed over time. Transforming alongside it are the momentum and orientation of the Athenian art field—as an autonomous area and a site for the production and circulation of symbolic commodities

1 Daskalothanasis (2015), 116-117.
2 Op. cit., 118.
3 On the term, see Kotionis (n.d.)
4 A peculiarity caused by the absence of intensive industrial development, advanced technology, a strong institutional framework, a powerful middle class, and the multiple alternating stimuli that are generally characteristic of life in a contemporary metropolis. See Kostis (2018), 509-514, 531-545, 593-645. With regards to metropolitan life in particular, see Simmel (2017).

in the framework of a free, albeit limited in power and range, market—jointly with the broader cultural environment, the social composition and preferences of the public, and the artist's gaze.

Thus, Vassiliou's *Athens* paintings are also, in a way, his self-portraits, traces of his trajectory and his personal journey, since every one of them is connected to him personally as an individual as well as a historical subject in the given moment. His place of residence at the time, his walks around the city, the development of his style and the stylistic choices of his painting over the course of his professional activity and advancement, the audience which he addresses, the tastes that he responds to as well as that he co-creates, his integration into art collectives, the broad acclaim he gains from his work, his prolific production and the frequently decorative solutions he invents, his social presence, the institutional recognition of his work, his inclusion in the moderately liberal intellectual circles of his days are, collectively, the parameters that distil the imprint of the urban landscape as lived event, experience, and visual description.

His works of the 1920s and 1930s [such as *Exarchia* (fig. 1), *Athens* (fig. 2), *Construction site* (fig. 3), *Galatsi* (fig. 4) and *Ardettus* (fig. 5)] connect the exploration of the city with an inclination to question the School's academic teachings and investigate innovative painting idioms. A kind of decorative scenography for the adventures of the *flâneur* of inter-war Athens, where loans from impressionism, sometimes touching on realism, post-impressionism, Cézanne, and the fauves coexist in a more or less assimilated way.

As he writes about his years at the School:

"In the dark-coloured halls of the School, the first disappointing encounter with the sterile teachings.

A figure-fragment from an illustrated page in Dickens, old-man Kaloudis, the eccentric painter of *kourabiedes* and sweets, is enraged that we are indifferent to the secrets kept by the stump and the crayon. Charcoal and its technique—the shaping, as they used to call it—becomes, later, a new pain in the neck. A restless and lively gang begrudges the dry and tedious exercise imposed upon them. They don't know what they want, and no one helps them to find out.

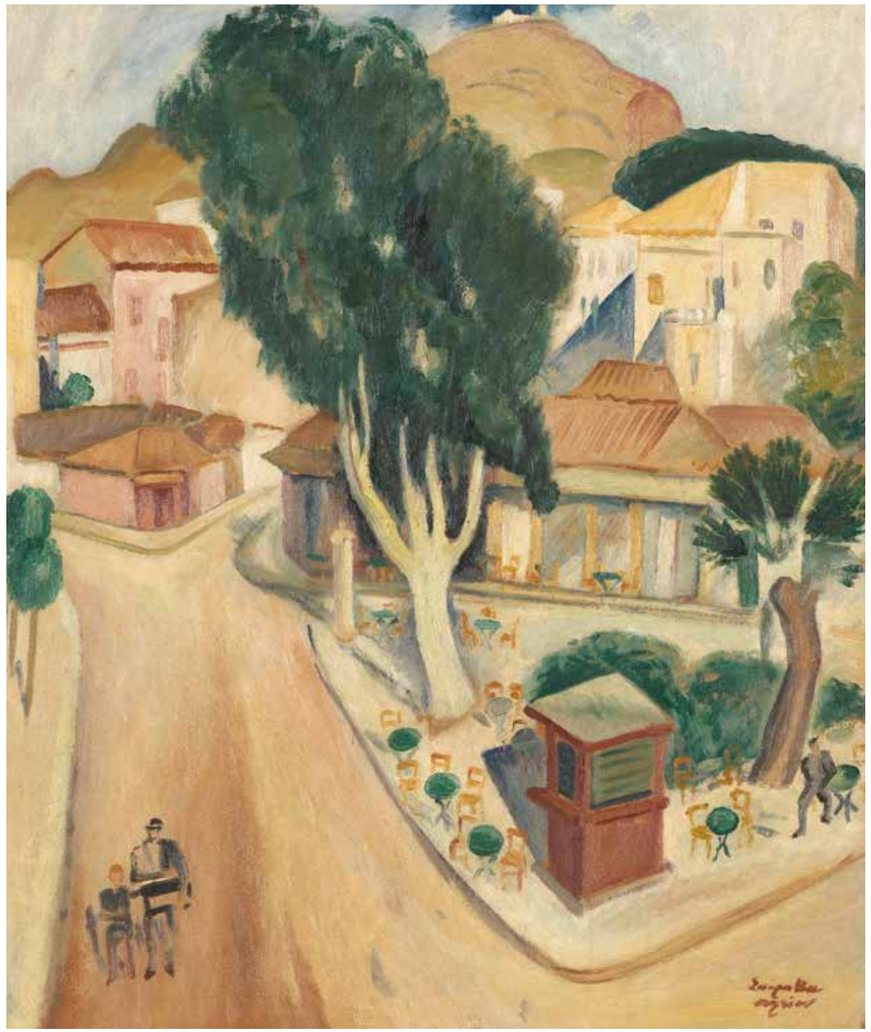


Fig. 1 | ***Exarchia***, 1929
George N. Niarchos collection

Athens, 1930 | Fig. 2
George N. Niarchos collection

Fig. 3 | ***Construction site***, n.d.
George N. Niarchos collection

Galatsi, 1929 | **Fig. 4**
Alpha Bank Art Collection

Ardettus, 1930
Alpha Bank Art Collection

Fig. 5

But they know, definitely, what they don't want. They grab a pencil case and pour out and look in the shadows of Ymittos, the smiles of Penteli, the scallops of the Saronic Gulf, to catch some meaning of painting.

At some point, the organisation of the School changes. Students can choose their teacher. They assign a studio to Nikos Lytras for the first time. The whole awesome gang registers with the new teacher as one. […] He let us paint the dark forest-green walls of the studio a brighter shade, the screens just as bright and lively-coloured, we made canvas from hessian and set up, after many years, full-length nudes and—the best—we hung on the walls printed copies of works by Van Gogh, Cézanne, Renoir. Commotion, uproar, teachers refusing to enter the heretics' classroom for scoring, the suave director with the golden glasses, a Munich fanatic, who came and gathered us at the door to admonish us because, as he had heard, 'recently, even Cézanne has given up on purple shades'. Year of the incident 1925 or 26".[5]

At this stage, Vassiliou's painting, aside from the experimentations he attempts in terms of composition, form, and colour, focuses thematically—adopting a rather detached, objective view—on scenes related to impressionism and a visual commentary of the symbolisms of metropolitan life: aspects of public space, landmarks, the city's residents sometimes as ramblers and sometimes as labourers working in building sites, scaffolding and works under construction resembling living beings, a car gathering speed. Patterns also make an appearance, to which Vassiliou will regularly return over the next few years, such as, for example, an outdoor metal spiral staircase. If, in fact, *Staircases* in his pre-war work enhance the impression of momentum and motion, after the war they are utilised much more to—self-consciously—explore abstraction on the level of form and composition (fig. 6).

While the painter's post-war engagement with the city persists, the incisiveness of his gaze seems to weaken and what ultimately prevails is a decorative schematisation in the rendering of the Athenian landscape, its

5 Vassiliou (1969), 29, 33.

total aesthetisation,[6] which groups situations and motifs and deactivates social deviations. Landscapes then become a kind of removed scenography. Vassiliou is, by now, a family man, living on Webster Street beneath the Acropolis,[7] and making his living as a professional artist. In addition to painting, he works equally systematically in theatre—as a scenographer—, as an art teacher and as an illustrator, while also maintaining his collaborations with newspapers and magazines.

Marinos Kalligas and Giorgis Petris—each from different ideological starting points—will dwell on the matter of the reception of abstraction, remarking in their critical essays upon Vassiliou's post-war/post-civil-war period– in the 1950s and 1960s. Kalligas, on the one hand, a personal friend and genuine admirer of the painter's work, takes it upon himself to explain "why the work of Spyros Vassiliou is pleasant to a lot of people".[8] "The eye of the Greek viewer", he clarifies, "has only recently begun getting used to a new vision, created several years ago at the leading centres of art abroad and which has just now become tolerable to the broader cultivated public. Thus, when they see the 'arbitrariness' in Spyros Vassiliou's most recent work, they are not surprised. These instances of 'arbitrariness', however, are not accidental, but drawn from considered artistic experience. They are extensions of some reality, a slight 'tampering' with reality, that eventually result in an oneiric transcription of images or situations we have experienced […]".[9]

Petris, on the other hand, also dwells on the fact that Vassiliou "found a personal way to utilise all the multifarious attainments of contemporary abstract painting, but without betraying his vision and without resorting to plain formalistic quests for the aniconic".[10] A few years earlier, at the start of the same decade, in 1953 in particular, Petris had attempted to define in sociological

6 On the aesthetisation of the Greek landscape, generally, and the Aegean by painters of the so-called Generation of the 1930s, see Tziovas (2011), 36.

7 On Vassiliou's home, see Malama & Lakidou (eds.) (2005), 7-8.

8 Kalligas (1959), in Delivorrias (2003), 295.

9 *Ibid*.

10 Petris (1958), in Matthiopoulos (2008), 137.

Fig. 6 | ***Staircases***, 1959
George N. Niarchos collection

terms the buying public of Vassiliou and the painter's great commercial success: "We must admit that, in their great majority, those who can afford to buy a painting today are, also, in a sense, pursuing entertainment".[11]

Abstraction had started to become "fashionable" in Athens too. In the summer of 1958, just two years before Vassiliou received The Guggenheim National Section Award for Greece, Angelos Prokopiou, in his critical notes in *Kathimerini* newspaper, criticised the local judging committee—D. Evangelidis, K. Pangalos, M. Hadjidakis—for their choice of an artist such as Gounaropoulos, when, in his opinion, "only Spyropoulos or Vassiliou, 'due to the good quality surrealist character of his paintings', would have any hope of distinguishing themselves 'in the climate of contemporary art that prevails in New York and the Guggenheim Museum'".[12]

The triptych of *City* of 1965 (fig. 7), in the aftermath of *Lights and shadows*—his 1959 namesake painting as the book, which won the recognition of the local Guggenheim for Vassiliou in 1960—continues in the style of guaranteed popularity: the apartment blocks, large bulks of concrete in the foreground, become studded brushstrokes in the back, in order to convey the vastness of the built environment. A memory of inter-war impressionism attempts here to describe some version of abstraction, without, however, losing sight of the recognisable subject. Any likely criticism of the onslaught of modernisation that is radically changing the city with its rampant, anarchic reconstruction, is not sharp but compatible, instead, with a romantically melancholic disposition. It could be no other way—these paintings are going to adorn several apartments in this sea of high-rise blocks in Athens, as well as in other urban centres, like Thessaloniki or Volos.

"This middle-brow culture owes some of its charm, in the eyes of the middle classes who are its main consumers […] accessible versions of avant-garde

11 Petris (1953), in Matthiopoulos (2008), 76.
12 Malama (2009), 354.

experiments or accessible works which pass for avant-garde experiments",[13] writes Pierre Bourdieu in *Distinction*. The newly acquired visual consciousness of post-war reality in the 1950s and 1960s now extends to the "open collectivity"[14] and is no longer limited to the "ghetto of an elite of intellectuals and the upper classes"[15], as was the case in the inter-war period. The middle, lower middle and working classes share a common, imagined identity, in the tradition of the legendary Greekness, albeit in prevailing Cold War conditions, in an "anti-communist state",[16] and with the dividing lines between victors and losers still in operation.

On the threshold of the 1980s, in *Athens* of 1978 (fig. 9) or in works like *The white wall* of the same year (fig. 8)—sort of like a small retrospective exhibition of civil, personal symbolisms—, Vassiliou, consistently on the web of the city, comes back to himself, almost as he was introduced to the public with his inter-war works, and despite the shifts in style and technique that have occurred in the interim; he is part of the city and the city is a piece of him.

Speaking, in particular, of the ups and downs of the "myth of Greekness", Antonis Kotidis names this phase of the postmodern age "autobiographical collectivity".[17] It is a scheme—that of a journey from closed to open and, finally, to autobiographical collectivity—that may also compellingly describe the path of Vassiliou from his earliest works to those of his maturity. His integration into the field, then establishment and reflection, as stages of civil constitution, personal and collective, also resemble the stages of an initiation, and indeed not always necessarily deliberate. A type of automated compliance with social and aesthetic norms that ensure a sense of belonging, as cultural identifications are visualised in painting over the course of six decades.

13 Bourdieu (2006), 366.
14 Kotidis (2012), 178-181.
15 Op. cit., 178.
16 Kostis (2018), 721-791.
17 Kotidis (2012), 181-183.

City, 1965
Bank of Greece Art Collection

Fig. 7

Fig. 8 | ***The white wall***, 1978
Dimos and George Kokotos collection

Athens, 1978 | Fig. 9
Bank of Greece Art Collection

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NIKOS HADJIKYRIAKOS-GHIKA

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The “washing line” in Ghika’s work

The conceptual journey on the route of places and times through the works of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika, in an effort to single out features, ideas and common denominators which run through his narrations in art, is replete with satisfaction. Which recognisable motifs or subjects recur which were incorporated or transformed in his compositions from the time of his youth to that of his maturity? One could perhaps think immediately of his broad-leafed plants, or the climbers on his trellises or his trees with their multiplicity of branches—all those features, that is, which betrayed his curiosity about and undiminished devotion to the patterns of nature throughout his creative quest. It could perhaps also be his frequent references to the broken lines and polygonal motifs taken from the rocks and footpaths of Hydra, which, in spite of the total upheaval of the ruination of his family home, would always continue to articulate the structure of his thinking in supporting the architecture of his works. Just as, of course, it could also be the wall—used to delineate courtyards and terraces and delimit landscapes and clearings, both in his cubist and his later, freer, compositions—that wall which served as “a form of stereotype in his

pictures";[1] or even features from the enigmatic Far East, whence the detailed precision of his designs in pen began unconsciously to stand out in his works long before he started out on his great trip to India, Nepal and Japan in 1958 in order to experience the magic of that distant world, which would stir his emotions until the end of his life.

In order to explore the relations and the course of the first fruits in Ghika's art, we have chosen something which will perhaps not be immediately understood—and is probably unexpected—in looking at the works of his lengthy career: clothes on the washing line. These made their first appearance at the beginning of the 1930s and continued to appear—sometimes dancing, sometimes well-concealed, sometimes strictly geometrical, sometimes elegant and charming, sometimes allusively, even almost in miniature—for more than 50 years in his compositions.

Washing line of 1930 (fig. 1), a work belonging to the Benaki Museum/Ghika Gallery, was inspired by the terraces of the Hydra mansion of his childhood, which he rediscovered on his return from Paris in 1935 and which he repaired with the greatest care, giving them new life and describing them with nostalgia in his texts.[2] He spoke of the masonry ledges, the blinding light and the wind causing the foliage to tremble; and it is somewhat like that in his work, where by means of the style of painting of the period, with the almost monochrome shades and the abstract composition, that he rendered the clothes on the washing line as virtually dancing beneath the branches which accompany their movement... This relationship with the white surfaces exposed to the wind, which is so clearly conveyed in the work, was perhaps the starting point for similar renderings and alternations and could be described as the first-fruit work, which in a way would also be definitive for its subsequent development.

Washing line, 1930
Benaki Museum / Ghika Gallery

Fig. 1

1 Zervos (1964), 5.

2 Nikos Petsalis linked the image of the work with Ghika's family house at 25 Omirou Street in Athens. See Petsalis-Diomidis (1979), 157, fig. 96.

Fig. 2 | *Women and garments on a line*, 1934-1936
Benaki Museum / Ghika Gallery

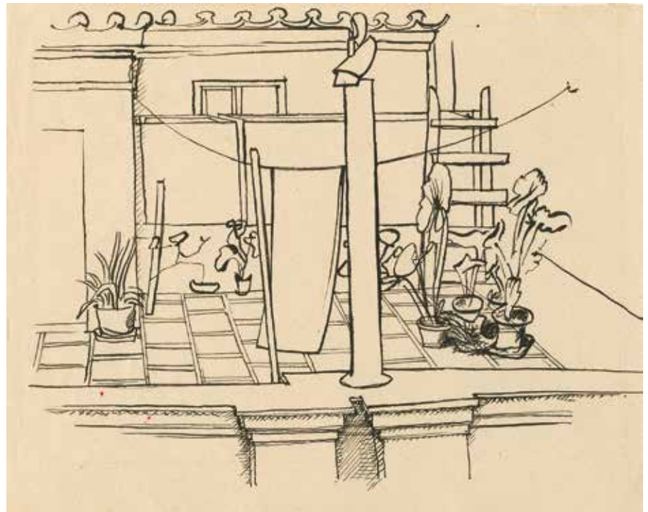

Fig. 3 | *Terrace in Athens*, 1939
Benaki Museum / Ghika Gallery

During the same decade, clothes—his laundry—were also hung out on the terraces of Athens. Settling in the centre of Athens when he returned from Paris, Ghika now pored with new insight over the details of the traditional houses of the city where he had grown up. He scrutinised their traditional features more closely—the roof tiles and the antefixes, the symmetrical paving, the plaster frameworks and the corbels, the ironwork, the awnings—and he portrayed these in many of his sketches in the period between 1935 and 1939. The two drawings *Women and garments on a line* (fig. 2) and *Terrace in Athens* (fig. 3) revert to the subject in a different manner: in the former, dimly delineated in charcoal, the washing on the line figuratively links the three female shapes, the one on the left strongly reminiscent of the form of a Caryatid; in the case of the latter, executed with the clarity of the pen, the sheet on the line in the centre is also the feature which suggests a slight movement, thus distinguishing it from the static nature of the picture.

The works *Linen on a line I* (fig. 4) and *Linen on a line II* (fig. 5), oil paintings of 1936 which belong to private collections, are entirely different in conception. Here the clothes on the line—totally schematised masses, but somewhat abstractly stylised—are supported on their severe wire lines, sometimes hovering airborne like kites before a sky clouded in lively colours and sometimes standing horizontally lined up on axes, symmetrically aligned with the mosaic of chiaroscuro imprinted on them.

During the pre-war years and in the climate of the more general quest for "Greekness", Ghika, together with the architect Dimitris Pikionis, endeavoured to support the features of Greek vernacular art and at the same time to save Neoclassical buildings in Athens. In his paintings, this interest found expression in his views of streets in the capital in the inter-war years and early 1940s. His characteristic work *Mitropoleos Square* (fig. 6) is a description of a neighbourhood with which he was very familiar, given that he lived in nearby Palaiologou Benizelou Street from 1940 to 1957. Here, the multicolour washing can only just be made out—like a small mosaic collage—high up on the small left-hand terrace.

Fig. 4 | *Linen on a line I*, 1936
Private collection

The oil on woodwork of 1946 entitled *Washer women* (fig. 7) shows two women hanging out clothes on a terrace—in all probability in the Plaka district of Athens.[3] This scene, inspired by the everyday life of that period in Athens, is of particular interest, as it is comparatively rare that we encounter human figures in Ghika's landscapes. The female figure on the left is, directly and emotionally, reminiscent of his childhood memories: "I also liked to watch women hang clothes out to dry, their plump arms wet from the laundry, standing on the parapet of a tall, flat roof, their legs looking from below like columns […]".[4] And again, the lined-up washing calls to mind another of his descriptions: "The long white nightgowns billowing in the wind as they hung from the line with the little wooden pegs assumed a bodily substance in my imagination".[5]

The theme of clothes on a washing line was remodelled in the mid-1950s in the now more geometrical compositions of the artist. The hanging sheets are now involved as structural patterns among the rest of the features and motifs. Ideas derived from cast-iron balcony railings, as in *Athenian balcony* (fig. 9), in the National Gallery in Athens, or *Neoclassical building with griffins* (fig. 10), in the A. G. Leventis Gallery in Nicosia, works in which the fixed architectural lines are a strong presence, show a new decorative approach, but with a deeper eclectic disposition. Within this framework, it is of special interest to notice a "first" for Ghika in the composition with the griffins: he added a large sheet covered with geometrical designs hanging on the wall at the top left as a background for the stretched off-white sheet.

The oil painting *Balcony II. Street scene* (fig. 11), a composition in which the scenic perspective is clearer, conveys a more distinct narration of everyday life through a unification of a multiplicity of colours; open shutters, masonry

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3 *Washer women* was a gift from Ghika to his friend Rex Warner, who was Director of the British Institute in Athens in 1945. Warner published the painting in his book *Views of Attica and Its Surroundings* in London in 1950. It was donated by Warner's descendants to the Benaki Museum in 2019.

4 Hadjikyriakos-Ghika (1996), 51.

5 *Ibid*.

Fig. 5 | *Linen on a line II*, 1936
Private collection

Mitropoleos square, 1940 | Fig. 6
Private collection

Washer women, 1946
Benaki Museum /
Ghika Gallery

Fig. 7

Fig. 8 | *Athenian balcony*, 1947
Private collection

Athenian balcony, 1955
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum | Fig. 9

Fig. 10 | ***Neoclassical building with griffins***, 1955
A. G. Leventis Gallery

ledges, skylights with ironwork motifs—all resting upon the abstract white curving surfaces—the white washing—with their creases well hollowed out. An additional feature is the harmonious conversation in the painting between the sheets which are hung out and the corresponding off-white curving leaves of the plant in the centre of the work.

Belonging to approximately the same period are the brightly lit compositions inspired by the gardens of Crete: *Plants and trellis* (fig. 12) and *Hanging cloths in the garden* (fig. 13), both works of 1954. "Ghika," Christian Zervos wrote, "attuned to the rhythm of the scene spread out before his eyes, from the garden to the glittering surface of the sea, was ready to plunge into this luminous face of nature. [...] He set himself to depict nature at its beginnings. Each of his brushstrokes, which bore within it this feeling until the next brushstroke, gave expression on the whiteness of the paper to the spontaneous curvatures of the plants, the roundness of their branches, the shadow falling on the leaves, and stressed the shaded flowers on the lit surfaces of the flowerbeds."[6] *Plants and trellis* shows precisely this multiplicity of colours of the features of nature around geometrical motifs on a flat surface, while the cloths on the line discreetly remind us of their presence. On the occasion of his retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery in 1973, Ghika said: "To the left, the trellis belongs to the masculine gender, but the plant is, without question, feminine. Are the hanging sheets from the wash perhaps from the bridal bed, from the marriage between the bow and the arrow?"[7]

In the work *Hanging cloths in the garden* (fig. 13), the earlier solid geometrical harmony of Ghika's works serves this time to frame the large pulsating white surfaces: "The sunflowers stand proudly at the top of the delicate stalks, the hanging sheets, a luminous, infallible sign of the unseen presence of man in the garden."[8] The intelligently regulated levels of the work also echo the layout

6 Zervos (1964), 10.
7 Collective (1973).
8 Achimastou-Potamianou (1975), 339.

Fig. 11 | *Balcony II. Street scene*, 1955
Private collection

Plants and trellis, 1954 | Fig. 12
Benaki Museum / Ghika Gallery

Fig. 13 *Hanging cloths in the garden*, 1954
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

of *Great composition of Hydra*, a work of 1948, in which similar obtuse-angled curving features link the levels of the geometrical spaces of the landscape.

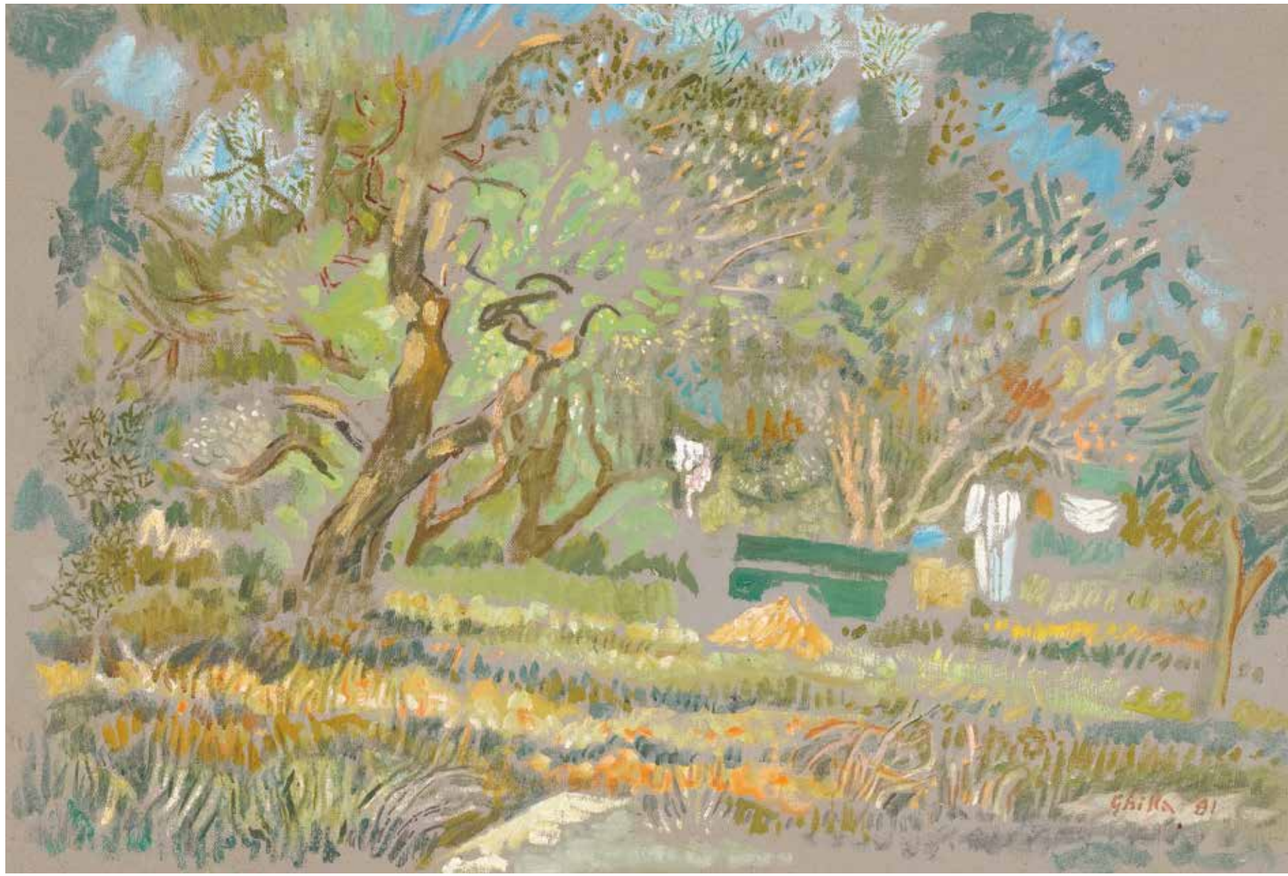
The subject would continue to recur, as in the later *Garden on Hydra* (fig. 14) of 1959, in which coloured pencils were used to create shadings and depth, producing light, hovering masses. In Ghika's very well-known work *Wild garden* (1959), with the dense vegetation of Hydra, the diffuse off-white surface can be seen again; but even more so in the large composition of the same year *Dark midday* (1959), in which the hanging fabrics are mutated into vertical features, with their folds uniting the stone-built sections, all of this forming a severely structured stage set. It is perhaps one of Ghika's most characteristic works to accord with the words of his writer friend Stephen Spender: "a complicated technique, like an enormous web of materials with a differing texture, with complexes of different patterns, turning in different directions".[9]

Corfu came into Ghika's life towards the end of the 1960s. Geometrical, sun-scorched, waterless Hydra was now replaced by the Ionian island with its lush vegetation, its age-old olive trees in the boundless olive groves, the curving buildings and its humid, lyrical environment. His walks in the clearings on the hillsides around his house, with his easel and sketchbook in hand, once again gave him the pleasure of discovering foregrounds in nature. A sweet, unexpected return to clothes on the washing line is *Washing line amongst olive trees* (fig. 15); this time the motif is executed discreetly, in white and at a distance, on the branches of the trees.

How were drying fabrics—as motif and symbol—refashioned, serving as a continuous link uniting the decades of Ghika's life in a familiar manner? At a first reading, it seems that for the artist it was the fabrics which declared the movement within the apparently static nature of his works—in any event, he was always inwardly fascinated by dance, the fluid sense of the circular form. At other times, it seems to be a reminder of sound, of the wind whistling through

9 Spender (1964), 23.

Fig. 14 | *Garden on Hydra*, 1959
Benaki Museum / Ghika Gallery



Washing line amongst olive trees, 1981 | Fig. 15
Private collection

them; elsewhere, again, it is the leverage of a tension—of a powerfully drawn bow. The light, with its iridescences and shade—a theme always dominant in his compositions and particularly in his landscapes, finds an ideal means for its emphasis in its reflection from the washing on the line. Finally, and perhaps the most substantive consideration, there is the symbolism of human presence, of interpolation, of recollection. In spite of all the different stylistic features, from the meticulousness of the design to the hasty allusive brushstrokes or the densely matted surfaces, the "clothes on a line", in various places and at different times, reveal to us relationships which bridge the thinking in the creative career of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika.

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YANNIS TSAROUCHIS

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Beginning has many births. An irregular approach to the juvenilia of Yannis Tsarouchis

Beginning not only creates but is its own method because it has intention.
Edward W. Said, *Beginnings. Intention and Method*
(Granta Books, London 1997, xxiii)

I did not "create artwork", as others did. Tests and experiments only.
Yannis Tsarouchis, *Απολογία/Αγαθόν το εξομολογείσθαι* [It is good to confess]
(Kastaniotis publications, Athens 1986, 262)

The visit of juvenilia, instigated by this research exhibition and its curatorial concept, brings us back to the first beginning of the painting act and to consecutive renewals within it. It casts the spotlight onto unseen juvenilia, incomplete and homeless essays, along with proven precursor works, to reveal a heterogeneous body of non-regularities in constant transition. It may be easy, on a practical level, to explicitly isolate different views, contents or the conditions and the time of inception of a beginning; studying the early works, however, which dictates a comparative co-examination with their—in absentia—mature counterparts, cannot be exhausted in simply identifying and recording distinctive or common themes, techniques and stylistic features.

This early archive, which, in its most part, is excluded from the canon and in the shadow of what is considered the mature or principal work, allows a different framework of reception, closer to the genetic core of the artistic act, and bids us, foremost, to undertake an active, critical reading beyond evaluative divisions, internal hierarchies and regulatory engagements in aesthetic and ideological/ethnocentric stereotypes. Mostly, however, it forces us to reconsider the theoretical issue of the beginning itself, in the critical terms set and developed by Edward W. Said in 1975, in his excellent and always topical treatise *Beginnings*. Our aim is to shift the reading of juvenilia from a closed archive of enduring similarities to the continuously shifting and transforming relationality of the difference produced by the beginning and by each new subsequent start. The category of works described as "juvenilia" is not exclusively identified with artistic "juvenility", nor the creator's biological age. Juvenilia permeate as a structure in the creative process, contain their own thought and language, and serve a different artistic intention each and every time.

The concept of "beginning" is defined as the starting point of an activity —always retrospectively and after it has been completed—, in relation to something that follows later on. However, if the relationships between earlier and later are consequent in a strictly literal sense, that doesn't mean they automatically entail a causal relevance. Each beginning is different and installs actually an intricate grid of relationships, both with pre-existing works and those created later. Relationships of continuity and/or opposition, affinity and/or alterity born between the before—and the genealogies of before—and the after do not favour straightforward reductions, nor could they encourage a linear viewing of early, middle and late works or phases. How, then, do we approach the beginning today—which, according to Said "not only creates, but is its own method, because it has intention"?[1]

[1] Said (1997), xxiii, see quote at the beginning.

An answer to this key question is provided by Yannis Tsarouchis's painting oeuvre itself, which incorporates the tools for a critical methodological approach. A retrospective viewing of Tsarouchis's artistic production from the 1920s to the 1980s reveals a permanent aesthetic—and cultural—hovering over different and/or contradictory directions, systems, means and places, which is inscribed on the inner core of the works, mutates, and persists as a necessary creative condition until the end. It engenders vacillations, repetitions and reversions, breaches and intersections, constantly activating new beginnings and restarts through time, and mainly a profound drive of creativity, artistic nomadism and lifelong training and apprenticeship for the painter. The continuities of Tsarouchis's work, interwoven with the discontinuities, the ruptures and their hybrid fusions, preserve and imprint on the body of painting the trials, the doubt, the will, the mistake, the emotion, the contradictions, the desire, the obsession, the thought of juvenilia itself, crossing again and again the dividing lines of beginning and end.

Juvenilia and their multiple early transformations, to focus on the first beginning and the object of this exhibition, could be identified as a period of about fifteen years, between 1926 and 1940, whose boundaries, however, are not unmovable. They were sought, in their most part, in the rich collection of the Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation and its extensive archive of primary studio material from all periods, which we had already been given the opportunity to study in depth during our research in preparation for the major exhibition "Yannis Tsarouchis – Between East and West" in 2000.

The selection of 15 works—having, in the interest of economy, omitted certain stages—begins with the first adolescent exercises in painting and the modernist studies and essays that followed. It showcases, next, a body of "chromatic" or "Oriental" style work, during the most mature phase of his early period, between 1936-1939, the painter's essential break with the conservative, academic past of Greek painting, before, finally, including yet another boundary, the beginning of his "linear" or "naturalistic" phase, with a 1940 painting standing as its juvenilis. In the antinomic pairing of these figurative systems that reflect

two contradictory and ever-alternating views on painting as well as a continual confrontation with them, we recognise the profound creative dilemma of Tsarouchis's work and the seductive ambivalence of the painter.

By the naturalistic exercises of the early years, the young painter, faced with the blank page, comes into confrontation with the how and what of the act of painting, deliberately tests his creative abilities, conjures up his teachers and attempts, as a self-taught artist, before and after his official studies, to gather and create, through many different paths, knowledge, language and its rules. We can already distinguish a dual initial orientation: he paints what he sees from nature and endeavours to reshape it into an artistic entity. The themes/ideas he has in mind are the world which moves him and which will endure: everyday objects in still lifes, the transparency of glass, the city, its people, mythologies of intimacy and interaction, unseen stories of half-open houses, the melancholy of enclosed facades, the copying of a scroll from Byzantine fresco-painting (fig. 1-6).

A learning practice such as copying, which the artist will perform until the end of his creative journey, builds his familiarity, in his first steps, with technical knowledge and difficulties, sharpens his mimetic abilities and, most importantly, encourages him, later, to adopt certain styles. His multiple and heterogeneous interests in copying, aroused by eponymous and anonymous forms of art alike, intersect with his always present, marked aptitude to be prepared for both faithful representation and withdrawing from the same.

Through copies of Byzantine frescoes, Fayum and Hellenistic mosaics, folk costumes, weaving and woodcut motifs, vernacular and neoclassical homes all over Greece and, at the same time, through copies of contemporary avant-garde works from art books and journals, such as *Cahiers d'Art* and *Minotaure*, we follow the apprenticeship and practice of the roving painter in areas of artistic traditions which, in the early 1930s, were mostly connected to the Byzantine-folk idiom of Fotis Kontoglou—whose assistant and student he was during 1930-1934—, the naive painting of Theophilos and the shadow theatre posters of Karagiozis of Athanasios Dedousaros and Evgenios Spatharis,

Tomatoes and cooking pot, 1926
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

Fig. 1

Fig. 2 | ***The cheese platter***, 1927
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

Oil and votive candle, 1927 | Fig. 3
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

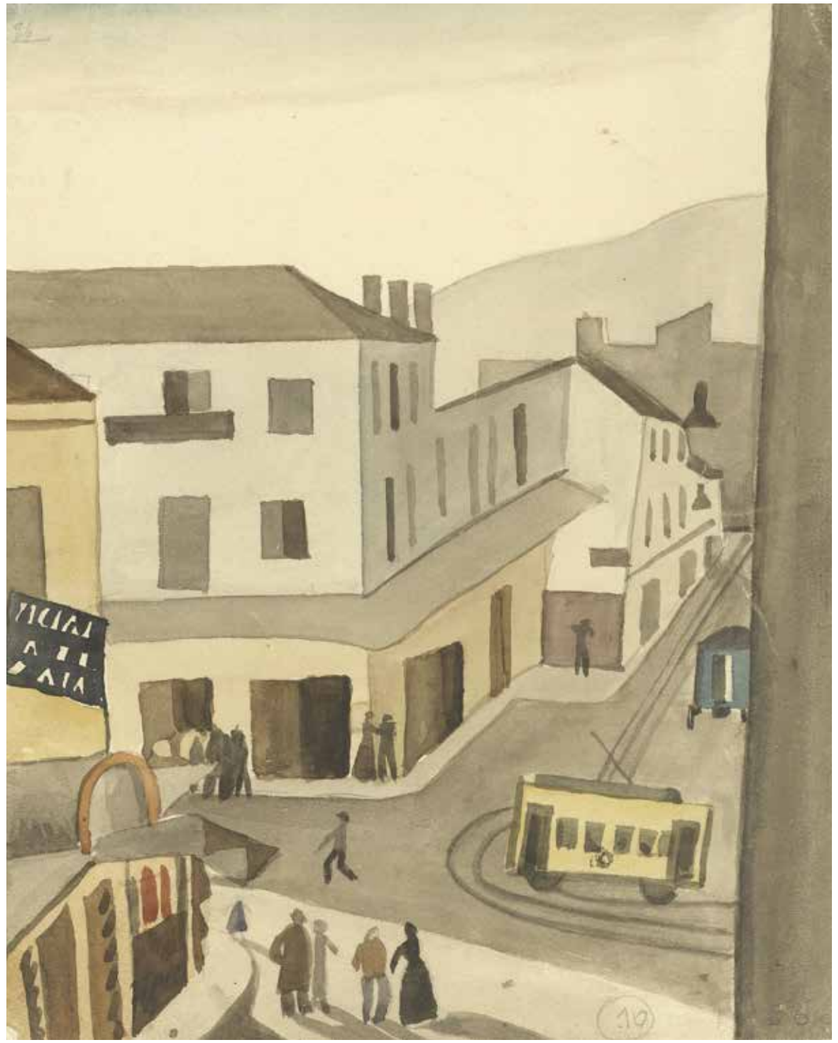

Fig. 4 | *Monastiraki*, 1926
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

Pink houses in Nafplion, 1927 | Fig. 5
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

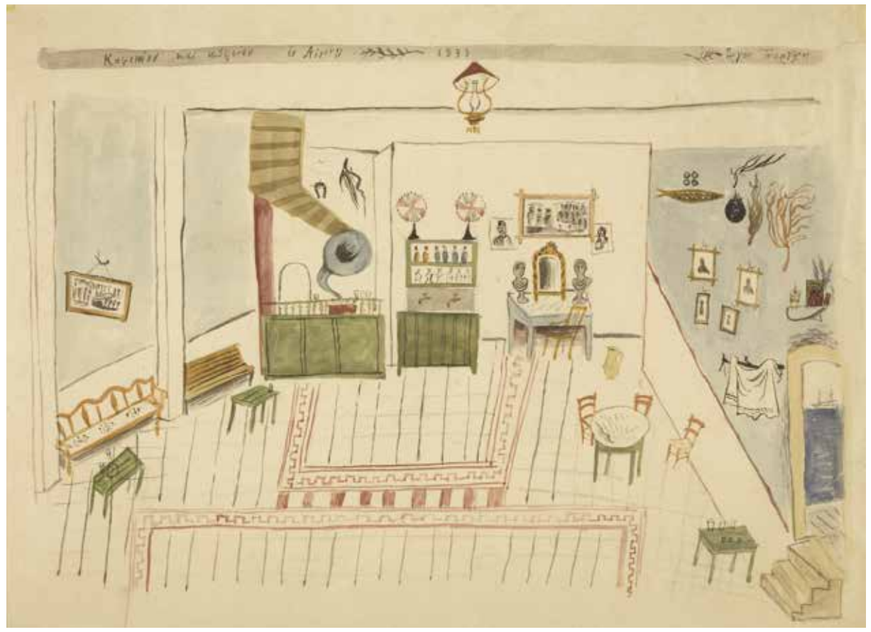

Fig. 6 | *Coffee-house and barber shop in Aegina*, 1933
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

and certainly Hellenistic and Coptic painting but also ancient Greek vase painting. On the other hand, a hidden, solitary dialogue with different works of his contemporary avant-garde fellow artists in Western European centres is visible in his first attempts to depict a flat or geometric space without perspective, and mostly between 1934-1935, in a series of post-cubist paintings and surrealist drawings in pen and pencil, which were and would remain homeless (fig. 7).

However, the invisible relationship to works of others, and especially Henri Matisse, opens up a broad field of possibilities and the prospect of a network of potential connections of modernism with locality and Eastern traditions, which fulfils the principal mandate of the so-called Generation of the 1930s. In the decisive year 1936, Tsarouchis begins, and will complete within three years, without having exhausted its limits, his "chromatic" or "Oriental" style, as he describes it, and some of the best works of the 20th century at the end of the inter-war period. In the works of this series, the male body is placed categorically at the centre of the painter's thematic choices. The creative process begins from an initial, more or less naturalistic draft, drawn in pencil from life, before arriving at the final work, where painting claims its autonomy from its mimetic function through colour. Although Tsarouchis did not follow Matisse's theory of colour equivalence to its absolute extremities, and although colour never completely denies its resemblance to the real object of reference, "its struggle", nonetheless, "to find its right place in the painting", as the artist remarks,[2] inevitably leads to changes in the mass of forms, to schematisation, to violation of the fidelity of the contour line, and, ultimately, to the recreation of the form itself. The verisimilitude of the model gives way to chromatic expressiveness as naturalism does to design rhythm. The pull this theme exerts on the artist, on the one hand, and his will to transcend it, on the other, are equally obvious. The hidden presence of other works within the works which installs itself here, as a means or reproducing or idealising the subject, reveals, through

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[2] Comment by the painter on the works in the exhibition; supplement to *Yannis Tsarouchis. Painting*, Athens: Tsarouchis Foundation, 1990, iv.

Fig. 7 | ***Still life with ruby red background***, 1934-1935
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

a process of translation, an extensive network of intertextual relationships with sculptural examples, both ancient and contemporary (the eastern pediment of the temple of Zeus in Olympia [470-456 B.C.], Rodin's *The Thinker*, 1880), Fayum portraits, anonymous photographs by itinerant photographers, as well as styles such as the palette of Polygnotus (ochre, black, red and white) and the off-white or terracotta background of ancient vase painting and the posters of Karagiozis (fig. 8-15).

Stimulated by his copy of Medusa's head (a scene from a floor mosaic in a 2nd century home in Piraeus), which the artist creates in one of his visits to the Archaeological Museum in 1939, he begins anew, this time to paint differently. He returns to the pre-modern period and 19th century naturalism, subverting his earlier practices in order to reproduce his external model with the greatest possible fidelity. In 1940, he paints his first trompe l'oeil male nude from life. He copies the colours faithfully and uses the right combination of shapes to define their span. Although, later on, he will frequently return to his earlier self-referential painting, a new system of trompe l'oeil representation though design style and the descriptive value of colour, breaks into the work of Tsarouchis, to persist in multiple hybrid transformations and references, sometimes to the Byzantine technique of modelling forms, and sometimes to the ascetic aesthetic of the four colours of Polygnotus, which he had practiced through his juvenilis production of copies.

Fig. 8 | *Evzone and family*, 1936
Anastasia Sgoumpopoulou's collection

Cyclist dressed as Evzone, with a temple at the bottom right corner, 1936
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation | Fig. 9

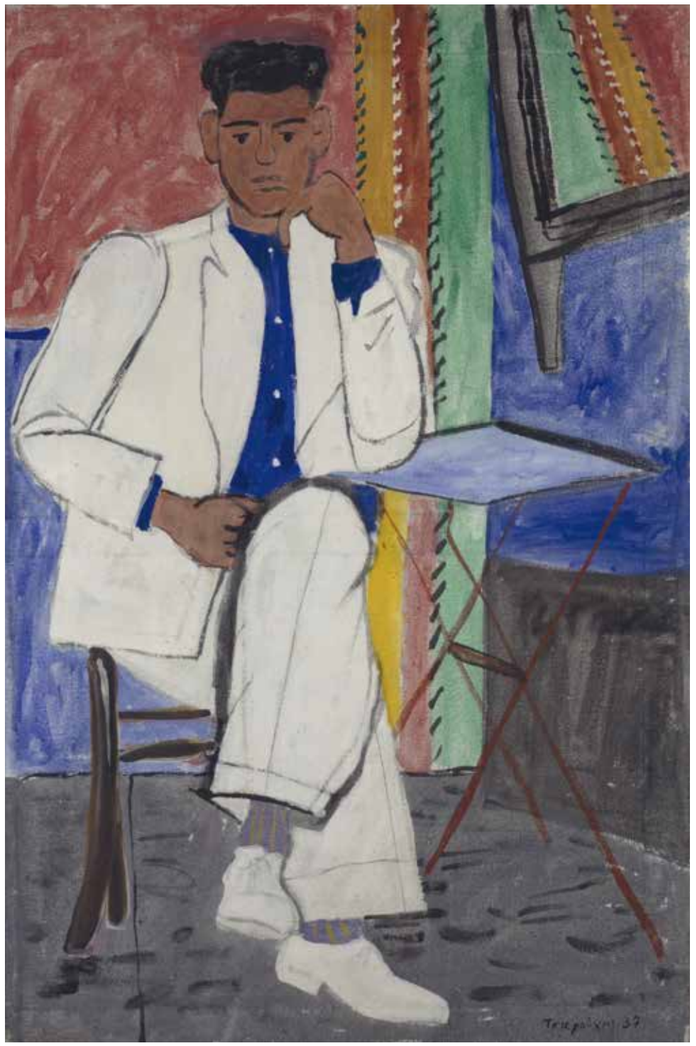
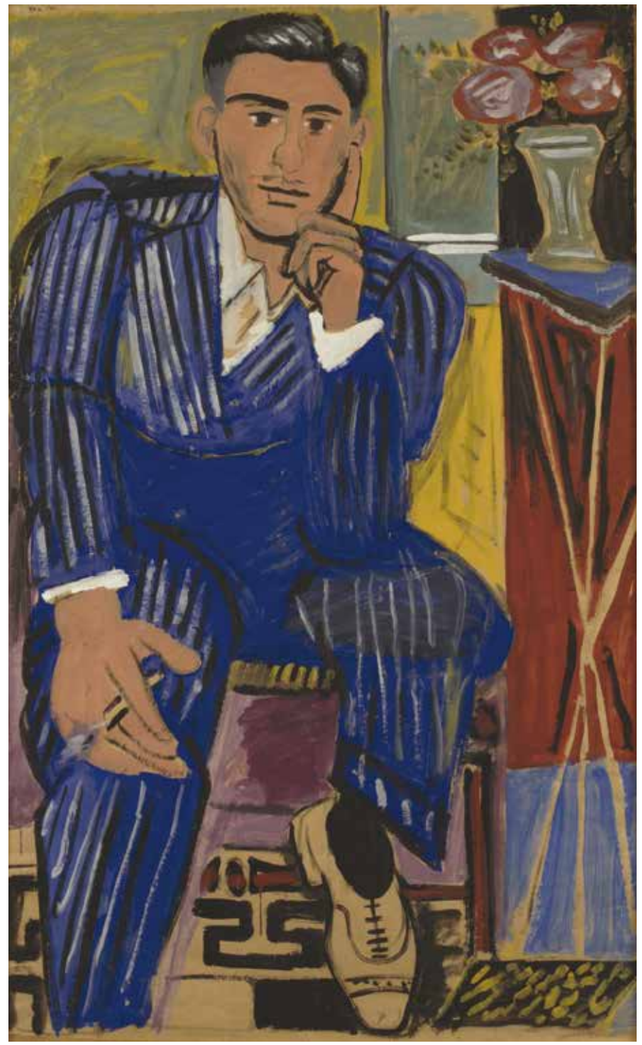


Fig. 10 | *Youth in white linen suit*, 1937
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation



The thinker, 1936
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation | Fig. 11

Fig. 12 | ***Nude Italian, seated in profile***, 1937
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

Seated dark-haired youth with a topcoat, 1937
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation | Fig. 13

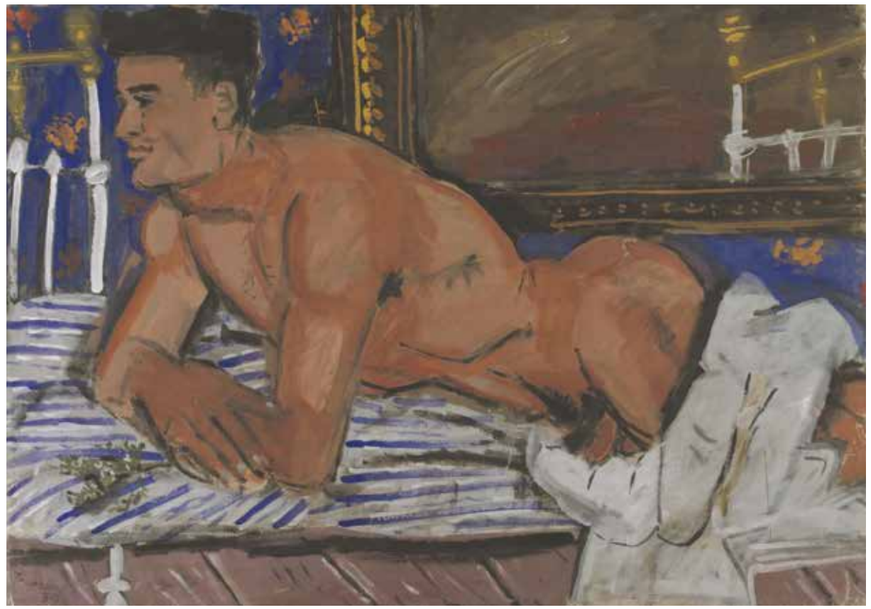
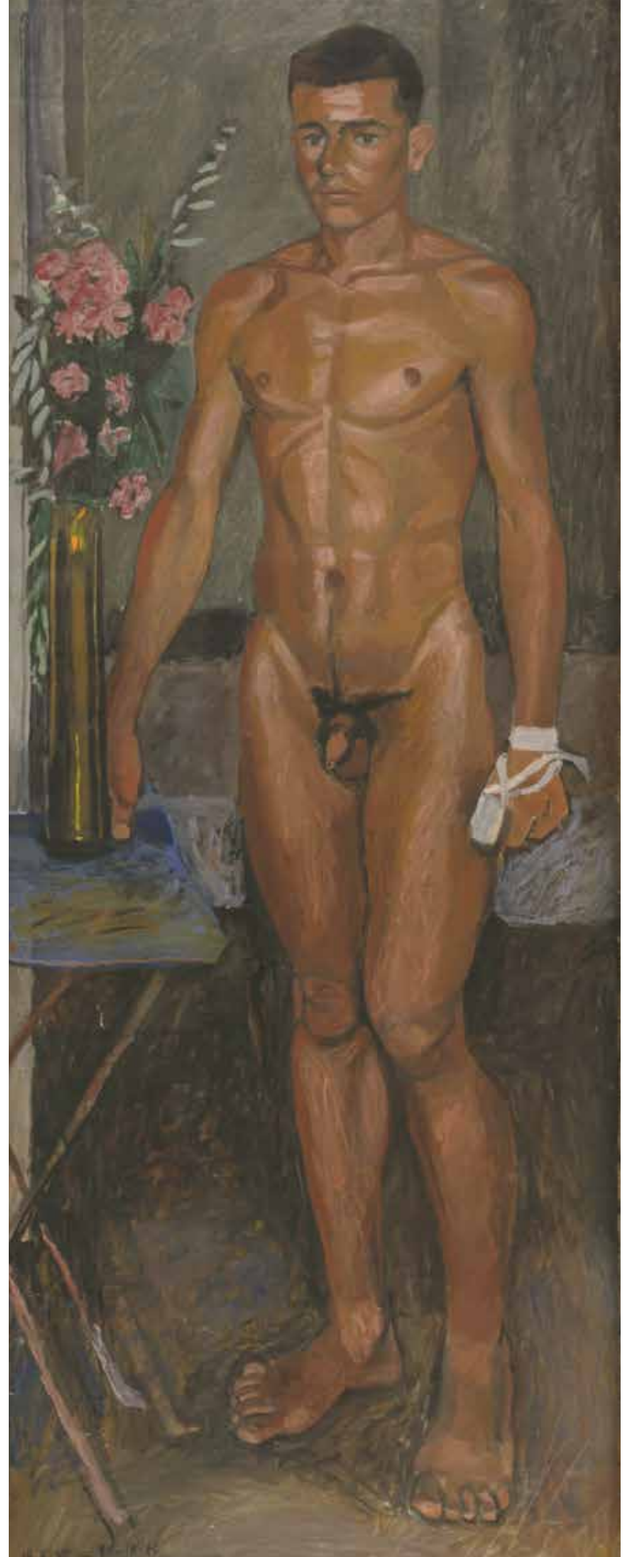
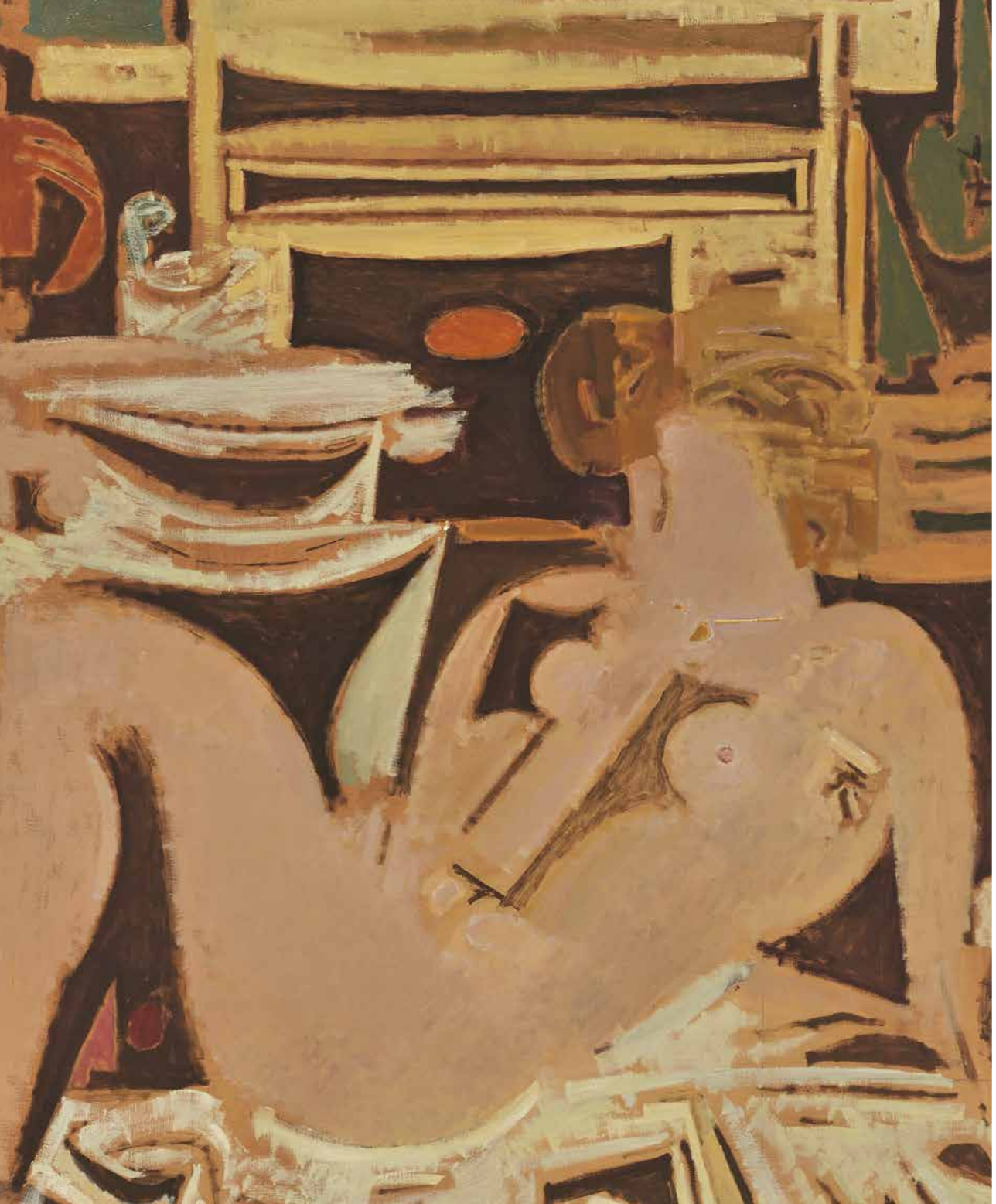


Fig. 14 | *Youth posing as a statue from Olympia*, 1939
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

Nude youth with oleanders and a bandage on his hand, 1940
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation

Fig. 15





YANNIS MORALIS

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Yannis Moralis. From the École de Paris to "Greekness" and *abstraction géométrique*

The idea of a conservative artwork is inherently absurd. By emphatically separating themselves from the empirical world, their other, they bear witness that the world itself should be other than it is; they are the unconscious schemata of that world's transformation. Even for an artist like Mozart, who seems so unpolemical and who according to general agreement moves solely within the pure sphere of spirit, the polemical element is central in the power by which the music sets itself at a distance that mutely condemns the impoverishment and falsity of that from which it distances itself.

Theodor W. Adorno (2002), 177

The central idea of this exhibition focuses on seeking the way in which certain morphological features of the early artistic attempts (juvenilia) survive, become noticeable and shape the mature works of the selected artists. That hypothesis presupposes an essentialist psychological view of the self, considering it the un-historic and atavistically structured subject of an intelligent and self-sufficient being.

However, in keeping with Michel Foucault, I think that the self exists always "in relation", not as an essence but as a historical entity, as a diversified point, active, malleable and self-modifying, within the horizon of its experiences and its social interaction: "That entity, the 'self', is not a fact of nature but a construct

Fig. 1 | ***Love – Hope***, 1934
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

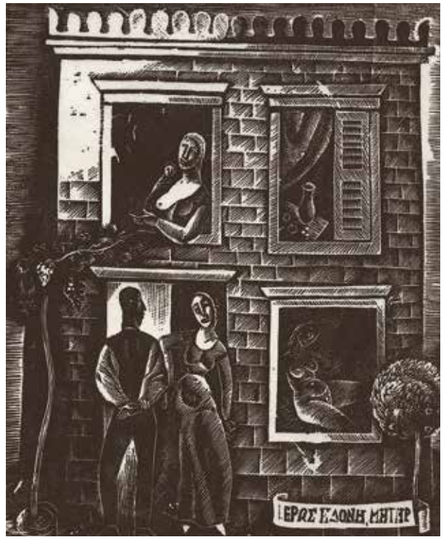

Fig. 2 | ***Love, Pleasure, Mother***, 1933
Alpha Bank Art Collection

of history. […] a field of interventions open to the diverse and indefinite possibilities of transformation".[1] Foucault also referred to a "historical-practical" labour of self-transcendence, through the work we perform on ourselves. [2]

I think, therefore, that the selfness of an artist—of every individual—is shaped and gradually reformed through their inner diversity, the frequently contradictory psychocognitive dispositions and capabilities, which are subject to, on the one hand, their reflective task of self-figuration (*techniques de soi*) and, on the other hand, on the objective socio-historical conditions they experience. Stylistic breakthroughs or unpredictable tendencies in the work of major painters of the 20th century, such as Picasso, Derain, De Chirico, Malevich, Duchamp, Ernst, Picabia, et al., confirm the above and dictate the pluralistic interpretation of Buffon's maxim: "les styles c'est l'homme".

With these thoughts, I identify a number of Yannis Moralis's (1919-2009) youthful works, mostly engravings, from the 1930s (fig. 1, 2 and 3), which I believe contain morphological attributes that later gradually prevailed in the work of the final decades of his career.

I will attempt, that is, to interpret his course, from the 1930s, when he moved within the boundaries of the so-called École de Paris, to painting with "Greekness" in the early 1950s, which then evolved into the style of *abstraction géométrique* in the 1960s, to become more or less standardised in his final exhibitions.

Moralis, in response to the "*climat international*", as he wrote,[3] engaged with both the dominant global modernist trends, from which he drew eclectically,

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1 Macherey (2023), 15-33. Cf. Bourguignon (2019), 388-391, and Tzanakis (2020), 23-24 & 49-64.

2 Foucault (1988), 26.

3 In a letter to the later academic (membre titulaire de l'Académie des Beaux-arts), banker and collector Pierre [David] Weill, Y. Moralis wrote, in 1963: "La peinture grecque d'aujourd'hui tend vers une peinture non-figurative, ainsi que vers l'internalisation du style. […] Maintenant nous avons des influences du 'climat international' sans que l'on pourrait qualifier d'animateurs". See Moralis (1963).

and the prevailing ideologies in the field of Greek art. He had claimed that "the painter must paint in accordance with his time",[4] obviously meaning that they should paint according to the dominant optical-visual culture of their age.

During the 1930s, he made his start from a perception of painting whose main features were the plasticity of forms, a realistic view of the three-dimensional space, and design and colour precision in the representation of the "here-and-now" of his subject. From the early 1950s, he gradually moved on to an increasingly abstract art, to arrive at an austere, frugal style, dominated by flatness and a rendering of forms without tonal gradations, the absence of a light source, an abstract, two-dimensional view of space and an exact—linear and allusively chromatic—rendering of abstract, anthropocentric, atemporal subjects.

In other terms, I would describe this path as a transition from the painting of subjective vital sensuousness, an emotional methexis in the world of human intimacy and the optical and tactile experience of embodied existence ("of the memory of touch",[5] as he put it), to a painting that is essentially rational and intellectual, monumental and allusive, yet fleshless and exsanguinated by its inclination to geometricity. Moralis, turning away from anything topical, was led to an abstract style of classical spirituality that disregarded experiential reality, the phenomenological perception of everyday life and the "facticity" of contemporary living, not going as far as indirectly renouncing its sparsity and falsehood, as Adorno argued that every active classicism does, but obviously detached from it. In these works, the painter transcended the subjectivity of "Being 'thrown' into the world" to present us with a notional, ontologically timeless and denaturised existence of beings. Internalising, however, the hopeless angst of existence, he attempted to exorcise the "Being-toward-death" through the monumentalisation of his subjects, which were often focused on the Love

4 Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 105.
5 Lambraki-Plaka (2011), 20.

Café, 1939
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 3

and Death dipole.[6] An experience of death had, in his own words, "haunted" him since his childhood.[7]

As the starting point of this path, we can take the callipygian *Nude* of 1939 (fig. 4) and as its final destination the understated *The island* of 1976 (fig. 7). The former leans towards the neo-baroque example of De Chirico (fig. 5), and the latter towards *abstraction géométrique* which, starting from the works of Picasso (fig. 6), was followed by a plethora of artists in the post-war years. While nothing betrays that the two works have been made by the same hand, they are bound by compositional harmony and precision of design.

Moralis, whether empirically in the early years of his studies, or methodically and deliberately, from the very first of his mature works of the 1940s, paid particular attention to the balance of the composition, the precision of the contour line, and the chiaroscuro of forms. Composition and design were the aesthetic bases of all his works, and it was to these that colour submitted. In an imagined all-time dispute and schematic ranking of painters from the Renaissance to the present day, Moralis undoubtably belonged in the Florentine rather than the Venetian tradition:[8] in the array of Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raffaello Sanzio, Dürer, Poussin, David, Ingres, Courbet, Cézanne and Picasso; not Giorgione, Bellini, Tiziano, Veronese, Rubens, Delacroix, Turner,[9] Monet, Renoir and Matisse.

Henri Matisse, however, shrewdly observed that the conflict between design and colour is waged not only between painters throughout the ages, but also within the same individual/painter over the course of their life.[10]

6 Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 122.

7 Moralis (2001).

8 On this, see Kemp (19922), 284, and Pace (2003).

9 Moralis has remarked that "Turner is a great painter, but not of the ones I like; I mean his style". See Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 120.

10 Mentioned by Matisse in a letter to André Rouveyre on 12.6.1941. See Matisse (2004), 188. Cf. Matisse (1999), 188.

That inner battle between the colourist and the designer is also evident in Moralis's development.[11] The painter, who gradually reduced the importance of colour and adopted a palette of few mixed hues, the hushed shades of the "foliage of olive trees" and the "wings of the partridge",[12] demonstrated that, from the 1950s onwards, the designer prevailed over the colourist.

Moralis's artistic education, from 1931, at the Athens School of Fine Arts, had taken shape in the libertine environment of Umvertos Argyros's studio, which he had chosen after an initial two months at the studio of Kostis Parthenis, which he left because he couldn't abide by the discipline and the imposition of the teacher. Moralis, like other artists,[13] had wryly described his studentship under Argyros: "The whole gang—Nikolaou, Kapralos, etc.—was there. Argyros was "Free-for-all", he'd let you do whatever you wanted! […] I had total freedom".[14]

Also teaching engraving at the School however, from 1932, was Yannis Kefallinos, who was a defining influence on the young artist.[15] It is my belief that demands for precision and technical mastery in engraving, as well as the necessary simplifications of the design imposed by the tools (cutters) and the nature of the material (wooden mould) instilled in him a geometric compositional density, clean contour lines, clarity in design and an abstract simplicity in forms, and may have taught him that a work had the potential to be visually self-sufficient and complete without the surge of colour.

11 To the question which works he would have in a *Musée imaginaire*, he responded: "Fayum. Pompei, mosaics of Ravenna, *The Tempest* by Giorgione and *The Tempest* by Greco (View of Toledo), several of Greco, also Da Vinci, Titian, Italian primitifs, Delacroix and Ingres (regardless if the two were always at each other's throat), Picasso's *Guernica*, Matisse, Braque". See Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 124.

12 See his own remarks in Lambraki-Plaka (2011), 17. Cf. Tsigkakou (ed.) (2011), 117 & 118.

13 See Panagopoulos (1982), 90-91.

14 Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 24. Cf. Moralis' narrative in Sgourakis & Sgouraki (1982), 07:32-07:38.

15 On his engraving work, see Orati (1993).

Fig. 4 | ***Nude***, 1939
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 5 | Giorgio de Chirico, ***Reclining bather (Il bagno di Diana)***, 1933
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

Pablo Picasso, ***Harlequin and woman with necklace***, 1917
Centre Pompidou | **Fig. 6**

The island, 1976
Maximos Mansion | **Fig. 7**

In addition to his prints, his drawings, as well as the small maquettes of coloured paper collage he had made in 1937 for the Balls at the Artists' Society "Atelier" (fig. 8 and 9), demonstrate his skill in ordered two-dimensional composition and geometric schematisation. That experience, of combining flat, uniformly coloured shapes without the illusional representation of space and volume, will be activated anew several decades later.

In 1937, as we know, Moralis and Nikolaou pursued further studies, first in Rome and later in Paris, where they connected with the circle of Greek painters, who more or less followed in the style of Dimitrios Galanis and André Derain. Moralis, even before going to Paris, drew pictorial examples from the spectrum of the so-called École de Paris of the inter-war period. As he tells it: "We sought lessons in Paris",[16] "later I started to like Galanis […] and, from the reproductions I saw, Derain, that is, his cubist period, the middle one, not the fauve, nor the renaissance. When I went to see the originals, Derain had started to recede and then I discovered Picasso, Braque and Matisse. I thought of that triumvirate as gods".[17]

It is indeed obvious in his works that the above drove his inspiration: as, for example, is evident in *Self-portrait* of 1934 (fig. 10), which might be compared to that of Picasso (fig. 11), or in the *Portrait of the painter Theodossios Christodoulou* (fig. 12). Derain, in fact, of the "renaissance" period, also intrigued him (fig. 14), despite what he said, as we can see in *Portrait of Ioanna N. Lourou* (fig. 13) and other works of those years.

It is of interest that during their studies Moralis, Nikolaou and others belonged to a circle of students influenced by the Young Communist League of Greece (OKNE),[18] while in Paris he partook in solidarity rallies for the Spanish

16 Lambraki-Plaka (2011), 19.

17 Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 105. Cf. Lambraki-Plaka (2011), 19.

18 According to the oral account of Titika Nikiforaki, a student at the Athens School of Fine Arts and a close friend of Moralis and Nikolaou (later, her husband), the ASFA circle of Left-wing students was led by OKNE member and Moralis' peer Dimitris Batsis, a law student, who, in March 30,1952, would stand next to Nikos Belogiannis before the firing squad.

Preliminary design for the masquerade decoration of the Ball of the Artists' Society "Atelier", 1937
Private collection

Fig. 8

Preliminary design for the masquerade decoration of the Ball of the Artists' Society "Atelier" , 1937
Private collection

Fig. 9

Democrats during the Civil War in Spain. As he had put it, they were "a little Left-wing".[19] By contrast, upon his return to Athens in September 1939 and after, he refrained from any public political action or stance. Correspondingly, in his work, with the exception of the War of Albania, there are no traces of the—so highly charged by events and dismal circumstances—history and social reality of the period during which he matured and established himself as an artist (Occupation, Civil War, Cold War, Dictatorship, Metapolitefsi). From that perspective, the introductory remark by Adorno above helps us to interpret the shift/flight of the artist towards abstract classicistic geometricity as a choice of negation, as a protracted denial of depicting the present and consenting to its imposition.

The works Moralis created during the Occupation and in the first post-war years, works that secured his appointment as professor at the foundation-level studio of the Athens School of Fine Arts in 1947, attest to the high level of knowledge he had acquired in painting, both in studying the composition and faithfully reproducing the subject. These works are distinguished for their clarity and sharpness, as well as the imperceptible sense of an emotional detachment.[20] *The painter with his wife*[21] and the compositions with female figures, *Portrait of Maria Roussen*,[22] *Two friends*,[23] *The table* (fig. 15), with their realism and vivid allure, invite us into their space to approach them, to touch the prominent objects or the carnal human beings, while the depictions of women in his works of the early 1950s keep us at a distance and gradually, in five-year increments, they seem increasingly to belong in another, untouchable spacetime of their own,

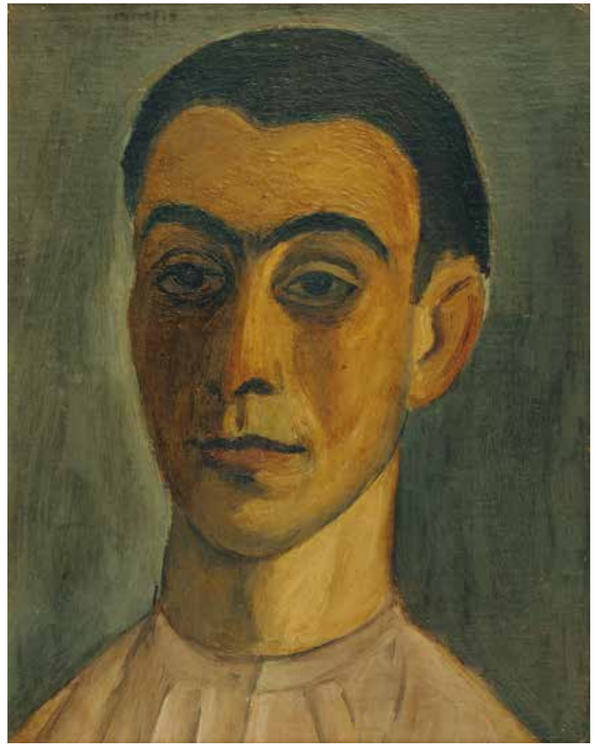
19 Tsigkakou (ed) (2001), 22, 42-43 & 46.

20 Matthiopoulos (2007), 295-297.

21 Yannis Moralis, *The painter and his wife*, 1948, oil on canvas, 148 x 74 cm, National Gallery, Π.7688.

22 Yannis Moralis, *Portrait of Maria Roussen*, 1943, oil on canvas, 92.6 x 43,5 cm, National Gallery, Π.7686.

23 Yannis Moralis, *Two friends*, 1946, oil on canvas, 100 x 67 cm, National Gallery, Π.7693.



Self-portrait, 1934
Benaki Museum

Fig. 10

Pablo Picasso,
Self-portrait, 1906
Musée National Picasso

Fig. 11

Fig. 12 | *Portrait of the painter Theodossios Christodoulou*, 1939
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Portrait of Ioanna N. Lourou, c. 1940
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum | Fig. 13

André Derain,
Portrait de Madame Maurice Renou, c. 1925
Private collection | Fig. 14

Fig. 15 ***The table***, 1947
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

of which we are allowed sight, but not access, nor desires. His engravings also illustrate his interest in rendering the vigour and plasticity of bodies (fig. 16).

Until the end of the 1940s, Moralis's work evolved and matured rapidly, oriented towards realistic representation, which, in certain works, he marginally exceeded. Touching upon the poetic sublimation of commonplace subjects and coming to make his object transparent, nodding towards a suprasensible reality beyond its physical existence, he stimulated—perhaps unintentionally, instinctively and unconsciously—the romantic hope of the possibility of connecting to the great flow of life that runs through everything and resonates within us.[24] These works, four of which he exhibited at the Panhellenic Exhibition in 1948,[25] established him in the world of art. M. Karagatsis, in *Vradyni* newspaper, wrote "[…] is the most outstanding painter of contemporary Greece. […] Moralis is not anxious to seek new paths. He takes the old ones. The difference being that he renews them. He adapts them in rational, evolutionary terms, to the spirit of the age, in the good sense of the word. Positive art".[26] Manolis Hatzidakis had also remarked that "he is not afraid of being described as an academic, […] he exercises his great talents in the natural depiction of things". He further encouraged him to attain "unity in composition that is enriched by meaning" and "the expressive fullness of colour".[27]

Subsequently, however, while the artist did "attain unity in composition", he would gradually renounce both the "natural depiction of things" and "the expressive fullness of colour" and ultimately let go of the thread of realism altogether. Under the unspoken influence of Parthenis's classicism, as well as the

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24 On the poetic sublimation of commonplace subjects in art, as the thread connecting realists and naturalists to romantics and impressionists, see Taylor (2007), 694-700.

25 His works: *Pregnant woman*, 1948, oil on canvas, 102 x 65 cm, National Gallery, Π.7694; *The painter and his wife*, o.p.; *The table*, 1947, o.p.; *Two friends*, o.p., see Panhellenic (1948), Moralis Ioannis, no. 366; *Portrait*, 1948, no. 367; *Portrait*, 1948, no. 368; *Composition*, 1947, no. 369; *Portrait*, 1946.

26 Karagatsis (1948).

27 Hatzidakis (1948).

direct effect of Nikolaou's quests, who, from 1947-1948, had dedicated himself to studying the proportions and the golden ratio in ancient Greek sculpture,[28] Moralis turned gradually to abstract painting, guided by the compositional austerity of tombstones.

To Nikolaou's imposing and austere composition, with life-sized male figures in the Ceremony Hall of Panteion University in 1949 (fig. 17), Moralis responded with three female *Nudes* he presented at his exhibition at Armos in 1952, works that caused sensation with their power, the frugal solidity and the inner tension of the geometrical stillness of the figures (fig. 18). These works, however, heralded the onset of a movement away from naturalisation of his visual world, by his shift to a limited number of mixed hues, minimal chiaroscuros, simplified planes, and an elevation of the contour line versus the plasticity of forms. These compositions were the harbingers of his subsequent development (fig. 19).

In the western world, from the late 1950s, it was becoming evident to all that global trends of abstract art were shaping the rule and framework for evaluating artworks and, consequently their creators, while, in Greece, the ideological construct of "Greekness" was being heavily promoted as the mix of global modernism with tradition.[29] Conversely, realism was by now considered aesthetically and historically outdated, while ideologically it was borderline suspect to the extent that it was supported fervently by Left-wing aesthetes and art critics.

Moralis, a "*bourgeois anti-académique*", according to Tony Spiteris, with his abstractive quests, responded to the aesthetic expectations of the emergent educated urban strata that sought the country's Europeanisation,[30] while,

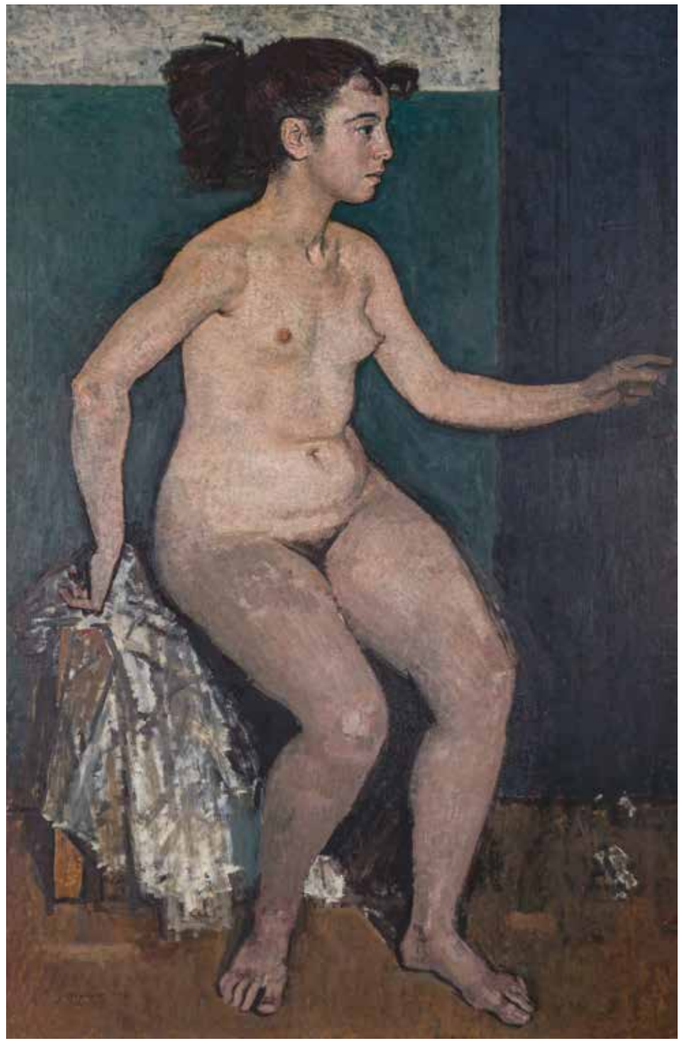
28 Nikolaou later published his research conclusions in three essays, see Nikolaou (1960); Nikolaou (1961) and Nikolaou (1986).

29 Matthiopoulos (2008a), 67-108; Matthiopoulos (2008b); 331-356; Matthiopoulos (2023), 119-155.

30 Matthiopoulos (2009), 223. Cf. Malama (ed.) (2011), 29, who also tracks down Spiteris's article (1953).

Nude, 1947 from Nikos Kavvadias – ***Pousi (Fog)*** Benaki Museum **Fig. 16**

Fig. 17 Nikos Nikolaou, ***Mural painting in the Ceremonial Hall of Panteion University*** (detail), 1949
Panteion University



Seated nude, 1952 **Fig. 18**
Municipality of Rhodes, Museum of Modern Greek Art

Fig. 19 | *Funerary composition II*, 1958-1962
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

on the side, as a professional portraitist, he immortalised realistically numerous eminent members of the political and social *status quo*.[31]

The artist also collaborated creatively with a pleiad of young modernist Greek architects, such as Aris Konstantinidis, Emmanouil Vourelas, Konstantinos Dekavallas, Nikos Hatzimichalis, and others, during the time that Greece was in the process of radical reconstruction.[32]

At the same time, in his painting, expressing himself in the laconic language of architecture, the admirable collaboration of ruler and compass and the dialectic contrast of the straight and curved line, delved into the abstractive synthesis of flat forms, the geometric simplification of the design and the submission of colour to an ancillary role (fig. 20 and 21). Having conquered and enciphered the scales of painting: "from sharp to blunt, from small to large, from bright to dark, from warm to cold", he focused his creativity on the incomprehensible and "unsullied mystery" of pure painting.[33]

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31 He created, among others, the portraits of Paul de Grèce (1956, oil on canvas, Private collection), Alexandros Papagos (1950-1955, oil on canvas, Private collection), Ioanna N. Lourou (National Gallery), Nikolaos Louros (1949, oil on canvas, Louros Foundation for the History of Medicine), Sofia Antoniadi (1965, oil on canvas, Universiteit Leiden), Eleni and Pavlos Kalligas (1980, oil on canvas, Private collection).

32 See Orati & Tsigkakou (2009).

33 Tsigkakou (ed.) (2001), 110-111 & Moralis (2006).

Fig. 20 | *Girl painting*, 1970
Onassis Collection

Girl that unties her sandal, 1973
Art collection of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation | Fig. 21

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A. TASSOS

Yannis Bolis
Art Historian, Head of the Department of Contemporary Sculpture, MOMus-Museum Alex Mylona

A. TASSOS: "I take all inspirations and impulses from the people and their struggles"

The social class dimension of A. Tassos's oeuvre is evident from his very first works as a student at the Athens School of Fine Arts in the early 1930s, with contemporary, original and gritty subject matters, inspired by the city environment, the toil and relentlessness of everyday life, the struggles and the miserable conditions of the labourers and lower classes, antiwar and antifascist rallies, strikes and protests, and conflicts with the police. During that time, the Left put forward a different ideological direction in art, promoting it as a commodity for all social strata rather than a privilege of the upper classes.[1] In the context of the labour movement's development, the growing power of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the popularity of Marxist ideas, young artists, such as A. Tassos, joined the Young Communist League of Greece (OKNE), advocating for a figurative—realistic, socially and politically engaged art.

A. Tassos's connection to *Protoporoi* (and, later, *Neoi Protoporoi*)[2]—a Left-wing journal that sought to consolidate a wide range of intellectuals and artists—

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1 Matthiopoulos (2003), 431-435.
2 Sakellariou (1999).

leads him to works that are seen to respond to the call of Dimitris Glinos: "The craftsman must be in constant contact with the masses, to express their inner world, their worries, their sorrows, their desires and their passions".[3] The November 1931 issue of *Protoporoi* features a photograph of a plaster maquette, signed by A. Tassos, entitled *Attack*: the figure of a stocky labourer in the act of attacking with a hammer in his hand. From the moment he joins Yannis Kefallinos's Printmaking Studio, Tassos makes engraving his main direction, his primary means of expression; woodcut is, to him, the "art of the masses",[4] as he titles an essay he publishes in 1934 in *Neoi Protoporoi*. Most new engravers, students of Kefallinos,[5] advocate for engraving, as does their teacher, for its capacity of socialising the artwork through the production of multiple copies. The same stance is promoted by the Left wing, who believe in making art for the "masses" rather than for the social "elite". Through engraving, the work of art ceases to be a one-off luxury object for the wealthy bourgeoisie; it becomes a "product" of mass consumption, accessible equally to the working class.[6]

Two characteristic woodcuts-juvenilia of those years, *Every morning* of 1932 (fig. 1) and *In the harbour* of 1934 (fig. 2), are revealing of intentions, choices and directions, and part of a larger series of works, whose influence from

3 Glinos (1975), 45.

4 Tassos (1934), 491-493.

5 Yannis Kefallinos takes over (1934) the Printmaking Studio, which has been reinstated at the School after a seventeen-year break. His presence is pivotal. Kefallinos's teaching abilities are seductive; he insists on excellent training in the techniques of woodcuts, copper etching and lithography for his students, he is interested in the art of books, and defends the social role of printmaking. In a liberal environment, the teacher also takes an interest in the theoretical education of his students, out of which A. Tassos becomes not only one of his favourites but also his assistant for three years. At the Studio, he meets, among others, Vasso Katraki, Loukia Maggiorou, Giorgis Dimou, Yannis Moralis and Kostas Grammatopoulos. Most of Kefallinos's students have political ties to the Left, and there is a pervasive rumour that his Studio is a "nest of communists". About Kefallinos's Studio and teaching, see Kasdaglis (1991), 243-302.

6 Matthiopoulos (2003), op. cit.

German expressionist models is evident. Dense etchings, sharp (and sometimes geometric) contour lines, and large areas of black set the overall tone, evoke a dramatic sensation, contribute to the depressing atmosphere, the melancholic mood and the sense of pessimism, and heighten the social content, the pure, political message. Heavy, faceless figures. People lost in the crowd, wandering around the streets in the night. Men absorbed in their work, unemployed builders driven to suicide, loaded trucks, dockworkers, outcasts, women and children resigned to their fate, starving people and soup kitchens.

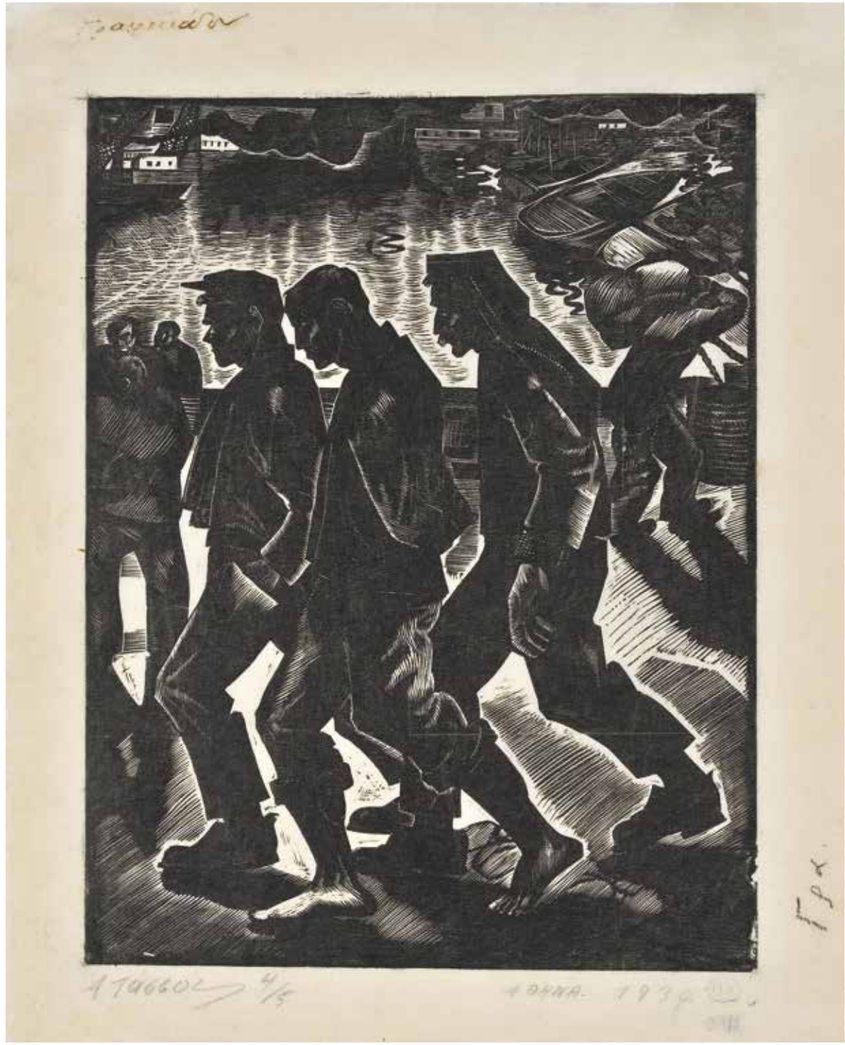
The intentions, choices and directions of A. Tassos are immovable in the evolution of his art, which remains deeply anthropocentric, with the artist himself advocating for the connection of "art and life", representation, and the social mission of artistic creation.[7] In 1959—a time when abstraction rushes onto the Greek art scene—, remembering the feisty revolutionary of *Neoi Protoporoi*, he emphatically insists that, above all, art "must be a well-sharpened sword in the hands of society. Woe betide those societies and those craftsmen who let such a weapon go to rust".[8]

In the works that he creates from the early 1950s, he essentially develops the themes of the mid-1930s, although the labourers, factories, working-class layers of the urban realm are replaced by the land workers of his birthplace, with which his bonds are strong and unbreakable. Farmers of Messinia and fishermen are imposed upon compositions that depict their adverse working conditions, their physical fatigue and their time of rest, their struggle against the natural elements, like in the work *Noon* (fig. 3) of 1952. From those first descriptive, black and white woodcuts of the 1952-1953 period depicting peasants, he moves on to coloured ones with similar subjects,

7 S.n. (1956), 12-13. A. Tassos takes part in a research run by the magazine, on the topic: "Are there shared points between modern art and the ideal of Greek art?" A. Tassos has a negative view of abstract art, as also demonstrated by his remarks during an interview to *Epitheorisi Technis*. See Petris (1958), 29-33.

8 S.n. (1959), 20-21. A. Tassos, among other artists, answers the question posed by the magazine: "In which way do you see life entering the work of art?".

Fig. 1 | *Every morning*, 1932
Alpha Bank Art Collection



In the harbour, 1934 | Fig. 2
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Noon, 1952
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 3

Fig. 4 | ***Peasant women***, 1958
A. Tassos Society of Visual Arts Collection

Fishermen (of Aegina), 1958 | Fig. 5
Bank of Greece Art Collection

like *Peasant women* of 1958 (fig. 4), driven to schematisations and simplifications of the form, enjoying the capacities of colour as a plastic-artistic value, which, however, never becomes "painterly", but adapts to the limitations and conventions of engraving, the need for pure hues and layers. Repeated curved shapes organise the composition, provide rhythm and movement, accentuate the unbroken ties, the solidarity of the group. People connect to the land, become one with nature, images often acquire symbolic content, with a clear tendency for monumentalising and idealising the figures, what they bear and what they represent. The mounted peasants of Messinia evoke triumphant warriors with their wooden poles-spears held aloft. Similarly, the fishermen of Aegina, with their baskets-shields, or the return of the oxen, reminiscent of an ancient sacrifice procession. Although the harsh realism of compositions from the 1930s has receded, along with the militant tone, the ideological core of his art emerges intact. The group of men, for example, and their stride in *In the harbour* (1934) allude directly to 1958's *Fishermen (of Aegina)* (fig. 5). The heroes and fighters of daily toil become the engraver's personal heroes. Farmers continue to appear in compositions of the years 1961-1966, when he turns exclusively to the evocative contrast between black and white, while the dimensions of his works grow larger. The roughness and textured impression of the white surfaces find balance in the broad, all-black surfaces of these woodcuts. The scythe-bearing farmers' bodies, exhausted from heavy fatigue, or their enraged and severe faces, are characterised by inner tension and drama. Tassos of the mid-1930s meets Tassos of the 1960s, with his works exuding the same emotional power, like "mercenaries" in the defence of mankind and the values of their life, as in *Fatigue* of 1964 (fig. 6).

"I am not bragging, but I had already implemented that so-called 'engagement' before the word was discovered in its present meaning and long before the current generations of the 'engaged' were 'summoned'. I am a veteran in the field":[9] this is what A. Tassos stated after the fall of the junta, in reference

Fatigue, 1964
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 6

[9] Pilichos (1982).

to the compositions he had engraved during its rule. He also stressed that his "engagement", from as far back as his student years, was focused on quality, given that from a young age, as he disclosed, "from a primordial consciousness of what I held in my hands to express myself, my logic and my heart had sided, as a natural position and stance, with popular struggles and mainly against adventurist wars and fascism".[10] And he added: "My problems are purely and exclusively aesthetic. They are problems of design, form and composition. I believe that nothing safeguards the longevity of the artwork as the quality of the plastic expression. The message lives and is vindicated only by quality".[11]

Metaxas dictatorship, Occupation, Resistance, Civil War, and the colonels' junta: A. Tassos was not only fully engaged in his time, but actually integrated it into his creation. His allegiance to the Left since his time as a student was a determining factor, even though his relationship with the Communist Party was far from ideal.[12] In 1932, he joined the "Metaxourgeio Group", a movement of proletarian art; the following year, he was arrested by the police pre-emptively, and for reasons of "chastisement" ahead of potential unrest on the May Day (Labour Day) celebrations. In 1938, he was arrested by the August 4th regime—an arrest clearly connected to his involvement in the "Manifesto of student artists supporting new realism" (1937), which alludes to the principles of socialism and proposes art as a "social phenomenon". The artist will have to stop living in an "ivory tower" and turn his attention to life: "The pulse of life is our Pulse. […] New Realism is the art of the future. With the works of this realism, our nation will talk and communicate".[13] Over that period, "dangerous" political

10 *Ibid*.

11 *Ibid*.

12 In 1948, A. Tassos, accused of conspiratory activity, is informed of his renunciation by the Communist Party through its radio station transmitting from Bucharest. He nonetheless remains ever faithful to the ideology and principles of Communism, while his relationship with the Party is restored after the fall of the seven-year colonels' junta, in 1974.

13 The manifesto is quoted in Baroutas (2006), 178-180.

and social messages are driven out of his work and the engraver, referring to his arrest, declares: "How I was treated and what that whole adventure left me with is a very heavy chapter for me. Which succeeded in changing nothing of my ideas and the path I took".[14]

With the start of the German Occupation, artists stage mass resistance to the conquerors.[15] In October 1942, A. Tassos is a leading figure in establishing the Artists' National Liberation Front (EAM) and takes part in actions against hunger and impoverishment; he designs posters and engraves images for clandestine publications, and is arrested by the Italian forces. The black ink of his woodcuts transcribes the turbulence of those days, the compositions are a direct reaction to events, a denunciation of brutality and deprivation of freedom, depictions of pain and sorrow, militant calls for resistance and dissent; they describe dramatic situations and painful emotions, become visual testimonies, psychological records, reminders of duty, hymns of praise for the long-suffering people and their heroes. And it is all these features that appear again in the work he produces over the seven years of the junta (1967-1974), years when art becomes his "only refuge for survival". It is telling that, with the enforcement of the junta, he goes back to an earlier, unfinished composition: *The martyrdom and death of Electra Apostolou*. His legendary comrade over the German occupation, who was savagely tortured and murdered by Special Security (1944), is the link joining the themes of Resistance (of the 1940s) and

14 Quoted in Bolis (2009), 23. His arrest by the Metaxas regime is a traumatic experience, just like his renunciation by the Communist Party, in 1948. During these two decisive and critical phases of his life, his partner, the painter and engraver Loukia Maggiorou, whom he met at Kefallinos's Studio, was a crucial ally: "the first time […] in 1938 after much strife in the battle of ideas, I found myself cut off from life and art; and the second time when, ten years later, the Left demanded my annihilation, without measure and beyond any sense of political expedience. And in both those difficult moments, Loukia Maggiorou, simply, warmly and humanely, pulled me out of the chaos and bound me again to life and art". See Pilichos (1982).

15 On the Greek artist's resistance against the Occupation, see Baharian & Antaios (1995[3]); Machairas (1998), 273-394; Matthiopoulos (2007), 279-285.

the Civil War (which marks the early 1960s) with the new themes arising from the dark depths of the colonels' dictatorship.

Beyond sizes and dimensions, beyond the evolution of his technique and means of expression, beyond realism or heroic rhetoric, idealisation and symbolic content, beyond his quests, "expectations" and accomplishments in "matters of composition, form, tone, design", beyond influences from expressionism or Byzantine art, there is a profound, unifying line running through his art. And it is not merely his vital connection with his contemporary realities or the personal and collective experience he conveys in his oeuvre, invoking his affiliation with the forces and values of the working class, his agricultural background, his professional restlessness, the importance of moral frameworks, ideals, social and political struggles. It is, also, the motifs and themes that he returns to, from his juvenilia to his mature works. The starved bodies of the Occupation (*Hunger*, 1943) (fig. 7) meet graveside mourning (*Civil War. Detail. a. The women, b. The dead, c. The men, 1961*) (fig. 8), the dead body of Che Guevara, alluding to Hans Holbein's *The Younger's Dead Christ* (*In memory of Che Guevara. The Archangel with the machine-gun A*, 1968) (fig. 9), Diomidis Komninos, murdered during the Polytechnic uprising (*Diomidis Komninos on the tarmac, 16 November 1973*, 1974) and the dead student who is transported, with sacerdotal grandeur, by the people rushing up to the forefront of History (*17 November 1973*, 1974); armed guerillas, the heroes of the Resistance (*Partisans*, 1944) (fig. 10) coexist, almost 40 years later, with *Colonel Spyros Moustaklis* (1974) and the imposing young men/archangels with haloes, military equipment and guns in their hands, who stand guard at Che's body (*In memory of Che Guevara*, 1968) or guard the gate of the Polytechnic (*Archangel at the Polytechnic gate*, 1974); young women bearing flowers are always there: to honour those who gave their lives in *The altar of freedom* of 1945 (fig. 11), for the dead of the Civil War (*Grave composition with women*, 1963), for Panagiotis Elis (*In memory of Panagiotis Elis*, 1973) (fig. 12). Or the old *Organist* of 1946 (fig. 13) with his lyre in the barren landscape with the crucifixes on the tombs and the derelict houses (an allegory, perhaps, for a blood-stained Greece during the Occupation and Civil War), another juvenilia composition that introduces the theme of music into

Hunger, 1943
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 7

Civil War. Detail. a. ***The women***, b. ***The dead***, c. ***The men*** (triptych), 1961
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 8

Fig. 9 *In memory of Che Guevara. The Archangel with the machine-gun A*, 1968
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

the engraver's work, directly related to childhood experiences in Dourgouti and the music of refugees. "Throughout my work", he confides, "there will always be a stringed instrument":[16] from the boy and girl with the lutes to the naked woman with the lyre in *The Song of Songs* of the mid-1960s, to the *The ladies of the rebetika songs – The lady of Kokkinia* of 1970 (fig. 15) from Drapetsona, Kokkinia, Kaisariani, the Orient.

The inked black plate depicting a young man, destined for the tomb of Liakos Iliopoulos in 1966 (fig. 14),[17] assimilates the character of juvenilia, in the sense that it signals a new experimentation for A. Tassos, who now gives material the primary role, transforming the wooden plate-tool into an autonomous and unique work, allowing the rough surface and texture of the wood to compete with the engravings, the sleekness and lustre of the black ink.[18] This new experimentation culminates in the iconic composition *17 November 1973* of 1974,[19] which summarises the journey of the artist's creation thus far, which, from the 1930s and until his death, imposes itself by the power of its messages and symbols, and is distinguished by its consistency and the quality of his morphoplastic quests, its fullness of expression, its socio-political dimension, and its profound human context.

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16 Pilichos (1982).

17 In 1952, A. Tassos is employed as an art consultant by Aspioti-ELKA graphic arts company, and becomes close friends with its president, Liakos Iliopoulos, as well as with his wife, Nina Iliopoulou, vice president of the company's board of directors. After Iliopoulos's death in 1966, a monument is erected in his honour in the surrounding space of the Aspioti-ELKA factory. A. Tassos is commissioned to design it. The wooden plate he engraves and inks is transferred in a concrete cast and re-inked.

18 Orati (2015), 19-25.

19 Orati & Sakellaropoulos (2023). The composition, with a height of 90 cm and a length in excess of 5 m, forms part of the Greek Parliament collection. A. Tassos begins working on it a few days after the Polytechnic revolt and completes it in 1974. In that same year, four more of his compositions on the bleak reality of the junta and abounding with symbolic content, religious references and emotional charge, are created to remain as inked plates: *Colonel Spyros Moustaklis, Archangel at the Polytechnic gate, The utmost Humiliation* and *Personnel Wanted for the Unnailing*. All of A. Tassos's works from the 1967-1974 period are presented in the "Black-White 2" exhibition, inaugurated at the National Gallery-Alexandros Soutsos Museum in November 1975.

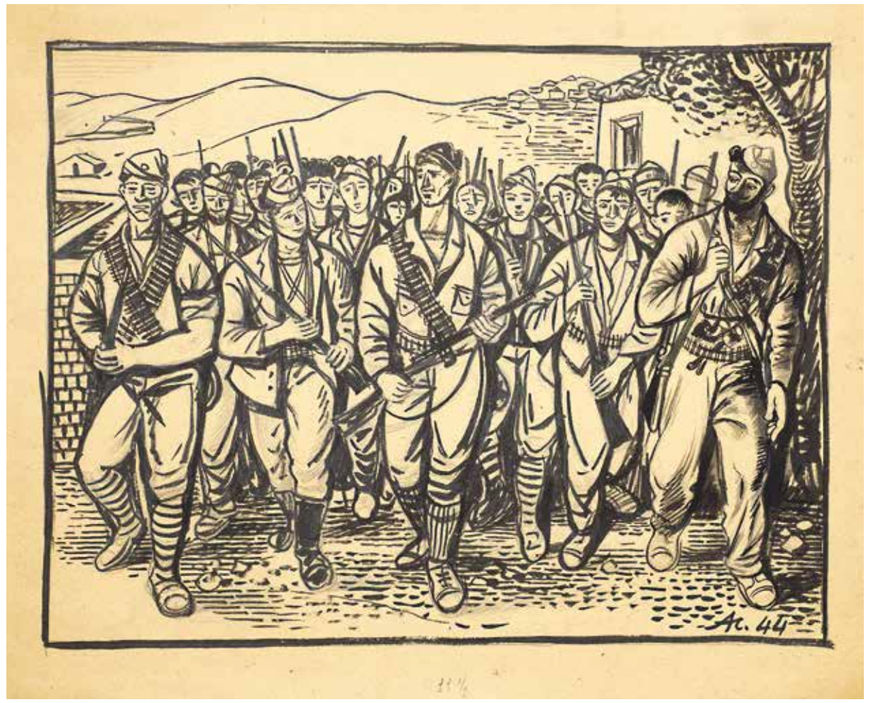

Fig. 10 | *Partisans*, 1944
Private collection

The altar of freedom 1st of May 1945, "Rigas" Publishing Company
Petros Vergos collection | Fig. 11

Fig. 12 | *In memory of Panagiotis Elis*, 1973
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

The organist, 1946
Yannis Papaconstantinou collection | Fig. 13

Fig. 14 | *To Liakos Iliopoulos*, 1966
Private collection

The ladies of the rebetika songs – The lady of Kokkinia, 1970
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum | Fig. 15

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VASSO KATRAKI

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Doctor of History of Art

Vasso Katraki: "Anything that comes from Man takes on a different essence"

In August 1962, from the pages of *Zygos* magazine, Giorgos-Simos Petris remarked with regard to the work of the distinguished Greek engraver Vasso Katraki: "If you were looking for the thread, the coherence, which brings the consecutive phases in her work together […] you would have to seek it in an austere plastic causality that runs through her entire creation and gives meaning to the mutations as we ascertain them in the successive stages of her artistic production"[1]. Petris, therefore, defined, as a timeless attribute of her work up to that point, "austere plastic causality", a somewhat vague term, which, nonetheless, recognised the consistency of her style over time.

The biological and, by extension, artistic trajectory of Vasso Katraki came to a final and irrevocable end in December 1988. Historical research, given the chronological distance that allows emotions to subside, has interpreted with certainty her stylistic development, clearly demarcated the periods of her creation, soberly evaluated the sum of her artistic production, and integrated

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[1] Petris (1962), 6-25 (6).

her organically into the broad and diverse context of a turbulent Greek 20th century.[2] The aim of this essay, in line with the aspirations of the "Juvenilia" exhibition, is merely to shed light upon certain timeless axes of her work. To bring out formalistic and, primarily, thematic invariants that appeared in her paintings, her drawings and her engravings from the early days, but endured the passage of time and stylistic ups and downs over the long journey towards maturity. As a fundamental means I will use, in addition to the works themselves, the words and ideas of Katraki, the views she expressed in interviews or in texts—and which survive in her archive, preserved by her daughter, Marianna, and digitised thanks to the contribution of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation.

The quest for certain juvenilia by Katraki, which defined her subsequent development, must begin from her artistic production in the dense historical period of the years 1941-1944. Even though it is not widely known, Vasso Leonardou, as was her maiden name, graduated from the Athens School of Fine Arts in 1940, with a degree in painting.[3] A student, initially, of Pavlos Mathiopoulos and later of Konstantinos Parthenis, she said: "I never intended to pursue engraving. At the School, I studied painting. I took engraving classes alongside. Then came the Occupation and I found myself engraving posters, stamps, all sorts of things, with this group of engravers. Working with them stimulated my love for black and white. And the Occupation made me an engraver".[4] Her first notable works coincide with precisely that period. They are not only engravings, but paintings and drawings as well. These early attempts

[2] Bibliography on Vasso Katraki is fairly extensive, and is continuously enriched, mainly by means of specialised studies. For a general overview of her work, see indicatively: Stavropoulos ([1998]); Bolis (2009); Bolis & Dogka-Toli (eds.) (2010); Goulaki-Voutyra, Bikas & Tsagkalia (eds.) (2013); Stavropoulos (2013); Giakoumi (2018); Moschonas (ed.) (2022); Bolis (ed.) (2022).

[3] Gounari (2010), 193-209 (specifically on Katraki's studies, see 193, 195). Also, Giakoumi (2018), 25-34.

[4] Deligiannis (1966).

Representation, 1970
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 1

already bear identifiable stylistic attributes and, mainly, reveal subjects that continued to preoccupy her till the end of her life.

The engraving *Representation* (fig. 1) was created in 1970, after the return, that is, of Katraki from Gyaros, where she was exiled by the April 21st regime.[5] It depicts three figures—three busts, more accurately—which resemble chess pieces.[6] The two on the right stand upright, while the third has fallen on its side—as if conceding defeat in an imaginary game. All three of them are rendered schematically: round heads, no hair, huge, frightened eyes and an unnaturally long neck. The lanky bodies' connection to prehistoric Cycladic figurines[7] has been aptly pointed out, without disregarding the influence of modernism (the faces of Amedeo Modigliani or the sculptures of Alberto Giacometti).[8] The long neck has appeared in Katraki's figures since the early 1950s. The fishermen of Aetoliko, the ceramicists, the passers-by and the peddlers on Athinas Street leave no room for doubt. One of her most well-known and dramatic compositions with reference to the Occupation years is dated back to 1952: the woodcut of the hanged man. The sign suspended from his neck reads "Athens 1944" (fig. 2). This is the first time that a figure in Katraki's work is portrayed with such a long neck—an overemphasis on hanging. The hanged rebel stylistically betrays her familiarity with German expressionism and seems to derive from a 1942 drawing. Characterised by harsh schematisation and a raw, realistic language, the drawing *Aetoliko, summer 1942* (fig. 3), which is paradoxically reminiscent of Christ and the two thieves from the scene of the Crucifixion, depicts three men hanging from three trunks (perhaps telegraph poles).

5 On Katraki's exile and her production during the dictatorship, see Orati (2024), 75-79. Also, Bolis (2022), 87-88.

6 Giakoumi (2018), 536.

7 Dogka-Toli (2010), 73-81. The engraver's interest in Aegean prehistoric art is also corroborated by the series of ten colour prints intended to decorate the "King Minos" hotel in Omonoia, Athens, which opened to the public in 1964. See Giakoumi (2018), 242-248.

8 Giakoumi (2018), 273-275.

The sign around the neck of the man in the middle reads "This is how the Germans punish", while the piece of information *Aitoliko, summer 1942* appears at the bottom of the sheet. Katraki later told Tony Spiteris: "I had seen the hanged men, the hanged *lalades* at Agamon Square, and it shook me so much that I went upstairs, we were staying at Makris's house at the time, up in Patissia, and I went home and threw up".[9] The image of the hanged men, both at Aetoliko and in Athens, must have been permanently carved into her memory; it is no wonder that, ten years later, in the harsh post-civil-war climate, it became a woodprint. That long neck of the dead rebel became, in a sense, the trademark of her figures from the early 1950s. And it conveys its tragic character unaltered, years later, in the fragmented figures of *Representation*.

Two more compositions of 1943, *Demonstration during the Occupation* (fig. 4) and *Funeral during the Occupation* (fig. 5), small woodcuts intended, perhaps, to illustrate illegal publications,[10] dramatically introduce burial and mourning imagery into Katraki's oeuvre. The central subject in *Demonstration*, in front of the protesters with their raised fists and Greek flags, is a mother mourning her dead son. If the hanged men composition echoed the Crucifixion, *Demonstration* also invokes a religious subject, that of the Pietà, as bequeathed to western European art. Captivating in *Funeral* is the funeral march, the process of delivering the body, the care of the living for the person that was lost. Veering away from the spirit of ethnography—the figures, in fact, seem to be walking across one of the stone bridges of Aetoliko[11]—the subject is rendered

9 Spiteris (2013), 24-31 (28). "Lalas" (pl. "lalades") is a brother or uncle in some local dialects (e.g. of Lefkada) close to where Katraki was born and raised. Agamon Square is present-day Amerikis Square, where the occupiers hanged rebels from the lampposts. Makris is the famous sculptor Agamemnon (Memos) Makris, with whom Katraki was friends since the days of their studies at the Athens School of Fine Arts. On the sculptor's activity during the Occupation, see Moschonas (2016), 24-31 and 94-101, for specific bibliography.

10 On the engraver's work over that specific period, see Bolis (ed.) (2022), 29-43, and Giakoumi (2018), 150-169.

11 Giakoumi (2018), 153-154.

Fig. 2 | *Athens 1944*, 1952
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 3 | *Aetoliko, summer 1942 (This is how the Germans punish)*, 1942
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 4 | *Demonstration during the Occupation*, 1943
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 5 | *Funeral during the Occupation*, 1943
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

simply and imposes a theatrical, processional rhythm. The pair, of mourning and burial, which Katraki handled with such subtlety in these two occupation engravings, returned at times, like a leitmotif, when the subject demanded it: either in the cruel historical moment of *Lumumba lament* of 1962 (fig. 6), on the execution of the fallen prime minister of Congo, Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961), or within the context of myth, as in the iconic *The duty of Antigone* of 1972 (fig. 7), created during the junta. In *Lumumba lament*, the deceased is not pictured.[12] A single woman, his wife, mourns with her arms raised to the skies, like another Magdalene from the Byzantine iconography of the Lamentation. Her scream, that expressionist externalisation of pain, comes into sharp contrast with the mute mourning of Antigone, a woman-symbol who chooses to clash with authority, putting her debt to her family first. In her engraving, Katraki, under the weight of her own historical moment, reshapes the ancient myth, proposing a heroine who buries both her brothers: Eteocles and the "traitor" Polynices, two mutilated bodies lying side by side. It is the wound of the Greek Civil War; open, gaping, festering, led to the junta. The duty of burial, in other words the recognition that honour is due to the dead of either side and, through this act, the achievement of reconciliation, becomes the engraver's message. And it is expressed in her work in a moment when, more than many others, she was living with the consequences of the April 21st political deflection.[13] In the composition *Aurae and Icarus* of 1984 (fig. 8), one of the most important of her mature oeuvre, Katraki now melds mourning (in the tragic figure of Dedalus on the left) and the burial (as one of the women pulls a cloth over the unjustly lost youth, like Antigone, while the second offers him flowers). From the harsh realism of the Occupation to the stylised drama of the Metapolitefsi [political reform], the journey is long. The desideratum, however, remains

[12] Under the threat of riots, Lumumba's body was exhumed, cut into pieces and dissolved in sulfuric acids by Belgian officers of the Congo's colonial administration. On Lumumba, see Nzongola-Ntalaja (2014).

[13] Tsiara (2010), 83-91 (specifically on Antigone, see 87, 89).

Lumumba lament, 1962
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 6

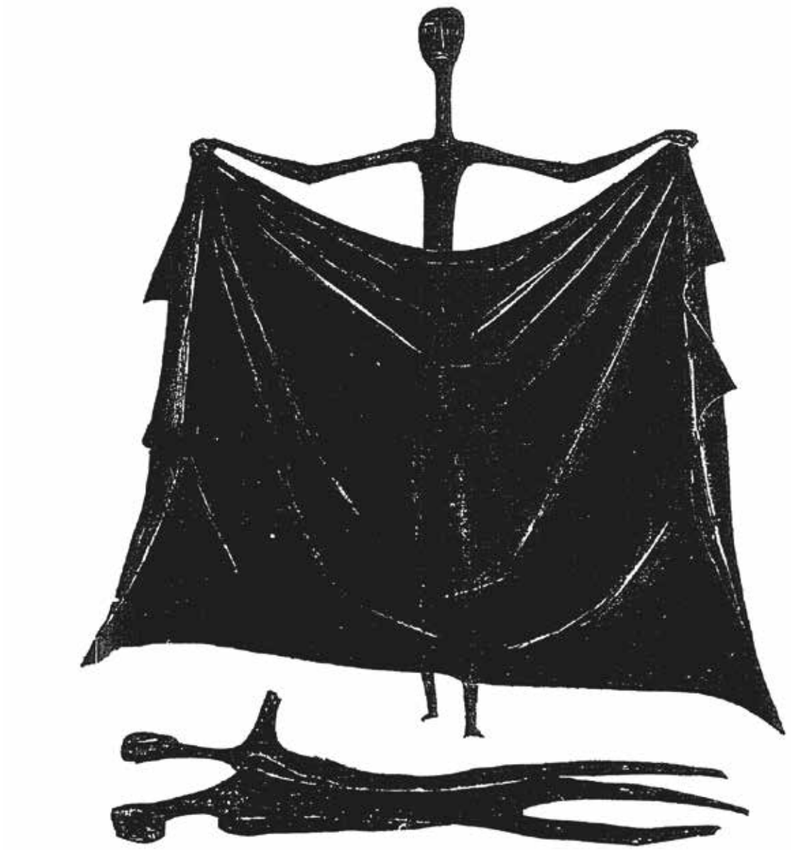


Fig. 7 | ***The duty of Antigone***, 1972
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Aurae and Icarus, 1984 | Fig. 8
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

the same: sorrow for the dead and, at the same time, an expression of respect for their sacrifice.

The hanged men, the protesters, the funeral convey the harsh picture of the Occupation. *Women at the olive grove* (c. 1941-1942, fig. 9) and *Landscape* (c. 1941-1942, fig. 10), two unknown paintings from the 1940s, break free from current events. Nevertheless, their dark colours and intensity divulge the general anxiety of Katraki during that period. These two oil paintings, among the few that she created immediately after her studies, were probably made between 1941 and 1942, before she went back to Athens, accompanied, this time, by her husband, Giorgos Katrakis.[14] *Women at the olive grove* as a composition bears no relation to the teachings she received under Parthenis. With several folk features in the rendering of the figures and the landscape, sharp contour lines and dark shades, it exudes a realism that comes directly from the teachings of Yannis Kefallinos, and his pursuit of a social art.[15] Women, some with babies on their backs or in their arms, most carrying out typical women's tasks of the agricultural-farming economy of the Greek countryside (washing clothes or spinning wool), are elevated to protagonists, though, certainly, not one of them holds a main role. All of them together comprise an assemblage that arguably describes the everyday life of their gender.[16] In that juvenilia picture, however, we can already trace a critical motif of Katraki's subsequent engraving work: the mother with an infant in her arms, the woman suffering from poverty and hardship and struggling to bring up her beloved child.[17] It is no coincidence that, a few years later, in the woodcut *The poor and deadbeat life of fishermen*

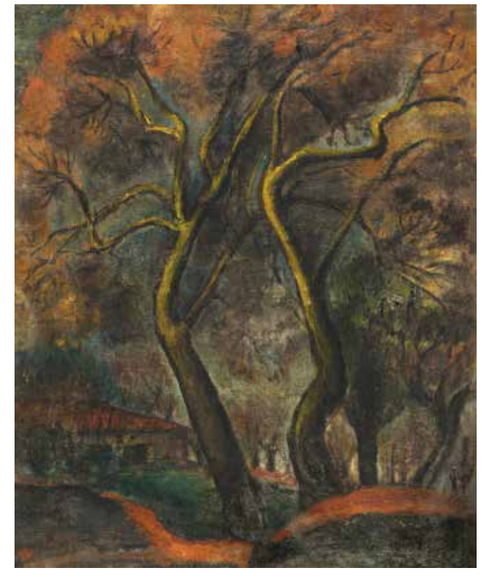
14 Katraki recalls: "After the surrender, we dispersed. I left for my hometown, and then I went to Nea Anchialos, where Giorgos was, and we got married. We stayed there for 1.5 years and then returned to Athens, and I went back to the engraving studio". See Spiteris (2013), 27.

15 On the work and teaching of Kefallinos, see Kasdaglis (1991). Also, Charistou (2013), 11-17 (specifically regarding Kefallinos's studio and Katraki's memories, see 12-13).

16 Giakoumi (2023), 185-195 (especially, 185-186).

17 Giakoumi (2010), 135. Also, Giakoumi (2018), 218-224.

Women at the olive grove, c. 1941-1942
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection
Fig. 9



Landscape, c. 1941-1942
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection
Fig. 10

of 1950 (fig. 11), the creator uses a similar compositional scheme. Inspired by the life of the people of Aetoliko, she portrays men and women in their everyday life, "a barefoot beeswarm" that "roams around all day, with their women always pregnant and their children yellow with malaria".[18] Gradually, the image of the mother was isolated, took on monumental dimensions and was engraved in stone. In the engraving *Three good mornings* of 1962 (fig. 13) and, later, in *Platytera III* (fig. 12) from the junta period, the mother as a symbol that persistently prevails, seems to symbolise the artist herself and her concerns about society and its future, the children.

Landscape with trees, one of Katraki's first compositions where the forest and especially the tree trunks take on leading roles, was probably painted in Anchialos. The painting, despite its realistic starting point, also entails a covert, symbolic nature, both in the rendering of the two leafless trees in the foreground, and the heavy, brown and olive-green colours of the canvas. Through the simplicity of its conception and execution, *Landscape* reflects the loss of hope. When, after the Civil War, Katraki engraved landscapes of Aetoliko, the tree motif again prevailed, albeit without that dramatic character. Only in *Bare trees –Aetoliko* (fig. 14), a woodcut dated around 1950, did she revisit a composition almost equivalent to the oil painting of her juvenilia. The black and white imbues the trees with a wild, frightening character, inducing a sense of anxiety and fear. The nude, xoana-like, figures wrapped in barbed wire in *Situations*, works of the dictatorship period, evoke, in part, the form of the tree. Alongside *Situations*, Katraki now also turns her interest onto the forest: large compositions where her characteristic figures mingle with equally lanky tree trunks, in a visual play, as man becomes part of nature. That "arcadian"[19] dialogue

[18] Katraki (2022), 16-17 (for the quote, see. 16).

[19] "Arcadian" in the sense that the western European humanist thought ascribed to the term "Arcadia": an ideal place where man lives in harmony with nature. The arcadian landscape forms a "place" in the renaissance paintings of Giorgione and Tiziano in the 16th century, the works of Guercino and Poussin from the Baroque age, the oil paintings of Eatkins from the 19th century and the engravings of Galanis in the first decades of the 20th century.

The poor and deadbeat life of fishermen, 1950
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 11

Fig. 12 | ***Platytera III***, n.d.
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Three good mornings, 1962 | Fig. 13
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

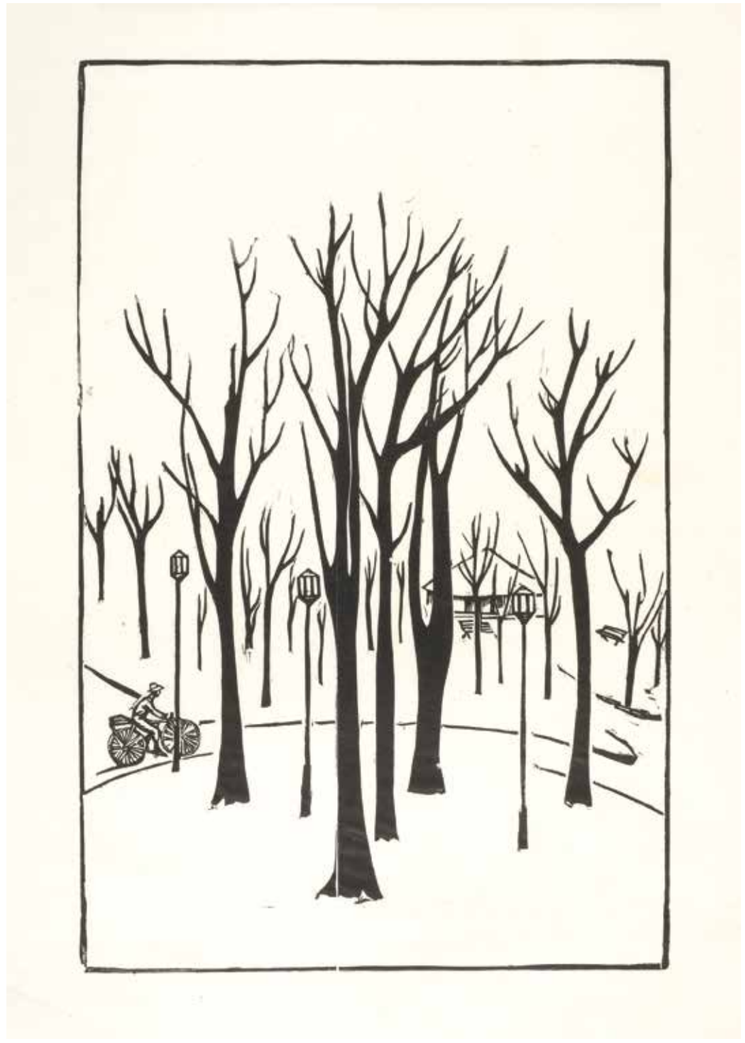


Fig. 14 | *Bare trees – Aetoliko*, c. 1950
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Trees, 1986 | Fig. 15
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

is yet another allegory for the turbulent years of the junta.[20] Later, in 1986, Katraki created one of her latest representations of the tree as a subject (fig. 15): a dense cluster of trunks, always bare of leaves, extends vertically, taking up the entire oblong surface of the paper. The trunks form a grid of vertical and diagonal axes, but primarily they develop, with their strange arrangement, anthropomorphic features.

Ultimately, more than "plastic causality", a vague, formalistic concept with almost metaphysical features, which Petris named as "the coherence, which brings together the consecutive phases in the work of the engraver Vasso Katraki", we should, perhaps, dwell on another, much stronger parameter, in the entirety of her oeuvre, from her youth to the end of her life. That parameter, that central core, is none other than Man. Even works such as *Forest* (1972) (fig. 16), which took on monumental dimensions in the 1970s, reveal, in addition to Katraki's interest in western European modernism, or in Oriental art, that the protagonist in her work was Man; even when s/he wasn't depicted but merely alluded to. It was an idea that strongly preoccupied her and which she expressed with absolute confidence from the very start of her artistic career. An idea forged in the kiln of the Occupation, in the social struggles for the people, with the people, in service to the vision of a better, fairer world: "I live and work with our fishermen, with our farmers, with the landscapes of my motherland, because they are as one with my soul. My constant contact with them helped me understand the material of my artistic creation. Anything that comes from Man takes on a different essence".[21]

Forest, 1972
Marianna Katraki Despotidi family collection

Fig. 16

[20] See also Giakoumi (2018), 283-285.

[21] Voutsinas (1955). See also what she shared with Petris: "I am trying to express myself in the simplest and clearest way. That's what I do because that's how I feel. I am interested in communicating with people as fully as possible, in speaking their language. That is the greatest distinction of an artist's work. Will I speak into the void?". See Petris (1962), 24.

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JANNIS SPYROPOULOS

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Jannis Spyropoulos: A Life in Art

The presentation of the multifaceted work by Jannis Spyropoulos with the aim of delineating a reading map, a lexicon, which shall lead the viewer to read his abstract composition, is original and relieving.

For once, the works of Jannis Spyropoulos presented in a group exhibition are chosen not to display the monumentality and the concept of immortality in the artist's vast oeuvre, but to show the reverence with which they were acquired.

Also of great importance is the curatorial choice, as it seeks to demonstrate how an artist has been led to join a huge movement of 20th-century art, such as abstract art, whose essence, beyond the aesthetic choice, is the transformation of a prevailing atmosphere of the social and intellectual conditions of the specific era.

In post-war Europe, events and historical developments are taking place that do not leave the artistic world unaffected. The movement of abstraction follows these developments, transmuting the quests for a new world. In addition, in its era, this movement was about to initiate a profound internal process that changed the stance of the viewer regarding painting and of the artist regarding the world. To this day, abstract art remains one of the least popular artistic

movements, despite the fact that almost a century later it has safely led us to the abstract and alien world we live in today.

In fine art painting, the developments that lead to the continuous restructuring of the subject and the design with colour constitute one of the ways of interpreting each artwork.

Spyropoulos, a reserved and solitary character, proceeded with abstraction step by step, like a baby that crawls before attempting to stand. Here we use the term "solitary" with the true meaning of the word—the solitary who lives a unique life.

From the beginning and as soon as the artist abandoned the academic painting environment of his studies, the concepts of abstract painting brought to his work ideas and techniques, symbols and pictorial testimonies, that we can distinguish and follow as they form (if not in every work—at least from one to the other) and illuminate the conditions under which they were created, as well as the influences they received or exerted in their historical context.

It is necessary to distinguish from the beginning the points that we will follow in order to rediscover them maturely and clearly in the classic paintings of the artist's abstract language.

- The design of the subject from the figurative to the abstract landscape
- The window as a fragmentation of the pictorial space and a mechanism of an emerging horizon
- Movement and time
- The architectural arrangement of each subject on the canvas
- The symbol of the cross as it transforms into a ladder
- Collage as a striking substance in painting

We will demonstrate how these distinctions, present throughout his fifty-year painting journey, seek expression and remain obsessive choices of an abstract gaze that, without ever becoming amorphous, expressed the same ideology and aesthetic perspective.

The design of the subject from the figurative to the abstract landscape

Taking a work from 1950, *Still life with pitcher II* (fig. 1), a popular and historically justified theme, we will see the earth of the later *Dry-stone walls in Mykonos IV* of 1954 (fig. 2) revealed on the tablecloth, whilst the background contains the arrangement of the masts in the numerous ports of the Greek islands through which he approached geometry.

We already have the logic of abstraction that softens and enhances representation, while embedding the elliptical rather than the spherical shape of the circle. The arrangement of the design is classical. There is a base, on which the subject lies, and the background that lies on top. Three levels and three horizons are formed there.

In the Cycladic landscape, Spyropoulos finds the division between the *Dry-stone walls* and the ledge as a means to remove the subject from the landscape, keeping the space. He equally creates his painting style by combining geometric shapes, coloured layers, straight and intermittent lines to achieve geometric abstraction. The image comes into sight from above and X-rays the physical structure, while almost typically being crowned by the sky.

The window as fragmentation of the pictorial space and a mechanism of an emerging horizon

The *Ladders III* (fig. 3) of 1955 are part of the body of his work that gravitates around Greek nature. We distinguish three types: a rectangular room, a vertical but pyramidal strip, a scale with a smooth side and the wall that cuts the image like a cliff.

A naked, colourful painting space began to be placed within the framework of a structured design. It is a geometric composition that places balconies and stairs, domes and arches as if seeking a functional complex rhythm.

Fig. 1 | ***Still life with pitcher II***, 1950
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Fig. 2 | ***Dry-stone walls in Mykonos IV***, 1954
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Ladders III, 1955
Spyropoulos Foundation
Collection | Fig. 3

Movement and time

In *Houses of Paros* (fig. 4) of and *The red sentry box I* (fig. 5), both from 1956, contour lines soften and the painting art changes in time. That is, it does not depict the landscape with an absolute compact structure, but enlarges the background allowing the viewer to enter the space, thus adding emotion.

As an illuminated manuscript, the *Writings II* of 1957 (fig. 6) contain a symbolic load of images. The symbols of painting are given by the stylised forms created by the hierarchical perspectives, which are now far from naturalistic description.

At the forest VI (1958, fig. 7) and *Dancers* C (1956, fig. 8) are works from these decisive years of Spyropoulos's abstract painting. These choices won him the Prize at the Venice Biennale in 1960, with a gestural abstraction of his own typology.

Lindos No 2 of 1959 (fig. 9) and *Ithaki B* of the same year (fig. 10) liberate the design. The painter's new demands call for non-representational works, free and timeless. The pulse of their movement transfuses into them musicality, and while the connotative titles he always gives to his works always refer to Greek landscapes, *Lindos No 2* marks a turning point in the vocabulary of the titles.

From now on, the titles are symbolic words, intellectual references to the spiritual sphere, which is the next and classic phase of his painting and the one that defines his personal idiom and his classical period from 1962 to 1986.

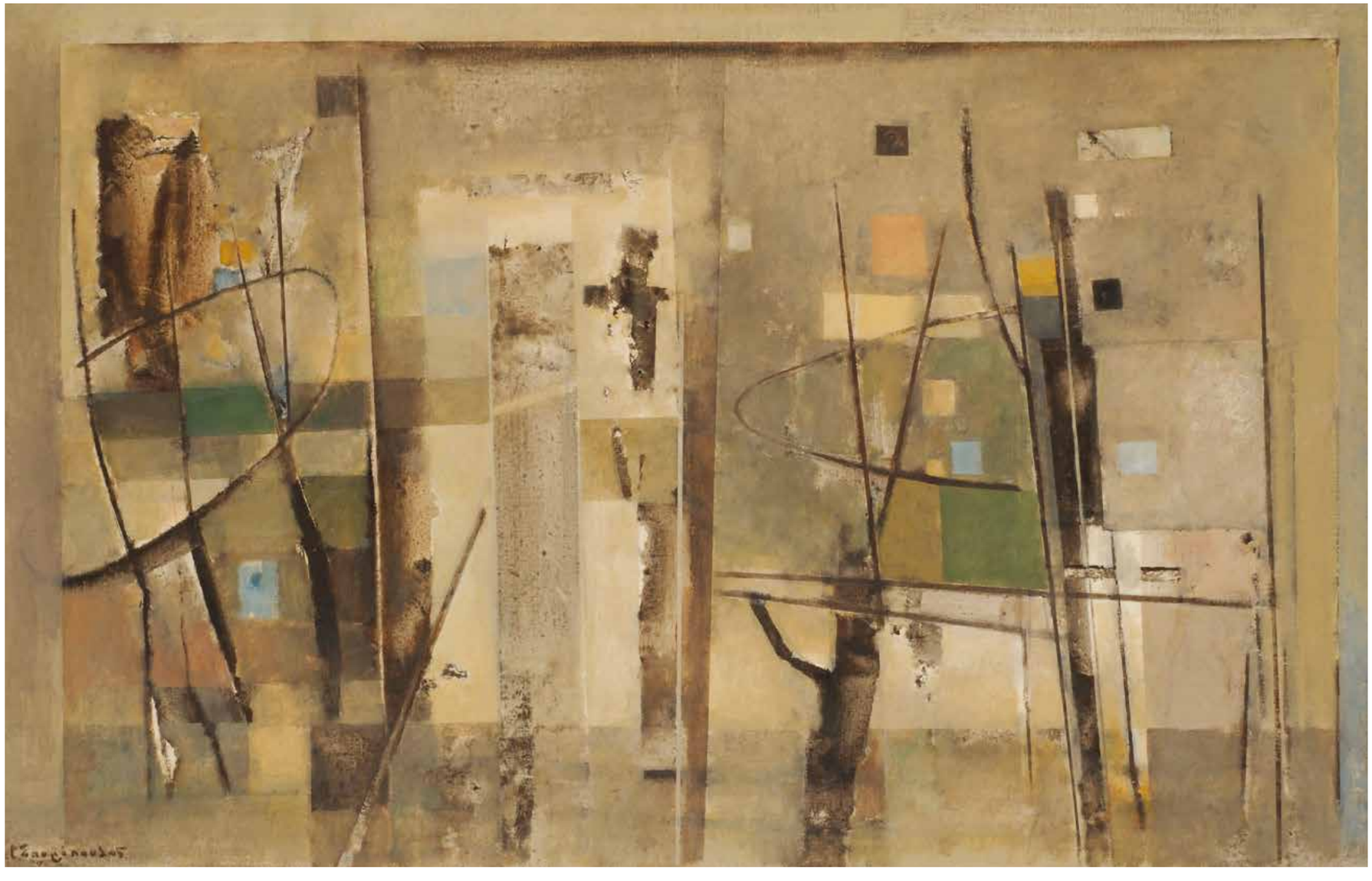
When a "noun" is selected to describe the idea behind the work and the title is given, such as in the work *Return H* of 1965 (fig. 11), we are dealing with an aesthetic exploration that looks into inner existence. Spyropoulos conquered it reaching the internal from the external, both pictorially and spiritually, even though he was a manual worker.

Houses of Paros, 1956
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Fig. 4

Fig. 5 | *The red sentry box I*, 1956
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Writings II, 1957 | Fig. 6
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection



At the forest VI, 1958
Spyropoulos Foundation
Collection

Fig. 7

Fig. 8 | *Dancers C*, 1956
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Lindos No. 2, 1959 | Fig. 9
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Fig. 10 | *Ithaki B*, 1959
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

The architectural arrangement of each subject on the canvas

The design acquires an effective and tense balance. It is mainly characterised by the presentation of opposing forms on superimposed levels. The images are represented with hierarchical criteria.

Proportion and harmony give way to the fierce dynamism of form and the expression of emotion; elaborate and complex works appear to emphasise expression, vigorous materials are placed on top of Spyropoulos's painting, and each composition manifests great rigidity and schematisation. The canvas is burnt at some places, as diptychs and triptychs organise a lush composition. Beauty ceases to be symbolic, as in the Middle Ages, and has a more rational and measured element, based on the technique of design.

The structure of the work is based on proportions, seeking perfection in the background, while also enhancing brightness and the opening of pictorial spaces.

In Spyropoulos's art, reality is distorted into an idiosyncrasy, where a more intellectual and idealised perception of it prevails, charged with fierce explosions and dramatic painting episodes.

During this period, we discuss about inorganic images and religiosity. Obviously, forms and colour combinations bear an idea, an expression and semantic load. Looking at *Prologos D* of 1964 (fig. 12), regardless of how it appears to the viewer, there is nothing else but lines and spots, but also hieroglyphic windows, in which the precondition of the abstract landscape is evident.

The symbol of the cross as it transforms into a ladder

In *Anafiotika A-IV* of 1957 (fig, 13) the outline becomes clearer and gradually abandons nature as a source of inspiration, to seek a more emotional expressive tone, through the subjective interpretation of the theme by the artist. The classic layering remains, but the pictorial space has "opened up". We will encounter

Fig. 11 | ***Return H***, 1965
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Prologos D, 1964
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection | Fig. 12

Fig. 13 | ***Anafiotika A-IV***, 1957
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection

Anafiotika, similar but completely disincarnated in Spyropoulos's classic abstract landscape *Passage No 17* from 1972 (fig. 14).

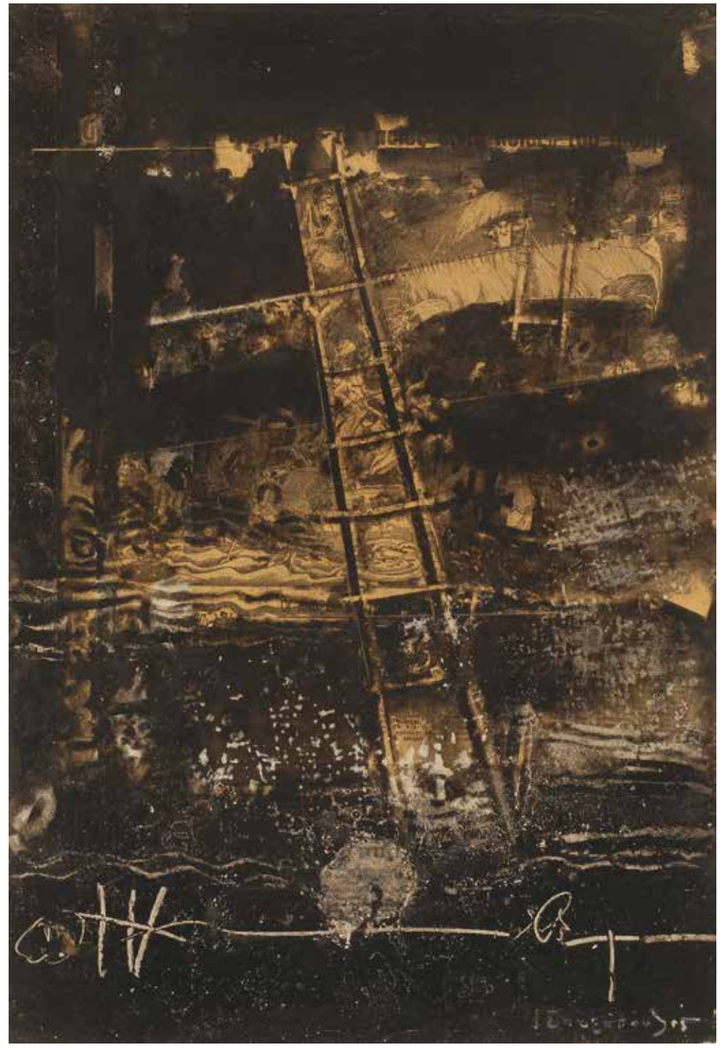
Collage as an attacking substance in painting

The artist explores the code of simple geometric forms, through a plot that has reached its limits. He uses geometry, not only in order to create purely visual events, but also as a key to explain organic life. Studies on matter return as consequences of the rhythmic repetition of identical elements, grouped in such a clear and reasonable manner, that each falls into its right position, none of them disturbing the order. It was that sense of organisation of his designs that led him to the revelation of his own abstract language.

Limits ought to bring both artist and viewer from an objective vision to the spiritual level of metaphorical shapes. They give a general picture of the emotions involved and often serve as an interpretation key to those who experience them. Empathy is not only a virtue of the viewer but a prerequisite, if s/he wants to be able to enjoy the work of Spyropoulos. The narrative ends with an iconic work of the last decade, *The Ladder* of 1985 (fig. 15). Paper abraded with scratches and etches, a background with a collage, intensity like a flood drowning the world behind a stairway. It is a truly dramatic work with a single escape, the Ladder. A shape designed as the spiritual symbol that unites the earth with the sky, the matter with the spirit.

It is our belief that this balance, achieved by painter Jannis Spyropoulos in his work, is truly unique.

Fig. 14 | ***Passage No 17***, 1972
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection



Ladder, 1985
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection | Fig. 15

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ALEKOS KONTOPOULOS

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Alekos Kontopoulos. The introducer of abstract art in Greece

Art is the creation of man's inner world, in whose depths the poet and the artist may discover the forms of human freedom, the only freedom that we may obtain

Alekos Kontopoulos, *Memento: creating Art*, 1971.[1]

The starting point of Alekos Kontopoulos's presence in "Juvenilia" is his work *The artist's mother*, 1923 (fig. 1) and the finishing one the painting *Self-portrait*, 1975 (fig. 2). Indicated thus, in a playful way, is the painter's systematic engagement with the subject of mother and child, while spanning a broad time frame: from the age of 19, when he left his birth town in Lamia to come to Athens and enrol directly into the third year of the School of Fine Arts, until his death. At the same time, viewers delve into his personal world with two acclaimed works presented in his retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery in 1976.

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1 As he says himself, this belief is the link that unites his earlier and later texts. See Kontopoulos (1971), 13.

The first, *The artist's mother*, was also the first encountered at that exhibition, while *Self-portrait* adorned the cover of its catalogue.[2]

The artist's mother is a work that reveals that Kontopoulos was innately talented and an exquisite realist from the start. At the same time, it demonstrates the way he structured the figurative form with broad brushstrokes of earthy colours, which, when seen as disparate from the image, comprise miniature abstract paintings within the larger painting, resonating with the aniconic painting of the 1960s.

A restless and innovative artist, Kontopoulos did not rest on the laurels of his drawing skill; on the contrary, he sought new paths throughout his course, causing surprise with unexpected morphological changes and the diversity of his work.[3] In 1949, shortly after the end of the Civil War, he founded, along with Yannis Gaitis, Lazaros Lameras, Giannis Maltezos and Dimitris Hytiris, the art group "Oi Akraioi" (The Extremists). He wrote and signed the group's theoretical rationale, which was published in November 1949 in the monthly literary and art journal *O Aionas mas* [Our century]; it is considered the first promotion of abstract painting in a Greek environment.[4] By way of a radical

The artist's mother, 1923
Municipal Gallery of Lamia "Alekos Kontopoulos"
Fig. 1

Self-portrait, 1975
Municipality of Agia Paraskevi – Alekos Kontopoulos Museum
Fig. 2

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2 The loan request of the exhibition "Juvenilia" was denied by the Municipal Art Gallery of Lamia "Alekos Kontopoulos" for the painting *The artist's mother*, as well as three other works from its permanent collection: *Still life* (1949), *Study* (1949) and *Composition* (1952), all of which are featured in this essay. Instead of them, the works *Procession* (1939), *Recital* (1951) and *About 18 years old* (1974) were included in the exhibition at the Benaki Museum. That exhibition opened with *Procession* (fig. 3), an oil painting from 1939 that showcases Kontopoulos's focus on mother and child. This painting serves as a precursor to *About 18 years old* (fig. 4), a mysterious and politically charged artwork that presents a universal and tragic theme.

3 Prokopiou writes in 1957 in *Kathimerini* newspaper: "Organically and with the naturalness of an effortless talent, he went through all the phases of modern sensibility, from fauvism and cubism, non-objective art and surrealism to pure geometry." See Prokopiou (1999), 114-116. To the list of his morphological quests, we should also add realism.

4 "For the first time (1949) he attempts to promote abstract painting in the Greek environment, fully aware of the boldness of his move", writes Lydakis (1964). According to Spiteris, the group only made declarations of its theoretical principles via Kontopoulos. See Spiteris & Kontopoulos (2006), 35. And for the republication of the texts, see Spiteris & Kontopoulos (1976), 450-491.

Fig. 3 | ***Procession***, 1939
Municipality of Agia Paraskevi – Alekos Kontopoulos Museum

About 18 years old, 1974
Private collection | Fig. 4

manifesto, it advocates for replacing the values of the Renaissance with the authentic contemporary art of the imaginary, spirituality, dreams and poetry, pointing out that artists have conquered the freedom of not having "to express only their environment and era".[5]

The text is illustrated by *Still life* of 1949 (fig. 5), a work that flirts with abstraction while remaining figurative.[6] It depicts a table clock on an undefined flat surface and heralds the fragmentary incorporation of figurative elements in brightly-coloured abstract compositions, typical of several works of the 1970s, such as *Balcony with flowers*, 1973 (fig. 6).

The selection of this particular painting is surprising at first, as we know that Kontopoulos made purely abstract works in that year, such as, for example *Study* of 1949 (fig. 7), which, had they accompanied the manifesto, would have better promoted his thoughts on contemporary art.[7] On second thought, however, we understand that the artist aimed for a gradual, methodical initiation of the Greek public into the then-unknown "spiritual" paths of abstraction, as in *Composition*, 1952 (fig. 8). Suspicion of abstract art was a widespread phenomenon. The theoretician of American abstract expressionism and leading formalist art critic Clement Greenberg wrote in 1954: "The tendency is to assume that the representational as such is superior to the non-representational as such […] Abstract art is considered to be a symptom of cultural, even moral, decay".[8]

In 1951, in his solo exhibition at Konstantinos Georgikopoulos's mansion in Psychiko, Kontopoulos presented paintings with figurative elements—such as in the work *Recital* of 1951 (fig. 9) from the National Gallery Collection, that is included at the present exhibition—as well as the "first works

5 Kontopoulos (1949), 349.

6 The bold red and green of this painting echo the colours he admired as a child in icons of Agios Dimitrios. See Spiteris & Kontopoulos (2006), 9.

7 The article was illustrated by all members of the group. The most abstract is arguably the one by Yannis Gaitis.

8 Greenberg (2007), 225-232.

Still life, 1949
Municipal Gallery of Lamia "Alekos Kontopoulos"

Fig. 5

Fig. 6 | *Balcony with flowers*, 1973
Vorres Museum

Study, 1949 | Fig. 7
Municipal Gallery of Lamia "Alekos Kontopoulos"

Fig. 8 | ***Composition***, 1952
Municipal Gallery of Lamia "Alekos Kontopoulos"

of abstract style" exhibited in Greece.[9] To support the shift in his work, in fact, he published the book *Η σημερινή ζωγραφική* [Painting today]; it was written in 1950 and released in 1952. According to Tony Spiteris, "he is the first Greek painter to write a book about contemporary painting".[10]

As told by Kontopoulos in his text "Εκμυστήρευση" ["Confession"], he came under fire for the exhibition in Psychiko by supporters of "Greekness", who found his painting anti-Hellenic—because it was unconnected to domestic tradition—and certain Marxist intellectuals—because his works deviated from the militant function of art.[11] The paintings in "Juvenilia" demonstrate, conversely, the artist's love for his country and his sensitivity to collective social and historical trauma.

Kontopoulos was one of a few artists in his generation to criticise, rather than embrace, the mandate of "Greekness". In the obsessive quest for national

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9 From a review by Giannis Miliadis in *Eleftheria* newspaper, 18 June 1951, we know that, among the figurative works exhibited was the cubist painting *Recital*, as well as other interiors, still lifes and landscapes. See Miliadis (1999), 112-114. The information that he was the first to present abstract work at the Psychiko exhibition comes from his own text "Εκμυστήρευση" ["Confession"], which refers to an article by Alexander Xydis in *Zygos* magazine in July 1965. The exhibition is referred to be presented in 1950 by mistake. See Spiteris & Kontopoulos (2006), 109. Earlier, Spiteris had started off his text for the Venice Biennale catalogue in 1960 by writing that Kontopoulos was the first to introduce abstract art to Greece; he mentions, in fact, that he [Kontopoulos] showed abstract work in 1949, the year he founded "The Extremists" group. See Spiteris (1960), unnumbered, counted manually, 3. The latter is probably inaccurate. He is also accepted as the introducer of abstract art in Greece by his contemporary art critics Angelos Prokopiou, Eleni Vakalo, Stelios Lydakis, et al.

10 Spiteris (1985), 21. The text "Painting today" is republished in Kontopoulos (1971), 23-60.

11 No reviews of the time accusing Kontopoulos of "anti-Greekness" have come to my attention; I assume the accusations were probably expressed orally. On the other hand, Giorgos Petris's views on abstract art were well known. Their culmination was his article in the Left-wing journal *Epitheorisi Technis* in July 1958, on the "abstract painting exhibition" at the Athenian gallery Kouros, in which Kontopoulos took part. Here, among other things, he calls abstract painting the product of cultural imperialism, convenience and decadence. See *Epitheorisi Technis*, issue 43, 77-79. Republished in Matthiopoulos (ed.) (2008), 117-120.

Recital, 1951
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Fig. 9

identity in art, he saw an irritating egotism, smugness and bad ancestor worship. "If we are to hope, today, for an art established in new humanism, we will certainly not achieve it by means of futile nostalgia and a fruitless reversion to earlier types, but by the artist's specific effort to capture, in the best possible way, the permanent conditions of the fate of mankind", he wrote in an essay in 1956.[12] Despite his declarations, however, he did not hesitate to revert to "earlier types" when the occasion demanded it and indeed without deviating from his philosophical aims.

Kontopoulos was a connoisseur and aficionado of Greek antiquity. A personal friend and associate of leading archaeologists, as well as a museum painter at the Archaeological Museum of Athens from the Occupation, in 1941, until 1969. In 1957, a year after the above publication, he proposed and undertook to create "without any payment" a painting in the form of a permanent installation for the museum stairwell leading up to the vase galleries on the first floor. The late archaeologist Semni Karouzou herself collected the research material on ceramics, whence the artist drew his inspiration.[13]

Kontopoulos created an imaginative work of monumental dimensions, which adorns the Archaeological Museum since 1959 (fig. 10). He brought together fragmentary scenes from ancient vases and enriched them with new features, to comprise his own narrative. He depicted the successive stages in the production process of the vases and showcased the variety of their uses and properties in everyday life, both domestic and ritualistic. The image fuses

12 In the essay entitled: "Η σύγχρονη τέχνη και το αίτημα της ελληνικότητας" ["Contemporary art and the mandate of Greekness"]. See Kontopoulos (1971), 99-110.

13 Petrakos (2008), 11-36. The view that Kontopoulos's work is a mural had mistakenly prevailed. Parenthetically, I would like to thank the archaeologist Evangelos Vivliodetis for pointing me to the article. Karouzou, the first female curator of vases at the National Archaeological Museum, worked closely with the painter. She had published copies, drawings and representations of antiquities by Kontopoulos. See Karouzou (1955), and her study *Vessels of Anagyrous* in Papaspyridi-Karouzou (1963). Certain of Kontopoulos's copies of vases are displayed in cases at the National Archaeological Museum, as part of its permanent collection.

Pottery, 1959
Hellenic National Archaeological Museum
Fig. 10

Final study for the Archaeological Museum's painting ***Pottery***, 1959
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum
Fig. 11

everyday life and mythology, people and goddesses. The painting space is undefined, lacking perspective and rational flow; the inner and the outer magically coexist. But the location is recognisable: it is the district of Kerameikos, with its busy potters and sepulchral monuments.

Various drafts—including the National Gallery painting presented here (fig. 11)—prove that the painter initially approached his subject in an abstract, expressionistic way, with economy of means and narrative austerity. In the final version, however, he adds actions, figures and objects; he emphasises detail and augments his colour range. He particularises the painted narrative. He facilitates a visual reading and conceptual understanding of the work. He appropriates a linear approach, which deliberately alludes to the style of ancient vases, provokes associations and enhances conceptualism. He also introduces text into the composition, to stimulate the viewers' thought further, and in several different ways.

He uses two excerpts: one by Critias—preserved by Athenaeus in *Deipnosophistae*—and another by Kostis Palamas from his 1895 poem "Fatherlands". Both function as penetrative interpretive tools, substantiating distinctive *memento mori* that remind us of our ephemeral journey on Earth and the finiteness of human existence.

In his painting installation at the Archaeological Museum of Athens, the lively, bustling, productive daily life of antiquity becomes an opportunity for the artist to covertly develop the timeless and universal issue that has always and systematically preoccupied him in paintings and texts: common human destiny, the perpetual circle of life and death.

Palamas was one of Kontopoulos's favourite poets since his youth, as revealed by a drawing from 1928 (fig. 12), which pictures him with half his face rendered realistically and the other half abstractly. This prophetic portrait merges, in a single image, two directly opposite styles, heralding Kontopoulos's later tactic to experiment with different types of script over the same time period.

A similar condition is at play at the time when he creates the Archaeological Museum painting while preparing for his participation in the 30th

Kostis Palamas, 1928
Municipality of Agia Paraskevi – Alekos Kontopoulos Museum

Fig. 12

Despair, 1945
Private collection

Fig. 13

Venice Biennale in 1960—where he represents Greece along with the painter Jannis Spyropoulos, the sculptors Lazaros Lameras and Alex Mylonas, and the engraver Efthymios Papadimitriou. He produces for the Greek pavilion purely abstract works, which allude to art informel and abstract expressionism; tendencies that prevailed on the avant-garde art scene of Europe and America.[14] The Biennale inaugurates a decade during which the painter dedicates himself almost exclusively to abstract art, removing figurative traces from his paintings.

However, at least at the beginning, the objective world remains a primary source of inspiration for his non-objective painting. Ten out of the eleven paintings he exhibits in Venice, for example, have titles that evoke conceptual images: *A country* (1958, 1959), *Landscape* (1959), *My country* (1960), *Athens* (1960), and only one's title is abstract, the *Composition* (1959). Later, Kontopoulos disengages entirely from the sphere of reality, as his titles once again reveal, albeit—as already said—only for a relatively brief time (*Composition – Image*, 1962) (fig. 14).

The significance and distinctiveness of titles in Kontopoulos's oeuvre have been pointed out in the past by Marinos Kalligas and Alexander Xydis.[15] What has not been discussed until now is their fairly frequent inclusion in his visual compositions themselves and their role in relation to the image. Initially, titles appear in Kontopoulos's drawings as handwritten notes analysing the subject.[16]

14 The painters Jean Fautrier, Hans Hartung, Emilio Vedova and the sculptor Pietro Consagra received awards in Venice at that time, revealing that Kontopoulos was fully in synch with the global art scene, just like the other Greeks who took part. See La Biennale di Venezia (n.d.).

15 Marinos Kalligas points out that Kontopoulos's titles reflect "his artistic and spiritual preoccupations, as well as his broader political contemplation". See Kalligas (1979), 33-34. Conversely, Alexander Xydis often considers his titles pretentious, imbuing the paintings with a "literariness" which weighs them down. See Xydis (1979), 39-41.

16 Starting with the drawing *Boat race*, which he painted in 1922 in Lamia, before joining the School of Fine Arts. Illustrated in Kontopoulos (1985), fig. 6.

A representative example is the excellent ink drawing *Despair* (fig. 13) that he sketched in 1945 in the midst of the Civil War. It depicts the face of a man whose penetrative gaze literally haunts the viewer. This original personification of the sense of deep despair is unsettling due to the expressiveness of its design and the charged relationship between discourse and form, vividly conveying the tragic climate of strife that prevailed.

Later—as from 1955, if not before—titles slip into his paintings in a way that invokes the written excerpts of the Archaeological Museum installation. In other words, instead of clarifying the meaning of the composition, like the drawings did, they stimulate the mind. They function to support understanding of the works' multifaceted conceptual references, liberating the imagination.

Of particular interest is the incorporated title in one of Kontopoulos's best-known paintings of geometric abstraction from 1970 (fig. 15); it was exhibited in 1971, during the junta, in his solo exhibition at the Athens Hilton Gallery and adorns the cover of Stelios Lydakis's book *Έοργα, Αλέκος Κοντόπουλος: Ο άνθρωπος και το έργο του* [Eorga, Alekos Kontopoulos: The man and his work], published in 1975.

The painting replaces the figurative image and traditional political iconography with a geometric aesthetic of harmony and balance. The text, however, makes us understand that it is clearly political. A barb at the regime of censorship articulated in a new encoded, political language of hidden messages.

We read: *From now on, the knife will cut a red line into your bread*. The extensive title appears in an undulating line at the bottom of the composition, in both lowercase and capital letters, easy to read, and aesthetically pleasing. It converses with a blood-red line crossing the painting vertically at its centre.

The phrase has no subject of action and is deliberately vague and undefined. Kontopoulos conspires with the public to convey his political criticism of the regime and the country's dystopian future. He winks at informed viewers while cleverly circumventing the oppression of speech and expression. As a non-partisan leftist painter, he invents here his own indirect means of semiotic communication.

Composition – Image, 1962
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos Museum

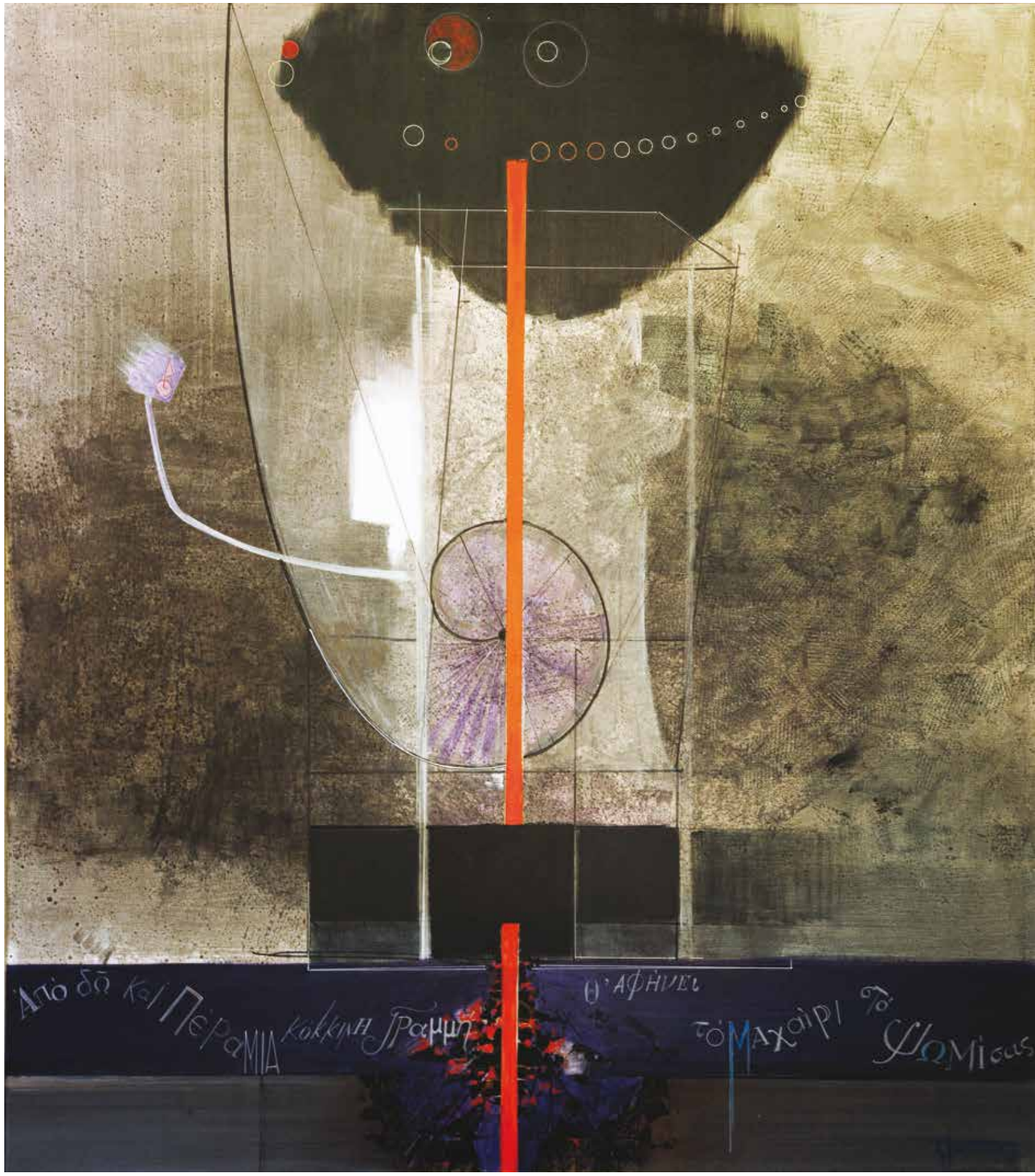
Fig. 14

Direct opposition to the regime will follow a little later when, in 1973, he refuses the national monetary award for painting given by the Ministry of Culture and Sciences, publishing a statement in *To Vima* and *Ta Nea* newspapers, where he speaks openly of the guise of a democratic process. The publication of his decision, as much as the letter itself, are acts of resistance, courage and morality.[17]

Many of Kontopoulos's works function broadly as optical riddles. It is certainly not coincidental that he gave the last painting he made in his life, a purely abstract composition of 1975, the title *Decryption*. It was as if asking the viewers, as a final favour, to not dwell on the surface but to delve into the depths of his works and communicate with the innermost expression of his soul.

From now on, the knife will cut a red line on your bread, 1970
Municipality of Agia Paraskevi – Alekos Kontopoulos Museum

Fig. 15



17 The letter is republished in Kontopoulos (1985), 11.

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DIMITRIS MYTARAS

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The stratigraphy of the painting of Dimitris Mytaras through his early works

How was the artistic identity and the painting idiom of one of the most acclaimed and recognisable post-war painters formed? Which works reveal the ardent start of the artistic physiognomy that predominates the history of post-war painting in Greece? Let's take things from the start: "Juvenilia" is a creative opportunity to trace and connect to the early days of the work of Dimitris Mytaras (1934-2017), an artist whose painting style and development stand as landmarks in modern Greek painting, because of his characteristic abstract and realistic attributes but—mostly—because of his artistic, and educational path and, ultimately, his commercial recognition.

It is easy to see that there is no trace of a transient or unilateral engagement with painting in Mytaras. On the contrary, and throughout his painting oeuvre, he delved into specific subjects extensively and rigorously, without limiting himself to specific techniques or views of the world. As he confessed in his "Brief autobiography", he felt "backward" compared to the artistic trends of his day, yet it is now obvious that this "backwardness" proved vitally beneficial.[1]

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[1] Mytaras (1989), 13.

Being a teacher as well as a painter with variable and strategically articulated theoretical discourse,[2] he describes how he viewed his work within the broader context of the age in which he worked: "When abstract art prevailed, I had just discovered Matisse and so missed out on a wonderful opportunity to rid my painting of the descriptions that had riddled us for a great number of years […]. I was also fairly horrified to discover that my drawings hadn't evolved since the days I was a student at the School [Athens School of Fine Arts]. I was at least 15 years behind, while others of my age had surpassed their time and a few, indeed, were on their way to the future with great success […] I worked with realism for several years without particular aspirations. All my old friends had abandoned me and joined the new schools—happenings, conceptual art, etc. My era had passed me by, yet again".[3] Instigated by this view of his on the developments in painting, it becomes clear that an artistic physiognomy such as Dimitris Mytaras and his multifaceted artwork cannot be interpreted through a simple, linear approach.

In an attempt, therefore, to metaphorically "dig down" and reach the deeper layers in the stratigraphy of his artistic course, it is easy enough to identify the precise starting point of his career, the elements that shaped it and those that subsequently stayed alive across the spectrum of his painting work. Most importantly: this stratigraphy reveals everything that was later consolidated in his art.

There is no question that Mytaras moved dynamically: starting from the multiply-present human figure, he pitted himself against circular mirrors; initially depicting views of internal spaces, he was quickly led to urban landscapes, classical antiquity, neoclassicism; from plain, black and white drawings, he moved on to the pulsating colours and swirling forms of expressionist compositions—and

2 It is no accident that, from as early as 1961, he has been writing articles on exhibitions and events, such as, for example, the Alexandria Biennale, see Mytaras (1961), 16 & 46.

3 Mytaras (1989), 13.

again, always, back to man. And that is the shape his long artistic career and his exploratory vacillations took during the second half of the 20th century.

First layer of findings: The origins of an anthropocentric painting and their role in configuring an artistic identity. The critical importance of drawing

When researching and seeking the early works of a painter, it is almost inevitable to first look for their drawings, which, in the case of Mytaras, are proven to have served as the structural framework of his painting development. The significance of his drawing expression and figuration was critical in managing the entire range of his painting, be it realistic or abstract. In addition to his most unperturbable medium of expression, drawing was a means of documenting his progress. It is no coincidence that an exhibition devoted exclusively to his drawings was held in 1994. In that context, the art historian Maria Marangou, speaking of Mytaras's drawings, interprets them as "the flowing line that invalidates staticity and fashions constant change as the only invariant".[4] And insightfully goes on to say: "Mytaras's drawings, however, those youthful ones, have body and soul. We will grasp their significance later, as early works, having followed the course of his entire oeuvre, which, whichever form it might take, retains the primary component of its values in drawing. I refer, therefore, to Mytaras's youthful drawings not because they define his beginning, but because they hint at the future painter, who never lost his original virtue. His pure drawing values, which evolved dynamically. To render the quality of his artistic discourse that we are all familiar with".[5] Within this pictorial universe and through the consistent choice of the human presence in his works, the values that will follow him—and that he will follow—for the remainder of his career begin to shine through, with the anthropocentrism of his painting at the forefront.

4 Marangou (1994), 7.

5 Op. cit., 8.

Fig. 1 | *Elderly woman*, 1956
Private collection

Fig. 2 | *Woman in profile*, 1957
Private collection

The drawings of the 1950s, and later, are dominated by female figures. From as early as his student years, the female figure prevails, with a particular fondness for slightly angled portraits/profiles, in postures of intense movement or stillness—women who are often seated yet have momentum. Female figures that seem to levitate in Mytaras's abstract spaces in ways that allude to tenderness or clearly declare a psychoanalytic insight into the subjects—for example in his drawings *Elderly woman* of 1956 (fig. 1), *Woman in profile* of 1957 (fig. 2) and *Charikleia* of 1960 (fig. 3). There is no coincidence in the fact that these works are harbingers of his subsequent, famous *Sepulchral* series (1970s, see fig. 8), as he admitted himself.[6] These compositions are imbued with a strongly descriptive linearity, motion and an—ostensibly ambivalent, but actually quite comfortable—abstractness, which, in time, gives way to photorealism, to return anew with the gestural impetus of expressionism.[7]

The human figure is, ultimately, a pertinent metaphor for the painter's shift from the personal to the political—in terms of theme—and from the realistic to the abstract—in terms of style.

Second layer of findings: in the mirror—from the start and forever

The mirror was a subject that preoccupied Mytaras persistently and thoroughly, since the early 1960s. Repetitively, as a subject, as a shape (circular), in different views and techniques. With all available styles and mediums, the mirror inaugurates one of the major chapters in the painter's work, driving him to focused cultivation of the content and meanings of his painting. Be it a plain and immature figurative portrait with a reflection—e.g., *Mirror* of 1957 (fig. 4)—or his subsequent abstract compositions with bold colours and gestural momentum—e.g. *Mirror with green* of 1964 (fig. 5)—, each of his mirrors contains all the stylistic values that preoccupy him.

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6 Mytaras (1989), 35-37.

7 From an interview to Anna Grimani, see Lambraki-Plaka & Grimani (1995), 14.

Fig. 3 | *Charikleia*, 1960
Private collection

Through that thematic and morphological quest, Mytaras puts together a painting universe—as is the case with most of his works—which may be interpreted in several ways: multiple aspects, a psychoanalytic perspective, swirling and regression to a magical childhood, undefined spaces, faces in double and/or triple repetition, gestural freedom. And with every opportunity, he articulates his own artistic discourse on mirrors, explicating at length their significance in his work: "The climate of this series of works could be connected to De Chirico's metaphysical dispositions or the latest trend of neo-surrealism. It should be noted, however, that its origin is not so much metaphysical or surrealistic as magical in character. And also, that it is not an oneiric painting, as it could easily be assumed, and certainly not internal, as it was delivered to us by neo-Attic tradition. The form is influenced by baroque, which has impacted our painting in recent years".[8] Each of Mytaras's mirrors has dual existence: it presents the ideal opportunity for the representationalism of human figure to meet with symbolic reflection and turn to geometric abstraction and the momentum of expressionism, which prevailed in painting globally at the time.[9]

Third layer of findings: internal, urban, civil landscape painting—and more

An interior with *Table* of 1957 (fig. 6) and an *Interior* with bed of 1958 (fig. 7) are subject to precisely that unripe yet characteristic frontal treatment that he avails himself of heavily, from his familiarity with French modernism and Matisse, as he often remarked upon himself, almost apologetically.[10] These compositions are mainly fertile ground for the development, on the one hand, of his portraits and, on the other, of his compositional experiments in the scenic design of another field, that of theatre.

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8 Mytaras (1966), 59 & 64.

9 Interview with Lambraki-Plaka titled "Δημήτρης Μυταράς. Μια προσωπική αρχαιολογία της ζωγραφικής" [Dimitris Mytaras. A personal archaeology of painting], see Lambraki-Plaka & Grimani (1995), 7-10.

10 Grimani (1989), n.p.

Fig. 4 | *Mirror*, 1957
Private collection

Mirror with green, 1964
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum | Fig. 5

Fig. 6 | ***Table***, 1957
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Interior, 1958 | Fig. 7
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

Antiquities of Delos (tetraptych), 1970
Alpha Bank Art Collection

Fig. 8

In a similar way he works with his landscapes: the mural entitled *Antiquities of Delos* of 1970 (fig. 8) reveals a consistent treatment of landscape: a clear abstractive disposition and a frugality in synthesis and colour, manifested geometricity with a horizontal configuration of the composition and vertical alternations of architectural, anthropomorphic or archaeological features,[11] and, finally, a broad, ever-present sky. Noticeable in everything is also a strongly scenographic disposition; Mytaras was familiar with scenography, after all, both due to his experience as scenic designer in theatre and his frequent commissions to decorate public spaces.[12]

All of the above is added to his approach to modern Greek reality, which Mytaras describes and comments with stark realism during the junta: architecture and people together, mostly male figures in suits, made with strong contour lines and a frontal approach in black and white, such as, for example, the men in *Dictatorship* of c. 1969 (fig. 9). It is obvious, at this stage, that the painter is consciously engaged in the sociopolitical context of his day, drastically limiting his colour range and stylistic experimentations. He has decided to declare something else, through the male figures that appear as colourless and faceless institutional beings, while the urban architectural features—when present—seem to stand as symbols of the state and its history—see *Composition with sunglasses* of 1970 (fig. 10), *Tombstone with a motorcyclist* of 1971 (fig. 11) and *White hat* of 1972 (fig. 12). As he says: "I used bold representation to comprehend certain situations, often sociopolitical".[13] This is the only period of such brevity in Mytaras's career.

Closing the circle of Mytaras's work in "Juvenilia" is the iconic *Leather gloves* of 1975 (fig. 13), a painting of the Metapolitefsi period, where bold colours gradually return to his compositions. In it, the painter seems to also

11 See also his own descriptions of landscapes, in Mytaras (1974), 36.

12 Interview to Anna Grimani title "...at the mirror's edge, it is a lost game", see Lambraki-Plaka & Grimani (1995), 15.

13 Mytaras (1974),162.

Dictatorship, c. 1969
Private collection

Fig. 9

set a boundary to the subject itself: with a fine, active red line, he divides or delineates his relationship to the portrait, social reality and, ultimately, painting itself, which he will continue to serve for several decades to come, tracing a creative trajectory and building one of the most illustrious careers in Greek post-war painting.

Composition with sunglasses, 1970
Art collection of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation

Fig. 10

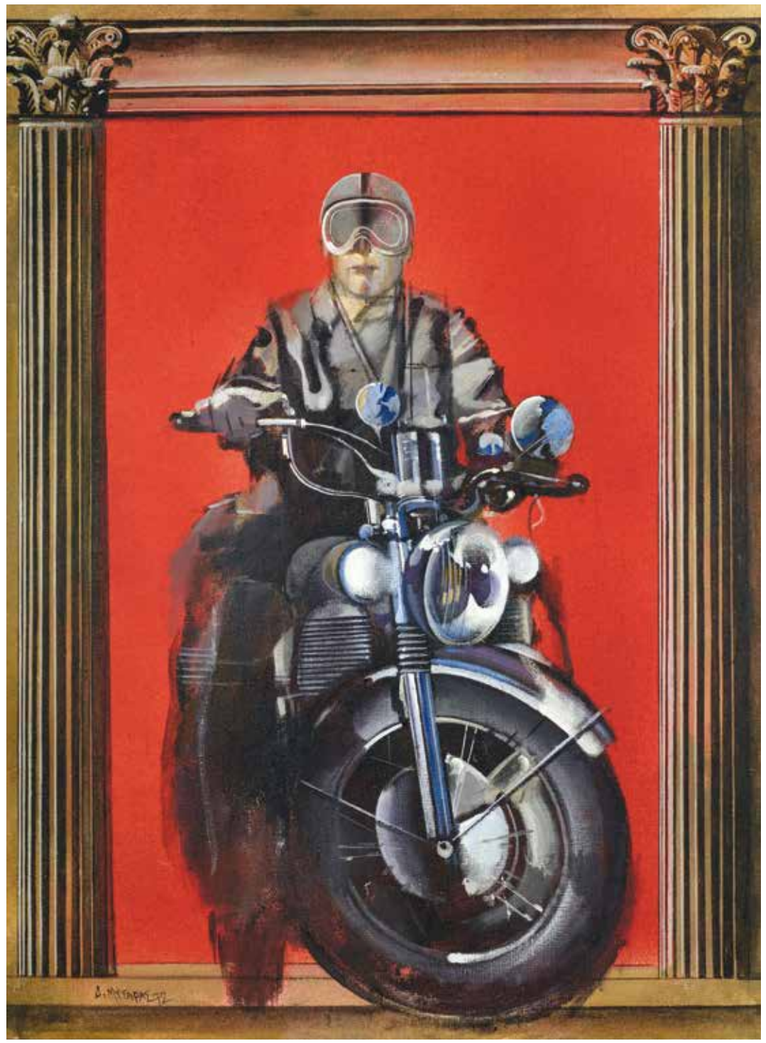
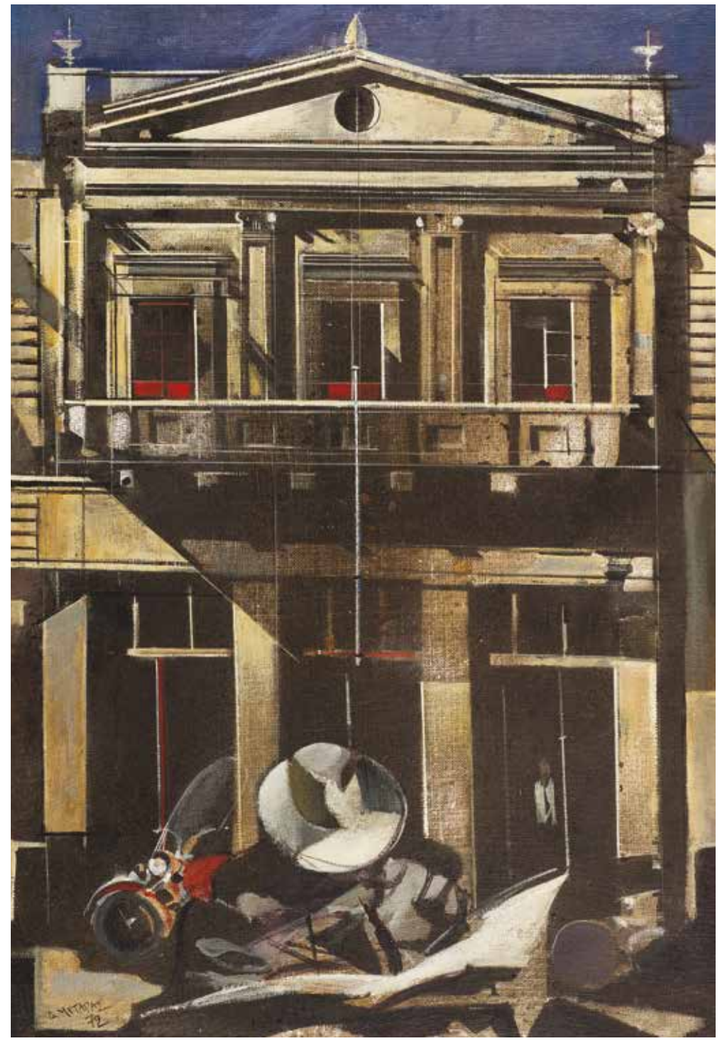


Fig. 11 | *Tombstone with a motorcyclist*, 1971
Private collection



White hat, 1972
Alpha Bank Art Collection | Fig. 12

Fig. 13 | *Leather gloves*, 1975
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum

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YANNIS GAITIS

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Yannis Gaitis: From the poetics of myth to the multiplied icon of everyday life, "such a colourful world, steeped in fear"*

Sitting among his "little men", as he described them, in his studio in Athens on Mavrommataion street, where he began to paint, Yannis Gaitis talks about the course of his life and his development as an artist for the television show *Monogramma* in 1984, shortly before the opening of his retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery. He describes his "little people" as the "second start of his great journey", and the phase of his work that "truly represented" him.[1] Indeed, the uniform, faceless "little men", in his painting or constructed out of wood or metal, in collectible objects and toys or in happenings on the street, were the trademark of his personal contribution to contemporary art.

Today, in the age of the archive but also of youth worship, we have left behind the criteria of skill and progress. Perhaps, then, we do not re-turn to (and re-view) the juvenilia of an artist looking for linear narratives but we re-examine them—just like the youth of modernity itself—as sources from

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* A line from the poem that Sinclair Beiles dedicated to Gaitis in 1977, entitled "Spit at it". Published in Papadakis (1980), n.p.

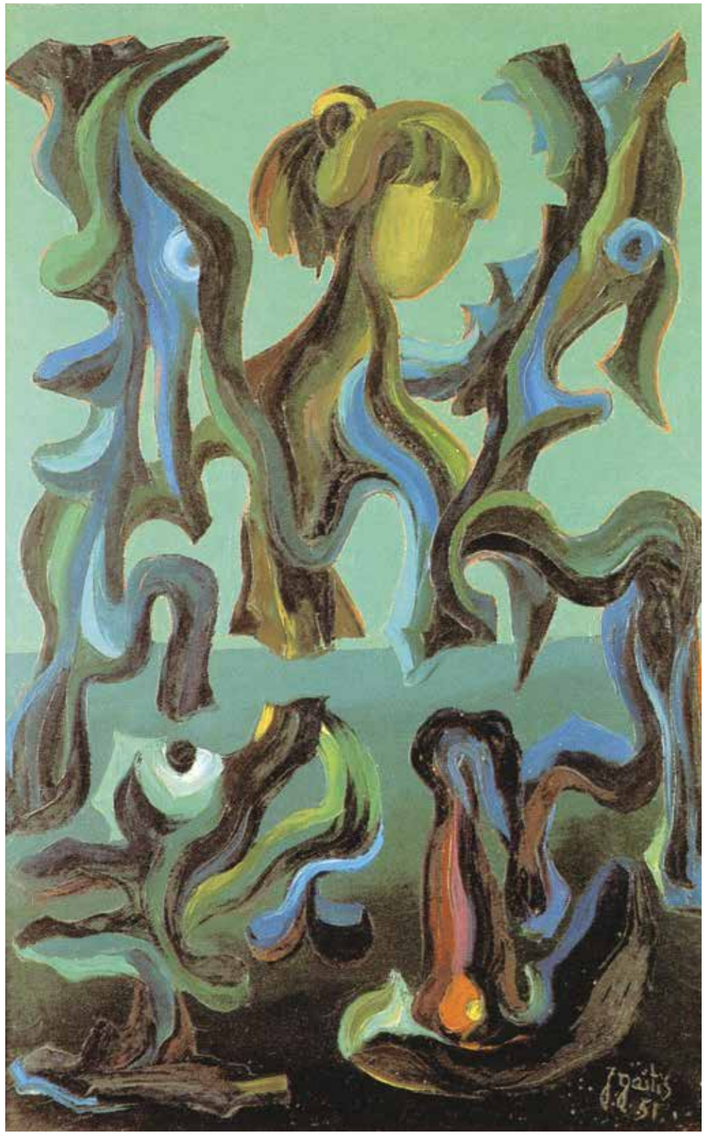
1 Gaitis (1984).

which we might draw alternative ways to reflect on and respond to the present.[2] So what can Gaitis's juvenilia tell us about his work that followed?

Gaitis, in the 1940s, a young member of EPON (United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth), designs posters and writes slogans along with Minos Argyrakis, is initiated into hyperrealism by Neoklis Koutouzis, and exhibits his first works influenced by cubism and hyperrealism. From 1954, when he moves to Paris, in the climate of post-war abstraction, he develops a powerful, gestural painting style, experiential in part, since it springs from a way of life that connects him to his friend Thanasis Tsingos. His first anthropomorphic figures appear in 1963-1964, and standardisation and repetition take their place in his painting. It is with these works that Gaitis participates in the trend of Figuration Narrative and the exhibitions curated by its theorist, Gérald Gassiot-Talabot. In 1968, during the junta, his well-known "little man" gains its first manifestation. Absolute standardisation results in the permanent elimination of the female figure from his paintings. In 1969, he presents at the Goethe-Institut Contemporary Art Studio in Athens his first wooden constructions and his little men take on monumental dimensions in his compositions, which rise up to five metres in height. An interesting point, here, is that Gaitis did not merely present his first constructions in Greece, but constructed all the ones that followed here, too, because, as he said, the process was much shorter compared to France.[3] In fact, on the occasion of his major retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery in 1984, certain works (some out of metal), which he had kept in model scale since the early 1970s,[4] were produced for the first time in large—i.e. their regular—dimensions.

Portrait of Gabriella Simossi, 1951
Private collection

Fig. 1



2 O'Kane (2019).

3 Gaitis explains that Greek carpenters produced the works in two days, whereas in France it would take three months for the decoupage. See Gaitis (1984).

4 Ibid.

In 1973, Gaitis presented, in the basement of Desmos art gallery, the installation *Funeral of Painting*, a reference as much to the political situation and the events at the Polytechnic, as to the end of painting.[5]

If we take the paintings influenced by cubism and surrealism (fig. 1) as Gaitis's juvenilia, it follows that the first sign of continuity in the works of the 1960s that we can identify are his hybrid anthropomorphic figures (fig. 2), and what Nikos Papadakis described as "features of a human-themed starting point", which he recognised in "a spiral continuity" throughout the work of Gaitis.[6]

Performativity is another feature that runs through his work—from the early practice of performativity in the act of painting before friends, originally in his studio and later for a gallery audience[7] (fig. 3) to gestural abstraction and, finally, happenings in public spaces, where the little men come to life and take to the streets (fig. 4).

If, however, we also include his works from the abstract period in his juvenilia, by the rationale that he had yet to forge his personal style, we discern further continuities in the work that followed, such as the proposal of painting gesture as an artistic practice, a direct way of transcribing the emotion of the subject, as well as a subtle feature of the artist's personal style, a kind of autograph.[8] Parallel to that is the consistency of his surrealist influences as well as—mainly—repetition, the multiplication of motifs, themes, even of his unique brushstroke.

Myth anecdote..., 1965
Annie Costopoulos collection

Fig. 2

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5 "Why do I want to bury my painting? Because I believe that the end of painting [the funeral of painting] is also the funeral of our society". Quoted in Gaiti-Charrat (2003), 58.

6 Papadakis (1980), n.p.

7 "At the time, Gaitis is already carrying out a practice that we will term "demonstrations", whereby the act of painting, in the way of Gaitis, means passion, speed and skill. He uses his body, his chest sometimes bare, he paints with his palms and his fingers, often kneeling on the floor […]. He creates before the audience small paintings, which he sells immediately…". See Gaiti-Charrat (2003), 44.

8 As it developed, anyway, in post-war abstraction, both of the abstract expressionism of the New York School, and French post-war abstract art. See Foster et al. (2004), 349-354.

Out of the gesture of either his broad brushstroke or a fine, intense graphism in colour paste, emerge birds, insects, mythical creatures, hybrid, imaginary forms between man and beast, in the 1950s. With minimally the same gesture, in rapid movements, his brushstroke repeats itself to build his abstract compositions (fig. 5, 6) and the first "little men" of the following decade (fig. 7). Here, the hyperrealist influences of his early works return and are fused with gestural, abstract painting, to comprise a "mythology of everyday life", which seems to preoccupy him.[9] The coupling of the fantastical with the expressionist style on certain heads,[10] for example, conveys that sense of an anarchic, playful imagination seen in compositions of a similar style in the painting of the COBRA. Some of these creatures could remind us, on the other hand, of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures, which allude both to a space-age future and to ritual totems transformed into equipment in a contemporary fairground. In some works of the same body, besides, the titles do not refer to mythical theogonies, but to the contemporary urban environment (*Á Paris*), an alternative—initially—place of residence for the crowds that seem to be in a process of "metamorphosis", sometimes mythological, sometimes Kafkian (*The Metamorphosis of Kafka*). In the first works of the 1960s, insects, birds, bees and animals multiply, but each form preserves its autonomy, its own features—the forms remain dissimilar to one another. Repetition intensifies, of course, with the division of the surface into smaller frames, but all creatures appear to share the same world in equal terms (*God made the world, the man, and the frog…*).[11]

Fig. 3 Yannis Gaitis in his studio, rue de Sèvres, in Paris, 1965

Fig. 4 Yannis Gaitis among the "little men", 1981

[9] According, also, to one of his titles, as well as one of the exhibitions curated by Gassiot-Talabot, in which he took part between 1964 and 1967, entitled "Mythologies Quotidiennes". For that world and the mythical element in Gaitis's work, see the excellent essay by Marilena Karra "Rhythmical traces lead, and concrete forms follow", in Gaiti-Charrat, et al. (2003), 411-428.

[10] See Cat. Nos. 383-385 in Gaiti-Charrat, et al. (2003).

[11] Enrico Crispolti writes that Gaitis attempts to deal with "the inhuman objectivity of our everyday life" with an "investment of mythical purity". However, "he replaces the breath of the narrative myths of his birthplace with the uncertainty and the confusion of contemporary man, who is at once unit and crowd, an ant man inundating of metropolises". See Crispolti (1965), n.p. Quoted in Gaiti-Charrat (2003), 46.

Untitled, 1957
Alpha Bank Art Collection

Fig. 5

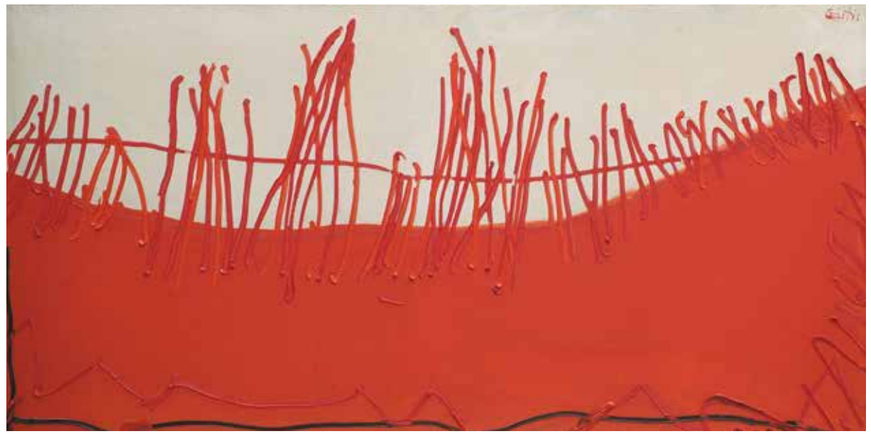
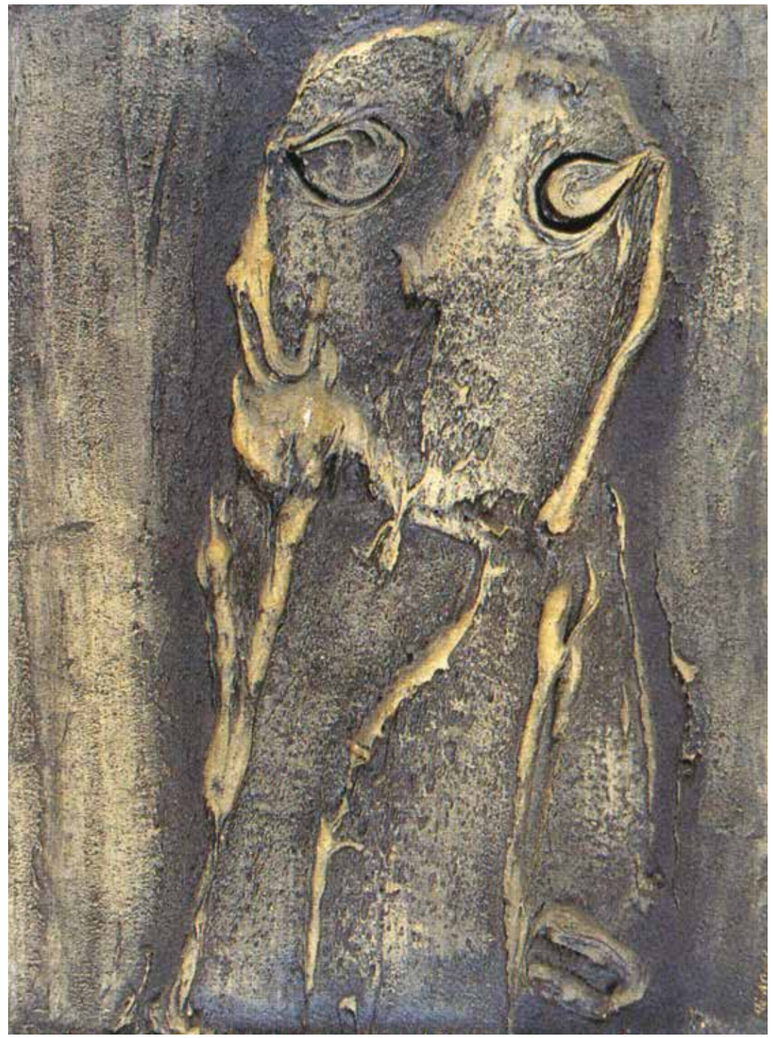


Fig. 6 | ***Composition***, c. 1962
National Bank of Greece Art Collection



Untitled, n.d.
Private collection | **Fig. 7**

Gradually, however, the flocks of mythical creatures, insects and birds, transform into the black and white or monochrome crowds of the city, to embody, by their common habits and practices, the everyday life of contemporary social reality: *Elevator*, *Walk*, *Procession*, *New authority*, *On the line (En ligne)*, *Demonstration backstabbing*, *Human landscapes: the reflections* or *Shadows of men* (fig. 8).

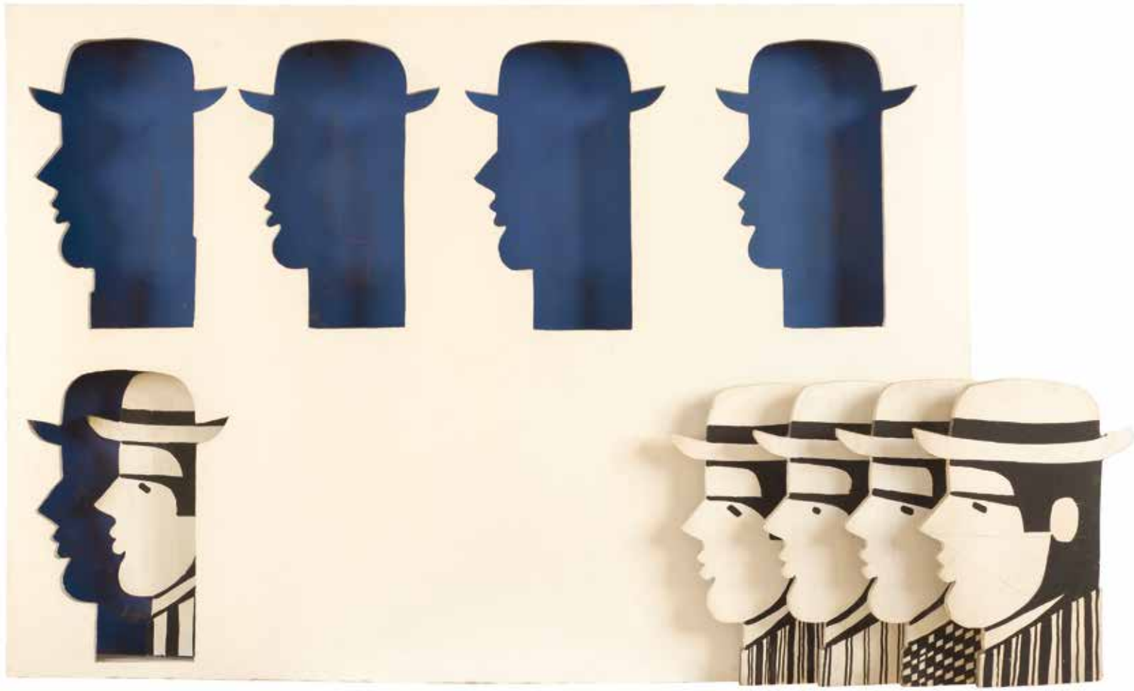
Repetition, symmetry, a heraldic layout and a frontal positioning are features of traditional and, more generally, pre-modern art and decoration (as we are reminded by the painting *The Holy Fathers* (fig. 9), which, in the work of Gaitis, are combined and gradually give way to standardisation.

The stylisation of the image of the human type—arguably deliberate in the midst of the junta (fig. 10, 11)—is likely another hyperrealist influence, perhaps from the work of Magritte,[12] the hyperrealist artist and quintessential influence upon pop art and popular culture, notably advertising. The bowler hat of Western man, a sign of modern times and the rise of the middle strata,[13] is indicative of social inclusion and class, educational level, and participation in shared values.[14] As a distinguishing feature of modern man, it appears in the work of Georges Seurat and René Magritte, the comedies of Charlie Chaplin, the characters in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and in James Bond's *Goldfinger*. In the 1960s, Gaitis's little men with their hats, their blank, stylised eyes and their plaid or pinstripe suits, begin making their appearance in venues of popular amusement and mass consumption. In the works of that period, such as *Funfair* or *Carousel-horses*, *Pinball*, *Target practice*, *Koutalianos*, *The circuit of death*, *The court of miracles*, the *Stripper*, *Chasteté* or *The beautiful Dulcinea* (fig. 12), football, both in terms of style and subject matter, seem to comprise memories of a folk culture being lost to pop and the onslaught of consumerism.

12 Regarding the connection of attributes of Gaitis's work to the qualities of the work of Magritte, see Lévêque (1969). See also Serafini (1988), n. p.

13 Robinson (1993), 4.

14 Panofsky (1991), 24.



Shadows of men, 1971
Annie Costopoulos collection

Fig. 8

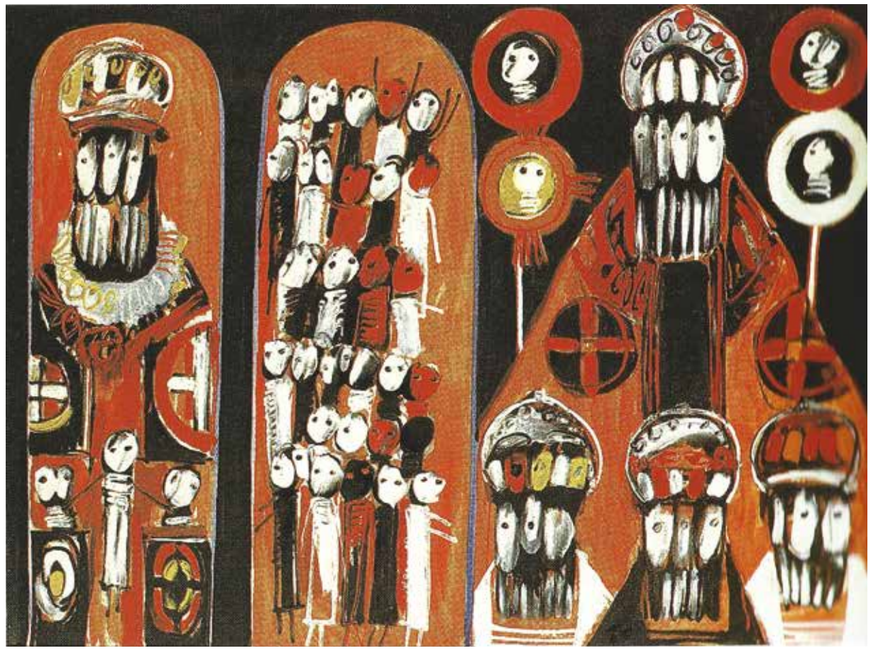


Fig. 9 *The Holy Fathers*, 1966-1967
Private collection

Funfair or *Carousel-horses*, 1967
Annie Costopoulos collection

Fig. 10

Fig. 11 | *Motorcyclist*, 1967
National Bank of Greece Art Collection

Chasteté or *The beautiful Dulcinea*, 1967
Douzeni collection | Fig. 12

Gaitis at that time also connects mass culture with the wave of tourism that developed in the 1970s, and responds satirically with a series of works whereby he alludes with humour to the reception of antiquity (fig. 13).[15]

Standardisation, repetition, multiplication are, however, pop art techniques, and this is where the ambiguity of Gaitis's work begins. He did not, of course, appropriate or mimetically reproduce images from advertising and comics, but constructed, instead, the image of contemporary man starting from his own experience in the metropolis and giving a testimony, as he used to say and captured in his works on the subject of the metro (fig. 14).[16] Gaitis's little man was the first figure he created "against the status quo", while also representing the "status quo".[17] We could, therefore, interpret multiplication and standardisation as a critical representation of the emerging new reality in post-war societies and as a protest against the formative power of technology, a power that levelled subjectivity and suppressed the individual's critical thinking—in 1964, Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* was released, and pop art made its appearance in Paris. The reproduction of the image of contemporary consumer culture, the "monumental objectivity" of pop art, was rigorously criticised in France

Fig. 13
Oh Gods or ***Symplegades***, 1980
Collection of European Cultural Centre of Delphi

15 "The last works I exhibited were the little men and the Antiquities. And that was more of a satire. Because when I went to the Acropolis and saw 10,000 people visiting every day and destroying the landscape, going up to have a photograph taken in front of the Acropolis and then leave, I turned red. I couldn't accept all these people going there and ridiculing the Acropolis". See Gaitis (1984).

16 "People don't want to see themselves as the little man… that's not me, they say, and yet they are. I refused to get a car, I don't have a car, I don't want a car… but everyone else got a car". Gaitis also confided that he avoided the metro at rush hour, because he couldn't cope with the crowds and the packing as sardines. Cf. also: "All people have become one, nothing more than a number. I am making a testimony, and I am telling you, make sure you save yourselves, we save ourselves. I can do nothing more, except this testimony." *Ibid*.

17 "The little men are, of course, wooden, but they are real people. They are the little man of today in the status quo. And that same little man reacts to the status quo". *Ibid*.

in the early 1960s,[18] yet it has been interpreted fairly recently as a process of appropriation of the mechanisms of the then-new phase of capitalist culture forming, subsequently, an indirect criticism.[19]

That discussion, however, exceeds the scope of this essay. To return to our topic, what could nonetheless be pointed out is that Gaitis's graphic style, the little man as an image and as an idea, reproduced on decorative objects, objects of everyday use and even limited edition collectible objects, was made into a named, recognisable trademark and an emblem of the artist's signature, as his distinct, rich brushstroke had been in the past. The more his work spilled out onto the streets to merge with life through happenings or installations, in Nikaia, at the metro, outside the Beaubourg, at the Petzetakis factory, at the Carnival of Patra,[20] at the Theatro Vrachon [Melina Merkouri Open Air Theatre],[21] the more it also multiplied on designer creations, such as dresses by Yannis Tseklenis[22] at the Minion department store, where the artist also held a retrospective exhibition in 1983, or the blankets at Iris Clert's gallery in Paris[23] and the toys at Polyplano in Athens (fig. 15-17). Gaitis's numerous inventions,

18 Things were more complex, however, as some critics, with Gassiot-Talabot among them, also recognised a critical dimension in the work of pop artists, such as Lichtenstein, despite their later criticism of it, which was, nevertheless, more opposed to the invasion of American art and culture in France. See Leeman (2016), 46; Leeman (2011). In that context, Giuliano Serafini's observation, which connects Gaitis to Lichtenstein, on account of their focus on reproduction media (albeit, it must be said, in a different way) is interesting: "Like Lichtenstein [does] with his typographic grid, so can Gaitis represent and reproduce anything through his trademark image of the little man". See Serafini (1988), n. p.

19 See Foster (2012).

20 Organised by Stathis Chrysikopoulos.

21 With Minos Volanakis in an event against violence.

22 The title of the series was "Tseklenis from Gaïtis", 1982, and was presented at the Minion department store, as well as in the US, in department stores in Dallas and New York. See Gaiti-Charrat (2003), 67.

23 The exhibition title was "Mettez un Gaïtis dans votre lit" ("Bring a Gaitis to your bed").

serious and playful at equal measure, little men in plaid suits, tin cans, perhaps wink at contemporary innovations, pop art and Daniel Buren[24] respectively, as well as at Pierro Manzoni, while also alluding to the optical games of Op Art, which were, in turn, adopted in fashion and everyday objects.[25] Besides, as Gaitis stated himself: "I make my work for myself. Then I want to get rid of it. I want to sell it to make a living. The artist is also part of the consumerist network of his times".[26] Gaitis's emotional identification with his little men seems not to be merely due to the fact that they represented the most mature and innovative contribution of his work, but also because they were reconciled with his own contradictions and ambiguities (fig. 18).

From the first painted mythical beasts with the massive eyes and his bustling, vibrant world of insects and hybrid forms, to the silence of the featureless, frozen black and white men in hats, Gaitis moved on to compound practices of modern and contemporary art that he had deployed since his youthful works with features of his contemporary pop culture, seeking in different—and perhaps partly contradictory—ways to unite his empirical work with life, and himself with the "common man, the wider public".[27]

24 As pointed out by Denys Zacharopoulos in his exhaustive study on the artist, see Zacharopoulos (n.d.), 80. See also Zacharopoulos (2003), 383-409. I would add that the flag installation on a street in Nikaia, also alludes to Daniel Buren. See Gaiti-Charrat, et al. (2003), 61, fig. 95.

25 As Serafini wrote, "That type of vocabulary is forever his own. To the point where, while his reputation gradually spreads beyond the borders of Europe, he becomes in a sense a victim of that vocabulary". See Serafini (1988), n.p.

26 Gaiti-Charrat (2003), 53.

27 "I would be interested in holding my retrospective exhibition—an event to mark my 40 years in painting—at the Minion department store, for instance. Where common people can see me—the wider public. Those whom I address and those for whom I have always painted". Quoted in Gaiti-Charrat et al. (2003), 69.

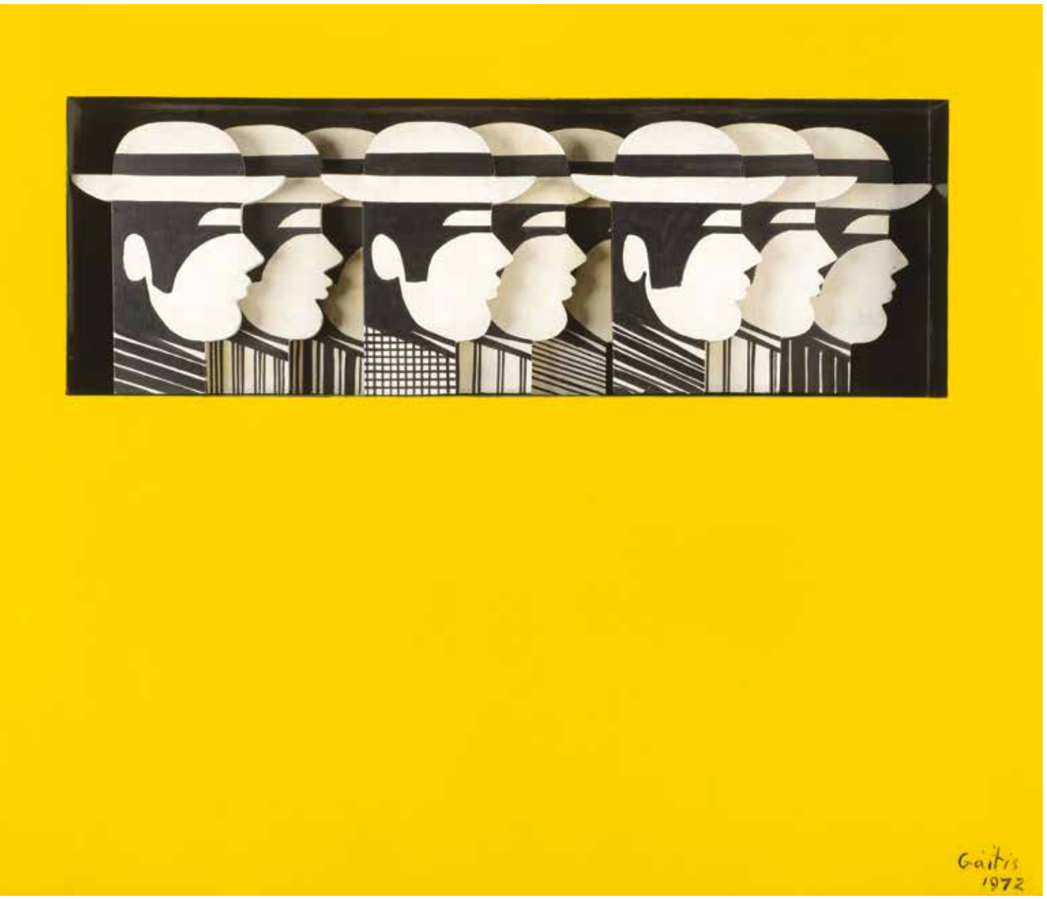


Fig. 14 | *Metro*, 1972
Private collection

Poster for the exhibition "Gaïtis" at the Minion department store, 1983 | **Fig. 15**

The entrance of Polyplano gallery, during Gaitis's exhibition "Human landscapes", 1977 | **Fig. 16**

Tin cans, one of the multiple objects—in limited editions—that depict Gaitis's characteristic figure, the "litte men" | **Fig. 17**

Getting to know his work mobilises us, bringing to life as it does the anxiety of man, who, in the early 1960s, was experiencing the emergence of a new age for human ties, our relationship with nature, work, the body, love and everyday life, and sensed its evolution. The world of his images, *such a colourful world, steeped in fear*, comprises and narrates the youthful period of our own technological civilisation, and we can relate our experience with that of the painter.

Self-portrait, 1967
Franco Cérès collection

Fig. 18

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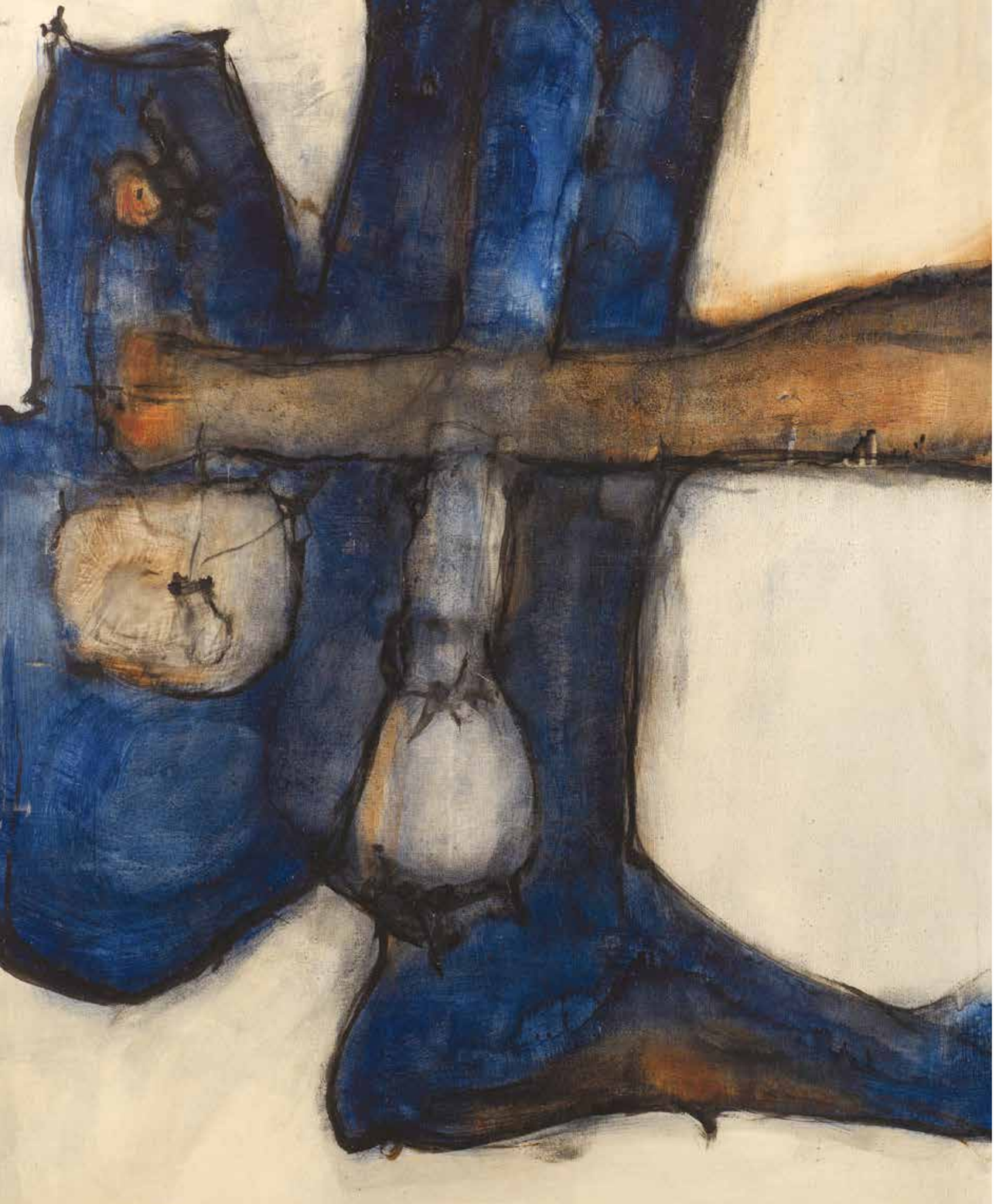

CHRYSSA ROMANOS

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Chryssa Romanos
Juvenilia

Chryssa Romanos is the first Greek artist who may historically be included in the category of neo-avantgarde, as described by Hal Foster, Benjamin Buchloch or Jill Carrick,[1] who refer to a post-war return to the demand of identifying artistic practices with the practice of everyday life, through strategies such as collage and readymade. From that perspective, the interesting thing about her juvenilia, as compared to her "mature" production, is that they allow us to investigate the aesthetic processes and the historical contexts that led to a shift from expressive, abstract painting to a type of experiential realism focusing on everydayness. The landmark works in this journey, from painting to collage, from abstraction to realism, from the subjective to the political, and the processes of questioning and experimentation that are typical of all transitions, provide us with invaluable interpretive tools to study and ultimately evaluate the contribution of Romanos in the history of modern Greek art.

Chryssa Romanos studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts from 1950 to 1956, initially under Yannis Moralis (foundation level) and subsequently at the

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[1] Foster (1994), 5-32; Buchloch (2003); Carrick (2010).

studio of the less progressive Andreas Georgiadis. The academicism of School teachings during that period does not inspire the young artist; by contrast, it causes in her, almost as a reflex, a tendency to reflect, which seems to define her first steps in painting. The object of her reflection is not only the dependence of art on representation, but also the demarcated and institutionalised framing of artistic creation by guidelines and rules. Contributing to this is the frustration caused by the conservative climate of post-civil war Athens, which is attempting to "regenerate and breathe creatively",[2] as well as the changes brought about by the ideological polarisation of the global political system at the onset of the Cold War. In Greece, that conflict is evident in political and cultural diplomacy and the activity of foreign educational institutions.

Amidst such a climate, the first recourse that serves as a vehicle for subverting academic instruction for Romanos is, in the early 1950s, abstraction. In the earliest of her student works, the abstract style with which she approaches figurative subjects attests to her interest in the autonomy of the medium and not in representation or a canonical perspective and rendering of space, human figures and shapes. In her first paintings, the relationship between gesture and materiality gradually becomes a central theme. For example, in *Study* of 1954 (fig. 1), horizontal or vertical brushstrokes become the main subject of the painting, while the trace of the artist's movement and body is recorded performatively with the help of a material whose energy and presence are left bare, apparent, self-sufficient.

These types of experimentations correspond to the spirit of an aspect of Greek avant-garde, which, during the 1950s, is centred on a transition from "Greekness" to abstraction.[3] Jannis Spyropoulos's exhibition in Parnassos in 1950, as well as the one by Alekos Kontopoulos in 1957, Henry Moore's exhibition (1951) and the participation of Greece in the Venice *Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte* in 1960, with works by Jannis Spyropoulos,

[2] For more, see Matthiopoulos (2009), 263-301 & 231.
[3] For more, see Matthiopoulos (2000), 363-400.

Study, 1954
Private collection

Fig. 1

Fig. 2 | *Still life*, 1959
Private collection

Alekos Kontopoulos, Lazaros Lameras and Alex Mylonas, could be seen as important events on the inception and gradual predominance of abstraction on the Greek art scene. In the context of synchronisation with international trends, abstract art is supported by art critics such as Eleni Vakalo and Angelos Prokopiou, who also encourage the young Chryssa. This is the age when the argument for legitimising abstraction could be summed up by Prokopiou's phrase: "synchronicity of Greece with Western sensibility […], proof of a victory of the new generation in the field of the aesthetic battle against the forces of anachronism and the stagnation of our souls, the souls of free people".[4] This particular Cold War rhetoric drives artists such as Chryssa Romanos to turn to abstraction, as a field for trying out new mediums as well as the way to express a radical ideology. She exhibits her work for the first time and takes part in the Summer Salon of Young Artists at Zygos gallery in 1958.

Romanos puts on abstract painting her own mark, which is already oriented towards bringing out the value of the everyday, as well as the importance of "affect".[5] With *Still life* of 1959 (fig. 2), she chooses to portray everyday objects aiming to reframe the familiar, the domestic, showing at the same time her interest in space, physicality, ritual, and structure. She sees the painting as a splicing of painted elements, which heralds her subsequent collages, while her efforts are deliberately architectural or structural, in a way that still alludes to the post-cubist aesthetic, as in the work of several of Yannis Moralis's students.

The next body of early works draws from the practice of typography and, specifically, from its simplest form, monotype: repeated motifs of typographical ink on glass, printed immediately, before they dry, on paper. The spontaneity of the gesture and the transparency of the glass, as well as the repetition that this medium allows, will remain as central arteries in Romanos's more mature work. The monotypes of the late 1950s (fig. 3) make symbolic, almost verbal, reference to black, and are reminiscent of Chinese calligraphy. These forms,

4 Ioannidis (2009), 231-238.

5 See Avramopoulou (2018), 9-66.

Monotypes, 1960
Private collection

Fig. 3

somewhere between abstract shapes and primitive script, are articulated like the components of a verbal system, accentuating the significance of gesture and serial presentation that we will come across in her later works, such as *Maps* of the 1960s.

The "Monotypes" series is an important transition towards the work Romanos presented in her first solo exhibition at Zygos gallery in 1960. In the works significantly titled *Painting* (fig. 4), colour makes a comeback and the gesture functions as the primary feature of an expressive language that could be included in the aesthetic category of (American) abstract expressionism. Over that period, abstraction is identified through the critical discourse and inception of abstract expressionism by art critics—such as Prokopiou[6]—with freedom, symbols, "inner need". In that context, Romanos experiments with the movement and physicality of the act of painting. Time, the moment, disposition, empathy are expressed by the metaphysics of gesture and the totality of form. The intensity generated on the canvas by the ostensible backward and forward movement of the forms is captured as an unbroken flow supported by a non-hierarchical organisation of line, shape and colour.

This particular work leads to arguably the most important body of abstract paintings entitled *Myth* of 1963 (fig. 5). This is her Paris period (Romanos arrives at the city on a scholarship in 1961), when ideological conflict and demands for social change step up, both in Greece and the rest of Europe. In Paris, the artist studies modernism and discovers neo-avantgarde strategies at the galleries, while her close relationship with Nikos Kessanlis, the trips they take together and the time spent with avant-garde artists open up new horizons for her.[7] New works spring up from this period, where transparency, a sense of movement and the ever-visible gesture of the artist upon the canvas, as the result of a ritualistic act, further her earlier investigations. The figurative element is introduced here anew, not referring to structurally rendered objects

[6] Prokopiou (1960).
[7] Chrysostomidis (1994), 125-152.

Painting, 1960
Private collection

Fig. 4

in space, but to organic forms, like body parts. These "parts" seem to hover in a two-dimensional environment, which is generated by the painting technique, with the canvas spread out on the floor, a practice reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's contemporary drippings. In this process, it is the action of the body itself on the flat, horizontal surface that captures the trace of the movement.

Myths also externalise a kind of self-awareness of the female body, suggesting painting as a means of artistic emancipation and introspection. In this context, Romanos's works move away from the abstract formalism of the previous period and allude to affect as the expression of innermost, vital forces that transcend the conscious. Blending features from the monotypes and abstract works of the 1950s, *Myths* express a strongly autobiographical, particularly distinctive type of writing, something like a "calligraphy of the soul", which, freed of external references, proposes an immersion into the archetype, the primary, the source.

In the early 1960s Romanos's work manifests a radical shift, which begins with her return to monotypes and the *Repetitions* of 1964 (fig. 6). This shift is connected to her shared journey and life with Nikos Kessanlis (they finally marry in 1968) as well as the couple's close relationship with Pierre Restany, the founder of Nouveau Réalisme.[8] Romanos paints in oil on a mirror and prints the subject several times over, in such a way that each repetition is the same but slightly corrupted. Serial reproduction and repetition serve to indicate the temporality of the everyday, an issue that will preoccupy her hereafter. As Anna Kafetsi writes, these first monotype collages "function as the stimulus to reconsider basic aesthetic values that connected the artwork to a formalistic view or a view regarding uniqueness" and are, as such, "a highly critical moment in the evolution of Chryssa Romanos's work".[9]

That period marks the beginning of the artist's conscious preoccupation, as Antaios Chrysostomidis mentions in her biography, with the ideological content of works and her need to express her era. "I said to myself: But Chryssa, you have

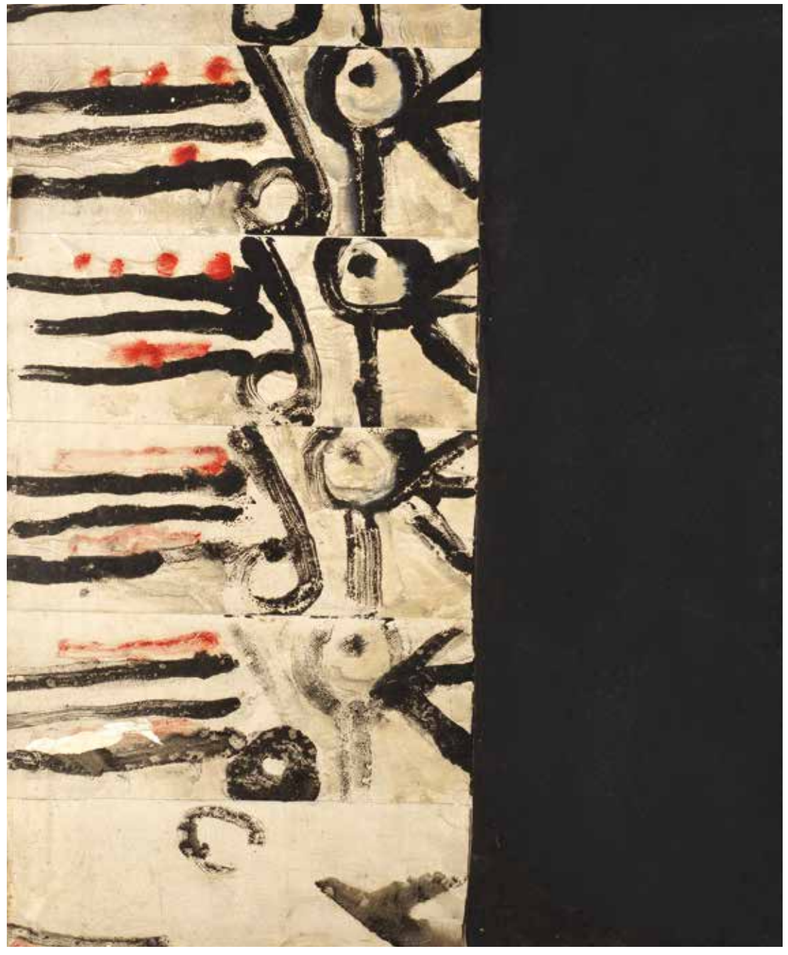
8 Kosmadaki (2021), 227-246.
9 Kafetsi (1994), 41 & 42.

Myth, 1963
Private collection

Fig. 5

always wanted to tell stories. Why are you wasting your time on monoprints? Why not use your work to express your ideas, your time, everything that's happening around you?" she says.[10] This is the motive that pushes her to move from abstraction to (new) realism and try to narrate her contemporary work through magazine cut-out collages.[11] At that time, the everyday (*le quotidien*) and the significance of the objects that define it are central in the discourse on culture in France, in texts by Henri Lefebvre, Maurice Blanchot, Georges Perec, and Jean Baudrillard.[12] Their texts systematically engage with the unimportant details of the daily experience, arguing that everyday life offered the only possibility for resistance and political change against the alienation of capitalism, spectacle and consumption. It is in this climate that the Nouveau Réalisme movement is founded by the art critic Pierre Restany. The artists of Restany's group—Arman, Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri, Martial Raysse, Jacques de la Villeglé, Raymond Hains and others—use means of historical innovation, such as Dada, to transcend the so-called "gap between art and life", drawing directly from reality, that is, the modern world of consumption and mass communication. The common ground of their work is a method of direct appropriation of the real or, in Pierre Restany's terms, a "poetic recycling of the urban, industrial, and advertising reality".[13] "New Realism", writes Restany, "sees the transformation of the object as a fundamental event, upon which it bases its theory. Any random object submits to the arbitrary. Through the choice alone, it becomes a work of art, a work of art that may acquire the capacity for expression [...] A sculpture is anything the hand can create [...] The object is plucked out of its everyday life, since the gesture of choosing and presenting it is enough to give it its own meaning. That choice entails the liberation of the object".[14] Like other Greek

10 Chrysostomidis (1994), 136.
11 Her first collages are exhibited in Berlin in 1965, and the following year at the Sao Paolo Biennale, to critical acclaim. See Chrysostomidis (1994), 139 & 140.
12 Carrick (2010), 30-32.
13 Restany (1990), 76.
14 Restany (1961).



Repetitions, 1964
Private collection
Fig. 6

diaspora artists, Romanos absorbs into her work during that time theories and experimentations of the Nouveau Réalistes, and joins, along with Kessanlis, the wider circle of the movement.[15] Her relationship with Restany and his group sets Romanos on a quest for a new objective image, which could provide the solution to the "crisis of the painted image". After the body in the *Myths* series, it is the place and the impasses of consumerism culture that preoccupy the artist.

Romanos has been actively political since her student years and, when it comes to her work, she understands political engagement in neo-avant-garde terms, as questioning the urban aesthetic of artistic autonomy and the "expressive" artist.[16] She draws from contemporary philosophical theories of the everyday and adopts a neo-dadaist practice to demystify "personal writing" and formulate critical discourse against the way that everyday life is translated into made-up narratives of advertising, "society pages" and publicity. For example, in the works entitled *Reportage* of 1965 (fig. 7), she draws from fashion magazines and advertisements guiding consumers towards a false happiness, dictating how they should live, dress and exist.

In the context of the ideological frictions of that time, the axes of her new works are criticism of mass culture, demystification of the artistic gesture, a break with the national demands of the artists of the Generation of the 1930s, and a renewal of the artistic vocabulary through radical practices of appropriation, against the emergence of a culture based on consumerism. For example, *Labyrinths* of 1965 (fig. 8) are made on paper from images cut out of everyday printed matter (magazines, newspapers, advertisements), where vision is guided with the help of words and signage such as *attention*! *danger*, *passage libre*, *impasse*... Mechanical elements and instruments are combined with human limbs, alluding to the body-automaton, while the image as a medium of information and manipulation of show business is deconstructed, shattered and reassembled into new narratives. It is a strategy balanced between art *engagé*

Reportage, 1965
Irene Panagopoulos collection

Fig. 7

15 Tzirtzilakis (ed.) (1998).

16 Foster (1994).

and free automatic association, reminiscent of the rerouting (*détournement*) and the concept of *dérive* of the Situationists,[17] who are contemporary to that period. Correspondingly, in *Zodiaque 13* of 1965 (fig. 9), familiar habits, the culture of star signs, cartomancy, tarot, and women's magazines reconstruct a mythology of the everyday that demonstrates the way creative possibilities and the spontaneous experiences are considered secondary in the closed system of production and consumption. In other works, such as *Roma* of 1965 (fig. 10), the same practice traces the personal, daily experience. Here, Romanos summons the ontogenetic function of cartography[18] to compose autobiographical, disorientating travel itineraries to familiar cities, which resemble the Situationists' "psychogeographic maps" of Paris.

Following the colonels' coup d'état in Greece in 1967, Romanos and Kessanlis produce resistance posters at their country home and socialise with Greek intellectuals and politicians, such as Nikos Poulantzas, Konstantinos Tsoukalas, Theodoros Pangalos, Ioanna Kaftantzoglou, Kostas and Aleka Vergopoulou, Nikos Koundouros, Mada Kotzia, and others, who have fled to Paris. Over those years, her relationship with Kessanlis, their shared work, her collaboration with Restany, the time they spend with the Greeks of Paris, and enforced exile are all integral parts of an everyday life where public and private space merge. Romanos and Kessanlis create and maintain two homes—two studios, one in Paris and another in Normandy, places that evolve alongside their work. Their Parisian circle gathers there, Romanos cooks, paints, engages in conversation, and life becomes one with art and politics. This is the time of "revolutionisation of the everyday", where "the personal, the everyday and the political are connected in a way that includes the expression of emotions and symbolic meanings".[19]

17 See Theodoropoulou (2024).

18 The "ontogenetic" mapping contains those elements that allow for the reforming of an open genealogy of the mapping procedure, embracing as it does contemporary and historical artworks, while making reference to relations, communities, correlation of forces, and the generation of knowledge. See Kitchin & Dodge (2007), 331-344.

19 Kornetis (2015), 428.

Labyrinth, 1965
Private collection

Fig. 8

Fig. 9 | *Zodiaque 13*, 1965
Private collection

Roma, 1965 | Fig. 10
Private collection

In that climate, Romanos's work begins to take on the form of "autobiographical journaling".[20] In *Bloc-notes No5* of 1980 (fig. 11), the artist uses silk screen to reproduce pages out of notebooks and creates, in the form of correspondence or journal entries, a fiction around her life and everyday activities, cutting, pasting, and painting familiar objects, envelopes, maps, photographs, notes, recipes. By reflecting on the "female" identity and reframing stereotypical definitions of femininity, she attempts a revision of the essential nature of a distinctive female script. Romanos adopts the practices of a "feminist" art that is just emerging from the civil unrest of May 1968, contributing to a radical turnaround in the self-image of female artists.[21] Texts of this shift such as, for example, by Simone de Beauvoir, are included in the annotations of *Bloc-notes* and substantiate Romanos's espousal of this demand, through practices that emphasise the body, the gesture, the intimacy of objects and journal-keeping.

Putting heterogeneous elements together as a strategy of affective realism evolves, over the next creative phase, into a stratification of fragmentary images and materials. In the 1980s, after Kessanlis and Romanos move back to Athens, the narration of the everyday is expressed through the practice of *décollage* (a favourite practice of the Nouveaux Réalistes). Works like *Images* of 1981 (fig. 12) and *Map-Labyrinth* of 1981 (fig. 13) are created by sticking on and ripping off printed materials, initially on transparencies and later on plexiglass, in a process opposite but equivalent to collage.[22] Romanos once again functions abstractively; she charts, with layers of material, itineraries of the gaze that correspond to narratives of her own everyday life. The ritual of ripping off/sticking on is connected to the painting gesture of the 1950s. The same applies to the materiality, transparency, and colour range of these palimpsests, which are reminiscent of her first works of painting.

And thus, the circle closes. And the everyday comes back through a return to the expressive properties of gesture, ritual and affect.

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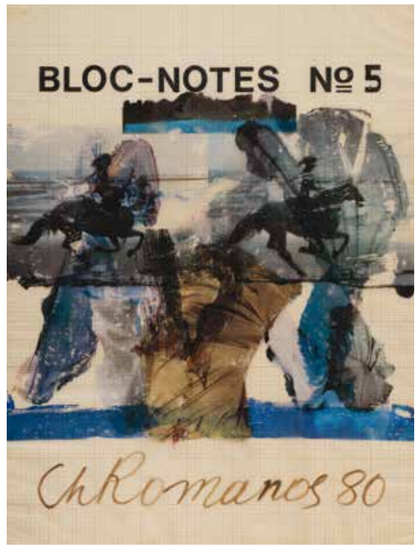
20 Kafetsi (1994), 89.
21 Parker & Pollock (1987).
22 Kafetsi (1994), 114-121.



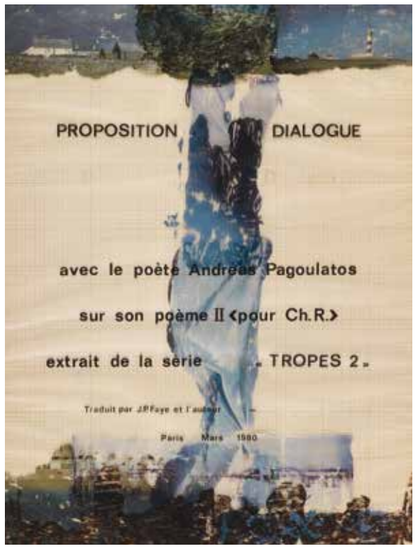
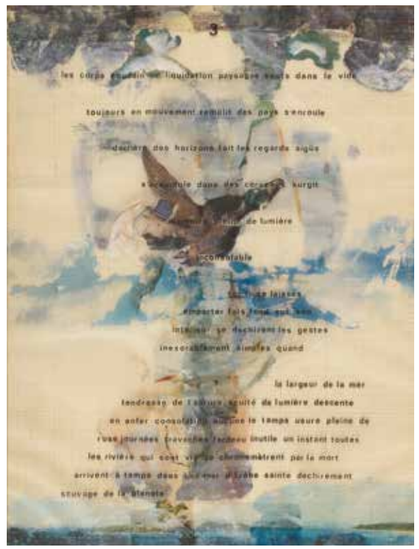


Fig. 11 From the ***Bloc-notes No5***, on the poetry of Andreas Pagoulatos, 1980 Private collection



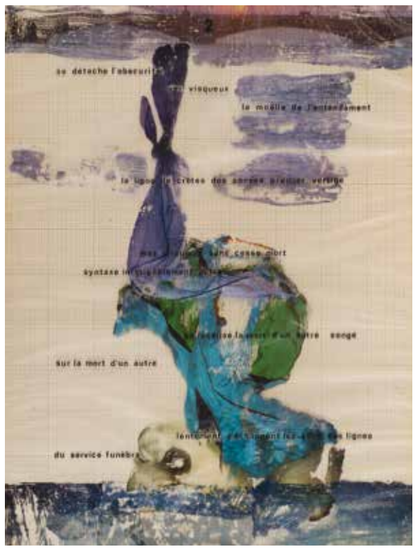
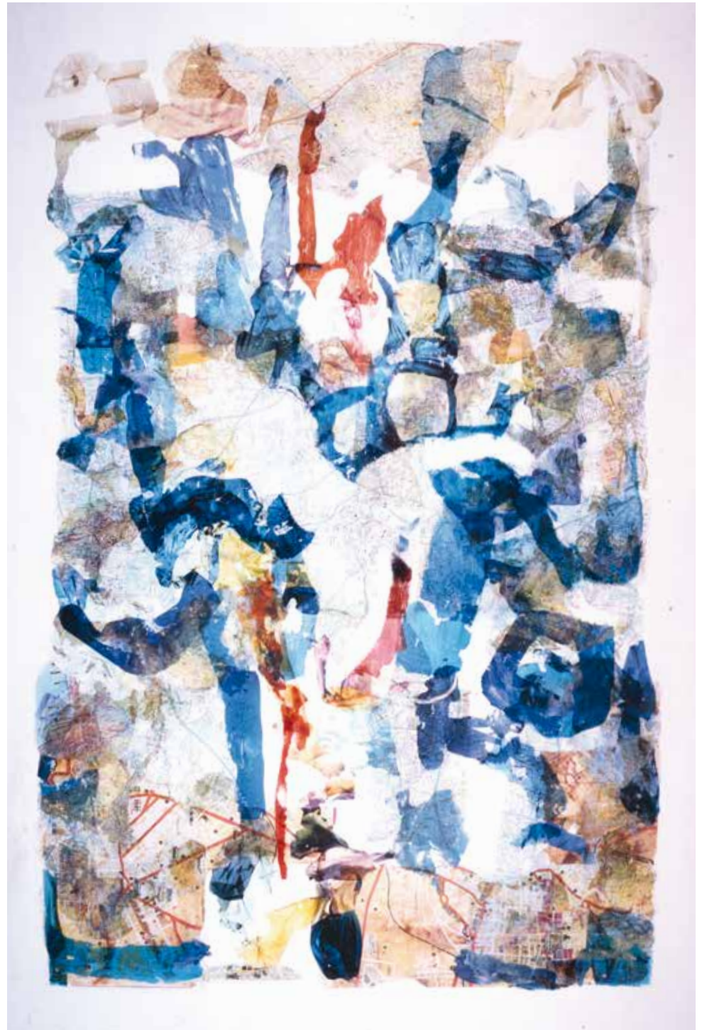


Fig. 12 | *Images*, 1981
Private collection



Map-Labyrinth, n.d.
Private collection | Fig. 13

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ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Yannis Gaitis

(1923-1984)

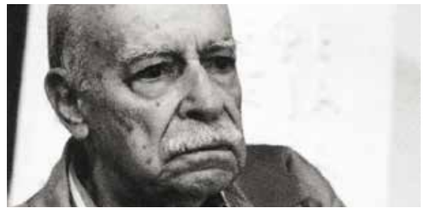
He studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts in the 1940s, under Konstantinos Parthenis. His first solo exhibitions were held in 1945 (at his studio) and 1947 in Parnassos Cultural Centre. He was a founding member of "Oi Akraioi" ("The Extremists") art group, along with Alekos Kontopoulos and other artists. In 1954, he moved to Paris to continue his studies at the School of Fine Arts and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. In 1959, he travelled to Rome, where he joined the "Gruppo Sigma", along with Vlassis Kaniaris, Nikos Kessanlis, Dimitris Kontos and Kostas Tsoklis.

His solo shows and participations in group exhibitions were numerous both in Greece and abroad, and included the Biennale of Sao Paolo in 1952 and 1967, and Europalia in Brussels in 1982. Works of his have been shown in retrospective exhibitions, such as those at the National Gallery (1984), the Benaki Museum (2006), and B. & M. Theocharakis Foundation for the Fine Arts and Music (2023).

His visual language led him, during the 1960s, from figurativeness to abstract expressionist and surrealistic tendencies, as well as to cubist and geometric creations. He gradually developed the "little man" that characterises his work, as a symbol of contemporary massification and faceless middle-class propriety. That motif prevailed in his painting, printmaking, constructions, installations and happenings, as well as in utilitarian applications, as a medium of social criticism addressed to the wider public and with international reach. A "little men" installation adorns Larissa Station of the Athens Metro.

Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika

(1906-1994)



He took his first lessons from Vassilis Magiasis and Konstantinos Parthenis (1921-1922). In 1922 he left for Paris, where he studied French literature and aesthetics, as well as painting under Roger Bissière and engraving under Dimitris Galanis at the Académie Ranson. In 1927, he returned to Athens to complete his military service, and held his first exhibition in Greece. From that time onwards, his work began to gain recognition. In 1927, he held his first solo exhibition in Paris, at Galerie Percier, and exhibited work at Stratigopoulou gallery in Athens, alongside Michalis Tombros, in 1928. In 1936-1937, he collaborated on the publication of *To Trito Mati* [The Third Eye] journal, to which he contributed translations and articles. In 1937, he began working in scenography, designing the sets and costumes for a production at Marika Kotopouli's Theatre. This was followed by collaborations with the Sokratis Karantinos's New School of Drama (1938), the National Theatre (1950), Rallou Manou's Modern Greek Ballet (1950), the Matey Dance School (1952) and the Covent Garden Theatre in London (1961). In 1941, he was appointed professor in the Faculty of Architecture of the National Technical University. He divided his life between Athens and Paris, and developed creative collaborations with many people in the arts, architects, literary personalities, painters and sculptors, making a significant contribution to the intellectual life of Athens.

He presented his work in numerous exhibitions, in Greece and abroad.

He was elected member of the Athens Academy in 1973, honorary professor of the Faculty of Architecture at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 1979, and a member of the Royal Academy in London in 1986. That was also the year he donated to the National Galley 45 of his works. In 1991, in partnership with the Benaki Museum, he founded the Ghika Gallery in Athens.

One of the main representatives of the so-called "Generation of the 1930s", with diverse and multifaceted work, he developed his art through an idiom that was always varied and brimming with different elements, while adhering to certain steadily recurring references (architectural structures, wall clusters, prickly pears, birds, etc). The constant refrain in his work is a dialogue between European avant-garde trends (mainly cubism and constructivism) and Greek tradition and Greekness, as these were perceived from his personal viewpoint.

Vasso Katraki

(1909 or 1914-1988)

She studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts (1936-1940) under Konstantinos Parthenis in painting and Yannis Kefallinos in engraving, to which she chose to devote herself. She embraced the Left-wing ideology and joined the Artists' National Liberation Front (EAM) in her student years, making her work a vessel of ideological and social content. In 1949, she took part in the creation of the "Omada Stathmi" art group, while her first solo exhibition was presented at Zachariou gallery in 1950.

Until roughly the 1950s, she engraved on wood; she subsequently invented an original technique, of carving on sandstone. While exiled in Gyaros (during the 1967 dictatorship), she managed to express herself by painting pebbles in black ink. She presented her work in numerous solo exhibitions in Greece and abroad. She took part in group events, like the Biennale of Ljubljana in 1956 and 1977, of Tokyo from 1960 to 1970, of Sao Paolo in 1957, and of Venice in 1966, where she was awarded the Tamarind Institute International Lithography Award. She also received awards at the Alexandria Biennale (First Prize in Engraving) and the Lugano Engraving Biennale (Premium ex æquo). Retrospectives of her oeuvre have been held at the National Gallery (1980) and elsewhere. The Engraving Arts Center – Vasso Katraki Museum was founded in Aetoliko in 1995, with the aim of placing her work on permanent display.

Her engravings are always centred on people, their anxieties, their ideas, their preoccupations, their hardships, their struggle for survival and the strife for freedom in hard times. In decisive, strong lines, without colour and with the concurrence of black and white as her only choice, she succeeded, with unparalleled frugality, in presenting figures that are enduring, reserved and, at the same time, charged with genuine emotion.

Alekos Kontopoulos

(1904-1975)

As a teenager, he took lessons from iconographer Georgios Sarafianos. From 1923 to 1929, he studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts under Georgios Iakovidis, Dimitrios Geraniotis, Pavlos Mathiopoulos and Nikolaos Lytras.

He continued his studies in Paris (1930-1932), with Paul Le Douxand Henri Morisset.

After returning to Greece, he became involved in the circle of *Neoi Protoporoi* (New Pioneers) and took part in creating the "Eleftheroi Kallitechnes" (Free Artists) group (1934). In 1935, he went back to Paris, to attend courses at the École des Beaux Arts and the Colarossi and Grande Chaumière academies.

He moved to Athens permanently in 1939, and was recruited at the National Archaeological Museum two years later, where he worked until 1969. During the German Occupation, he was part of the Resistance, and was involved in the effort to establish the Chamber of Artists in 1944. In 1949, he founded, along with fellow artists, the art group "Oi Akraioi" (The Extremists), with the aim of supporting an iconic art in Greece. Abstract expression was introduced into his painting in 1947. At the same time, he wrote theoretical texts and gave lectures aimed at its dissemination, serving as a trailblazer in that direction.

He presented his work in solo and group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. He took part in the Biennale of Sao Paolo (1953, 1955—when he received the silver medal—and 1957), of Alexandria (1959) and of Venice (1960). In 1973, he refused the First State Prize awarded to him, as a protest against the dictatorship regime. A retrospective of his work was held at the National Gallery in 1976, followed by several more in Greece and internationally.

His home was donated by his wife to the Municipality of Agia Paraskevi and operates as a Municipal Library and the Alekos Kontopoulos Museum, alongside the Municipal Gallery of Lamia "Alekos Kontopoulos".

Yannis Moralis

(1916-2009)

He studied painting and engraving at the Athens School of Fine Arts under Dimitrios Geraniotis, Umvertos Argyros, Konstantinos Parthenis and Yannis Kefallinos, during 1931-1936. In 1937, on a scholarship by the Athens Academy, he travelled to Rome and then on to Paris, to take classes in fresco at the École des Beaux Arts and mosaics at the École d'Arts et Métiers.

With the onset of World War II, he returned to Greece. In 1947, he was elected Professor at the Athens School of Fine Arts, where he worked until 1983.

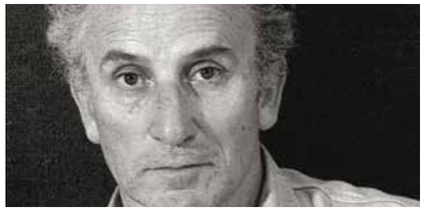
Following his participation in group exhibitions during the 1930s and 1940s, he presented his first solo show in Athens (Armos, 1959). In 1958, he represented Greece at the Biennale of Venice (along with Yiannis Tsarouchis and Antonis Sochos), as well as in the Tapestry Biennale of Lausanne in 1965 and 1972.

The National Gallery held a retrospective of his work in 1988, which was followed by a donation of part of the artist's work to the museum. Major exhibitions include the Athens Academy (1996), the Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation in Andros (2008) and the Benaki Museum (2001, 2018, 2023). He was honoured with distinctions such as Commander of the Order of the Phoenix (1979), the Prize of Arts and Letters of the Athens Academy (1979), and Commander of the Order of Honour (1999).

One of the most influential Greek artists, with regards to both his art and his teaching, he focused on diverse subjects, with emphasis on the human figure, landscapes and still lifes. He moved gradually from realistic representation to geometric abstraction, achieving a fusion of classical and modern. He also worked in scenic design (Greek Art Theatre, Greek Choreodrama, National Theatre), ceramics, and illustration. He created compositions for several spaces in private and public buildings, such as the engraved composition on the outer wall of the Hilton hotel in Athens (1959-1962). One of his works adorns at the Panepistimio Metro station in Athens.

Dimitris Mytaras

(1934-2017)



He studied painting at the Athens School of Fine Arts under Yannis Moralis and Spyros Papaloukas(1953-1957). He continued to Paris, on a scholarship from the State Scholarships Foundation, where he studied scenography at the École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs and interior design at the École d'Arts et Métiers (1961-1964).

After his first solo show at Zygos gallery in 1961, he presented his work in several solo and group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. These include the Biennale of Alexandria in 1958 and 1966, the Youth Biennale in Paris in 1960, the Biennale of Sao Paolo in 1966 and of Venice in 1972. Retrospectives of his work have been held at Pieridis Gallery (1989), the Château de Chenonceau in Loire, France (1992), the National Gallery (1995), the Crete Museum of Contemporary Art (1995), the Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation in Andros (2018), and elsewhere.

Centred on the human figure, his painting bears naturalistic and abstract features, emphasising the intensities and qualities of colour. He started from critical photorealism, in works of political content, to move on to an expressionist style, which retains, to a great extent, the sharpness of social observation.

As a scenographer, he collaborated, indicatively, with the National Theatre, the National Theatre of Northern Greece, the Greek Art Theatre Karolos Koun and Rallou Manou's Greek Choreodrama; he also worked as an illustrator, and created murals for public and private buildings. One of his works has been installed at Dafni station on the Athens Metro.

He taught interior design at the Athens Technological Institute (1964-1972). He was elected full professor at the Athens School of Fine Arts in 1977, where he also served as dean from 1982 to 1985. In 1978 he founded, along with his wife, Charikleia Mytara, and with the support of the Municipality, the Chalkida Art Workshop. In 2008, he was elected regular member of the Athens Academy and awarded the medal of Commander of the Order of the Phoenix. The Municipality of Chalkida awarded him the city's gold medal in that same year.

Chryssa Romanos

(1931-2006)

She studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts under Yannis Moralis and Andreas Georgiadis (1950-1955). In 1958, she was awarded a prize at the First Salon of Young Artists at Zygos gallery, where she also held her first solo exhibition in 1960.

In 1961, on a scholarship from the Greek State Scholarships Foundation, she pursued studies in Paris, where she stayed for twenty years, until her return to Athens in 1981.

She presented her work in solo exhibitions in Greece and abroad, and took part in several group and international events, such as the Young Artists Biennale (Paris, 1961), the Biennale of Engraving (Ljubljana, 1961), the Biennale of Sao Paolo (1965, 1994), of Venice (1976, as part of ProgettoArcevia), Europalia (Belgium, 1982), the Istanbul Biennale (1997), and others. In 2014, the Kalfayan gallery organised the tribute exhibition "Chryssa + Χρύσα [Chryssa]", where her work was presented alongside that of Chryssa (Vardea). A retrospective of her work was held at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (2023-2024).

Living in Paris, she socialised with the artists of her generation and expressed herself through various artistic mediums of the avant-garde. She originally employed automatic writing and gesture, the techniques of photomontage and collage, using images of mass consumption products, and photographs from the Press, along with handwritten or printed texts and symbols. Her works are imbued with a critical stance towards the social and political conditions of her time, yet their articulation remains poetic. At the same time, in her three-dimensional constructions (Meccano), she experimented with configuring an utopian architecture, with a playful nature.

Jannis Spyropoulos

(1912-1990)

He studied painting, initially at the Athens School of Fine Arts under Umvertos Argyros, Epameinondas Thomopoulos and Spyros Vikatos (1930-1936) and subsequently at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. With the declaration of World War II, he returned to Greece, where he remained until his death, devoted to painting. His oeuvre developed and gradually shifted from naturalism to a meticulously considered abstraction. With disciplined, self-contained compositions and a frugal use of colour, he created his own version of abstraction, which became very popular in Greece from the 1960s onwards, and resulted in him known as a "classic of abstract art".

He represented Greece in the Biennale of Alexandria (1955) and of Sao Paolo (1957). In 1960, he received an award by UNESCO at the Venice Biennale, and was distinguished for his participation in Documenta at Kassel, Germany, in 1964 and 1975. He presented his work in several solo exhibitions abroad (America, Australia, Canada, Israel, Cyprus). Retrospectives of his work have been held at the (Macedonian) State Museum of Contemporary Art-MoMus (1994), the National Gallery (1995), the Benaki Museum (2010), and elsewhere.

In 1961, he was awarded the Gold Medal of the city of Ostend, Belgium, Commander of the Order of the Phoenix in Athens in 1966, and the Gottfried von Herder Prize in Vienna in 1978. After his death in 1990, the Jannis & Zoe Spyropoulos Foundation was established, with the aim of collecting, studying, presenting and making good use of the painter's work, as well as supporting new artists.

Tassos A. (Alevizos)

(1914-1985)

He studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts under Umvertos Argyros, Konstantinos Parthenis, Thomas Thomopoulos and Yannis Kefallinos. He took courses in painting, sculpture and engraving, but spent his career working in engraving, as well as graphic design (book illustrations, posters, stamps). In 1940, he was among those students of Kefallinos's who designed propaganda posters for the Greco-Italian war. During the German Occupation, he continued to design posters and clandestine revolutionary publications. Active in Left-wing politics from a young age, he was one of the founding members of the Artists' National Liberation Front (EAM).

From 1939, he created covers and illustrations for books and magazines. In 1948, he was appointed art consultant at the "Aspioti-Elka" graphic arts company, and began illustrating school books for the Greek Schoolbook Publishing Organisation (ΟΕΣΒ).

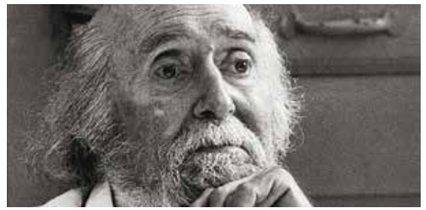
He was a founding member of the "Omada Stathmi" art group (1949) and the Panhellenic Cultural Movement (1977). He collaborated with the Greek Postal Service from 1954 to 1967, and also designed the stamps for Cyprus as from1962. In 1959, he became director of the Graphic Design Department of the Athens Technological Institute, where he taught until 1967.

He was honoured with awards and medals for engraving in Greece (1938, 1940, 1964) and Krakow (1966). He was an honorary member of the Academia del Disegno in Florence from 1963 and a member of the Board of Directors of the National Gallery from 1976. He presented his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions, while also taking part in international events, such as the Biennale of Venice (1950) and of Sao Paolo (1961), the Engraving Biennale (Lugano, Ljubljana, Tokyo, etc). The "A. Tassos Society of Visual Arts" was founded in 1986, with the purpose of disseminating his work and supporting Greek printmaking, and housed in his home in Mets, Athens, which operates as a museum.

In his artwork, he initially engaged with subjects reflecting the climate of war, the Resistance and human struggle. Later on, he turned to depicting the Greek landscape, labourers and peasants, themes that he treated with acute sensitivity and a humanitarian touch over tone. He is considered one of the most important Greek engravers of the post-war era.

Yannis Tsarouchis

(1910-1989)



Describing himself as a researcher and a lifelong student, Yiannis Tsarouchis studied alongside Dimitrios Biskinis, Dimitrios Geraniotis, Spyros Vikatos, Georgios Iakovidis, Thomas Thomopoulos, Yannis Kefallinos and Konstantinos Parthenis at the Athens School of Fine Arts (1928-1933). At the same time, he took classes at the studio of Fotis Kontoglou, where he was initiated into the secrets of Byzantine art and music, as well as folk tradition. His teachers—in the broad sense of the word—were Dimitris Pikionis, Angelos Sikelianos, Diamantis Diamantopoulos and Evgenios Spatharis.

He travelled several times to Paris, where he stayed for long stretches of time. He collaborated with Tériade and Iolas and held exhibitions abroad. His exhibitions include numerous solo shows and participations in group events, both Panhellenic and international, such as the Biennale of Alexandria in 1955 and Venice in 1958. A retrospective of his work was held at the Benaki Museum in 2009. Alongside painting, he also worked as a scenic and costume designer at the theatre and cinema (collaborating with the National Theatre, the Greek National Opera, the Greek Art Theatre Karolos Koun, the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus, the Covent Garden Theatre in London, the Dallas Civic Opera in Texas, the Théâtre National Populaire in Paris, the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, as well as with Maria Callas, Katina Paxinou, Alexis Minotis, Michalis Kakogiannis, Jules Dassin and Franco Zeffirelli).

He taught scenography at Doxiadis School (1960-1962), worked in book illustration, and wrote essays and reviews on art. Since 1982, his home in Maroussi houses the Tsarouchis Foundation, displaying his work, as well as that of other artists. His contact with so many different teachers and his trips to several places across the world resulted in enriching his artistic vocabulary and bringing different traditions into his work (Byzantine, folk, modern European, renaissance, baroque) on the crossroads of West and East, redefining the concept of Greekness.

Spyros Vassiliou

(1902 or 1903-1985)

He studied painting at the Athens School of Fine Arts (1921-1926), initially under Alexandros Kaloudis and, from 1923, under Nikolaos Lytras. In 1929, he held his first solo exhibition, and was awarded the Benakeio Prize in 1930, for the frescoes he designed for Agios Dionysios Areopagitis (pieces of ecclesiastical painting he created between 1936-1939). He was a founding member of the "Omada Technis" and "Omada Stathmi" art groups, and taught at the Papastrateios School before the war, and at the Athens Technological Institute (ATI) – Doxiadis School after the war. He had also been taking on scenography projects since 1927; during the Occupation, he turned to engraving and covertly distributed woodcuts, illustrated manuscripts and other publications. He presented his work in solo and group exhibitions and took part in the Biennale of Venice in 1934 and 1964, of Alexandria in 1957, and of Sao Paolo in 1959.

He spent many years teaching at independent and drama schools. From 1927, he also worked as a scenographer for independent and state-run stages, as well as for several films. His artistic creation also includes book illustrations, and the publication of articles and cartoons in newspapers and magazines, as well as *Paidika schedia*, in 1933, in collaboration with Agenor Asteriadis.

As a member of the so-called "Generation of the 1930s", he produced work imbued by the ideal of Greekness, which he transferred into his painting by depicting the natural and urban landscapes, as well as scenes of everyday life, selectively combining features of Greek tradition—such as folk art—with attributes of constructivism, hyperrealism, pop art and photorealism, to create compositions of ethnographic and narrative interest.

WRITERS' BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Charis Kanellopoulou (Athens, 1977) is an art historian, scientific advisor and curator of the Bank of Greece Art Collection. She holds a PhD in Art History from the School of Philosophy of the University of Athens and teaches Art History at the Open University of Cyprus. She has participated in numerous conferences and her work has been published in academic journals, collective volumes, and conference proceedings.Her texts have been included in exhibition catalogues. She is also the editor of collective volumes, including *Ancient World and Modern Art*, and *Yannoulis Chalepas. Notes on his life and work*, both published by the Centre for Culture, Research and Documentation of the Bank of Greece, in 2021 and 2022, respectively. She is the special secretary of the Board of AICA Hellas (Greek section of the International Association of Art Critic) and a member of the Association of Greek Art Historians.

Irene Orati was born in Athens in 1956. She studied Archeology and Art history at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She specialised in European printmaking at the Stattliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich. She worked as a curator in the Printmaking Division of the National Gallery-Alexandros Soutsos Museum (1980-1993), a curator in the Printmaking Collection of the Ionian Bank (1994-2000) and a curator in the Art Collection of Alpha Bank (2000-2021). Since 2022, she is Art Director at The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation.

Constantinos Papachristou was born in Athens, where he still lives and works, in 1974. He studied Archaeology, Art history and Organisation of Art Exhibitions at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and the École du Louvre in Paris. Since 2005, he has been working at the Benaki Museum. He is scientific advisor at the Hadjikyriakos-Ghika Gallery, while also curating and co-ordinating exhibitions. He has published in catalogues and journals in Greece and abroad. He is a member of the Association of Greek Art Historians.

Evita Arapoglou studied art history and history at the University College and King's College of the University of London; she specialised in the history of European art, with a focus on 19th- and 20th-century Greek art. Since 1994 she has been the curator of the A. G. Leventis Foundation Collection of Greek Painting, currently housed at the A. G. Leventis Gallery in Nicosia.

She has curated many important exhibitions in Greece, Cyprus and the United Kingdom, including "From the Collections of the A. G. Leventis Foundation" (National Gallery, Athens), "Ghika–Craxton–Leigh Fermor: Charmed Lives in Greece" (Leventis Gallery, Benaki Museum and British Museum) and the commemorative exhibition "Asia Minor Hellenism: Heyday – Catastrophe – Displacement – Rebirth" at the Benaki Museum.

She has written numerous books and articles, such as *3 Kriezotou Street*, dedicated to the house and studio of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika; *Ghika–Drawings and Art and Artists in Corfu*, catalogues raisonnés of the A. G. Leventis Foundation Greek Collection and has edited the accompanying volumes of the exhibitions "Ghika – Craxton – Leigh Fermor" and "Asia Minor Hellenism", amongst others.

She is a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Benaki Museum, Vice-chair of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Member of the Honorary Committee of the A. G. Leventis Gallery, Member of the Council of the Hellenic Centre in London and Member of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO.

Yannis Bolis studied History and Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he completed his doctoral thesis "Art Exhibitions: Artists and their audience in the 19th century Athens" (2000). Between 1992 and 2000, he worked as an Art historian and scientific advisor in the publication of the *Greek Artists Dictionary: Painters-Sculptors-Engravers. 16th-20th century* (Athens: Melissa, 1997-2000). Between 2000 and 2019, he worked as a curator of the Costakis Collection at the State Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki and Head of the Department of the Art Collections and the Archives. He taught Art History at the Applied and Visual Arts Department of the University of Western Macedonia in Florina (2010-2013), at the Hellenic Open University (2017-2019) and at the Department of History and Archeology of the School of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (2020-2021).He has written monographs on Greek artists (Yannis Moralis, Yannis Tsarouchis, A. Tassos, Christos Bokoros, Vasso Katraki, Yannoulis Chalepas, Opy Zouni, Christos Caras), and books on Greek art, and he has also contributed to exhibition catalogues and specialised art magazines. He has curated contemporary art exhibitions in Greece and abroad. Since 2019 he is Head of the Department of Contemporary Sculpture at MOMus-Museum Alex Mylona. He is a member of the Association of Greek Art Historians.

Olga Daniilopoulou was born in Athens in 1962, where she lives and works to this day. She studied French and Greek literature at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and worked as an exhibition curator (1984-1991) at the Nees Morfes gallery in Athens. In 1990, she curated a series of seven documentaries for Greek Television (ERT1), focusing on the work of young Greek artists.

She began her collaboration with the Jannis and Zoe Spyropoulos Foundation as curator of the Spyropoulos Museum in 1992, the same year that the museum was inaugurated. Since 2000, she has curated presentations of Jannis Spyropoulos's work.

She regularly contributed to a column on art criticism in *Art Magazine*. She has also collaborated with the magazines *Eikastika, ARTI*, and the daily press.

In 1996, her study titled "Eleni Vakalo's Critiques 1957-1974" (in two volumes) was published by Kedros Publications.

She is a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA), and International Committee of Museums (ICOM). She has organised and curated numerous exhibitions in Greece and she has implemented European programs for the Vorres Museum.

She continues to work as the Artistic Director of the Jannis Spyropoulos Foundation.

Elena Hamalidi is Associate Professor of Art History at the Department of Audio-Visual Arts of the Ionian University and an Adjunct Lecturer at the Hellenic Open University. She has also lectured at the University of Peloponnese, at the University of Thessaly and at the Athens School of Fine Arts. She has published on modernism and the avant-garde, esp. focusing on the circulation and "translation" of practices and ideas. She has recently published a monograph on modernism and reality in post-war Greek art, titled *Stories on the Verge. Modernism and Reality in Post-war Greek Art,* Athens: Melissa, 2022), and along with Stamatina Dimakopoulou she has contributed to *Hot Art, Cold War – Southern and Eastern European Writing on American Art 1945-1990*, edited by Claudia Hopkins & Iain Boyd Whyte (New York & London: Routledge, 2021). She has been co-editor of *Contemporary Greek Artists* along with K. Koskina and E. D. Matthiopoulos (Athens: Melissa, 2004). She is a member of the European Network for Avant-garde and Modernism Studies and a member of its steering committee since 2014.

Anna Kafetsi, a Doctor of Philosophy/Aesthetics (Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne), is the founding director (2000-2014) of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (ΕΜΣΤ) and a former curator for the XX century Collections at the National Gallery, Athens (1983-1999). Since 2016 she is the director of annexM Visual Arts Center at Megaron-The Athens Concert Hall. She has curated numerous exhibitions including "Metamorphoses of the Modern-The Greek experience", National Gallery 1992; "Russian Avant-Garde – The G. Costakis Collection", National Gallery 1995; "Synopsis 1-3 (Communications, Theologies, Testimonies)", ΕΜΣΤ 2000-2003; "Transcultures", ΕΜΣΤ 2004; "Videographies – The first decades", ΕΜΣΤ 2005; "The Grand Promenade", ΕΜΣΤ 2006; "Transexperiences", ΕΜΣΤ / "798 Space", Beijing 2008; "Heart in Heart", ΕΜΣΤ 2008; "Politics of Art, ΕΜΣΤ 2010; "SonicTime, speech-sound-silence", ΕΜΣΤ 2012; "The Garden sees", annexM 2017; the trilogy "The unwritten library" (*The last reader* part I, *After Babel* part II), annexM 2018-2019; as well as solo shows by artists Konstantinos Parthenis, Theodoros Stamos, Vlassis Caniaris, Yannis Tsarouchis, Chen Zhen, Jannis Kounellis, Kimsooja, Shirin Neshat, Y. Z. Kami, Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries, Yang Fudong, Gulsun Karamustafa, Maaria Wirkkala, Carlos Garaicoa, Dilek Winchester, Andrea Bowers, Georgios Xenos among others. She is the author and editor of many catalogues, essays and monographs.

Polina Kosmadaki lives and works in Athens. She is Doctor of Art History (University of Paris-Sorbonne, Paris IV). She is currently curator of modern and contemporary art, Head of the Department of Paintings at the Benaki Museum, Athens, and a lecturer of Art History in the European Studies program of the Hellenic Open University. Since 2008 she is an associate researcher of the French School at Athens Modern Section, leading research projects on cultural exchanges between France and Greece, *the Cahiers d'Art*, the editor and art critic Christian Zervos or the "ethnographic laboratories" of the

inter-war period. Her research interests lie in the avant-garde periodicals and exhibitions of the inter-war period, the reception of Antiquity in contemporary art, craft as critique, institutional critique and museum issues, as well as the exhibition and artistic practices of the 1970s. She has contributed to a number of Greek and international journals and also to collective books on modern and contemporary art.

Areti Leopoulou (1977) is a Doctor of Art history (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greek State Scholarship Foundation fellow), from where she also received her MA & BA degrees.

She currently works as an art historian and a curator of exhibitions and collections, as well as a book editor at the MOMus-Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki.

She has been a guest lecturer at the International Hellenic University and has numerous research contributions to exhibition catalogues, conference proceedings, art dictionaries and publications. Her book *Beneficial Parasites* (2017) was published by Futura Publications-Athens.

During 2006-2019, she was a curator at the Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki and the Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art.

She is a member of the ICOM-Hellenic Committee, the Society of Greek Art Historians, and of several editorial committees for cultural publications and fanzines.

Anny Malama is an art historian, currently working as a publication editor at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens. She is also an adjunct lecturer at the Hellenic Open University in the framework of the "European Culture" curriculum. She has taught art history classes at the Universities of Ioannina, Crete, West Attica and the Athens School of Fine Arts. Her research interests and her publications in Greek and international journals, collective volumes and exhibition catalogues refer to visual culture and social identities in modernity. She is a Doctor of Art History at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and has postgraduate degrees in History and Civilisations (DEA, École des Hautes Ètudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2002 [Michelis Foundation Award]) and Art History (Masters, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1998), as well as an undergraduate degree in Archaeology (Bachelors, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1995). She has attended the postgraduate training seminar of the Hellenic Open University on flexible distance learning for adults. She is a member of the editorial team of *Istoria tis Technis* journal (Athens: futura, istoriatistechnisinfo.wordrpess.com).

Evgenios D. Matthiopoulos received his Bachelor of Arts in Painting from the Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA, 1977-1983) and continued his graduate studies in Art History (1985) and in Philosophy of Art (1987) at the Paris I – Panthéon-Sorbonne.

In 1997, he completed his PhD in Art History at the Department of History and Archaeology, School of Philosophy, University of Crete. From 1995 to 2001, he worked as a scientific advisor and editor-in-chief for the *Dictionary of Greek Artists*, 16th-20th century (Athens: Melissa, vol. Α΄-Δ΄, 1997-2001). Since 1998, he has been teaching History of Art at the Department of History and Archaeology, University of Crete. From 2001 to the present, he participates as researcher at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies – FORTH and, from 2012 to 2018, he has been a member of its Scientific Council. During 2003-2011, he participated as researcher at the Benaki Museum.

He has served as President of the Association of Greek Art Historians from 2016 to 2019 and as a member of the Administrative Board of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (ΕΜΣΤ) from 2017 to 2019. He was also a member of the University Council of the University of Crete between 2012 and 2017.

He has published eight books, has edited six volumes and has contributed more than 50 articles to collective works, exhibition catalogues, conference proceedings and academic journals.

Ioanna Moraiti is curator of the Ghika Gallery Archive at the Benaki Museum. She studied Photography from 1993 to 1996 and European Culture from 2002 to 2007 at the School of Humanities of the Hellenic Open University. She started working at the Benaki Museum in 1999, in order to photograph, catalogue and document the Ghika Gallery Archive, which includes the corpus of the artist's works, his photographic archive and his personal archive. From 2014 and on, she came in charge of the Archive. She coordinated and curated various exhibitions and publications at the Benaki Museum, such as "Folk toys at the house of Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika", Athens 2013 (curation and catalogue text); "Ghika—Fermor—Craxton: 3 places, 3 creators", Athens 2014 (curation); "Wolf Suschitzky: Voyage in Greece in the 1960s", Athens 2015 (curation and catalogue text); "Dimosthenis Kokkinidis: Unrecalled rolled canvases 1952-1974", Athens 2015 (coordination); "Ghika—Craxton—Leigh Fermor: Charmed lives in Greece", Nicosia, Athens, London, 2017-2018 (co-curation and catalogue text); "Photographs of Joan Leigh Fermor: Artist and Lover", Athens 2018 (coordination); "Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika: Painting for Books", Athens 2018 (curation and catalogue text); "John Craxton: A Greek Soul", Athens 2022 (coordination); "Asia Minor Hellenism: Heyday—Catastrophe—Displacement—Rebirth", Athens 2022 (coordination); "GHIKA: A Journey from West to East", Athens 2024 (curation and catalogue text).

Spiros Moschonas was born in Patras in 1979. He studied History and Archaeology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where he also completed his doctoral thesis titled "Artistic unions and groups in Greece during the first half of the twentieth century: their significance and contribution" (2010). His research interests focus on the unions of Greek visual artists, modern Greek religious painting, modern Greek sculpture, and the relationship between the State and visual artists. He has collaborated with various institutions (Bank of Greece, Athens School of Fine Arts, Piraeus Bank, Municipality of Rhodes, Museum of Modern Greek Art etc.) in documenting and studying art collections, as well as with several Museums and Galleries (Cultural Foundation of the National Bank of Greece, Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation, Benaki Museum, National Library of Greece, Municipal Art Gallery of Larissa – G.I. Katsigras Museum, Athens Municipal Gallery, etc.) curating exhibitions. He has taught Art History at the University of Athens (2011-2013), Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (2019-2022) and the Hellenic Open University (2017-2023).

Bia Papadopoulou was born in Athens, Greece. She graduated from the School of Fine Arts, Ohio University, in 1982 (BFA, High Honors) and, in 1984, she obtained her MA from the Art History Department of the University of California, Berkeley. Upon her graduation, she followed the summer internship program of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in N.Y. That same year she returned permanently to Greece, writing articles for international and Greek art magazines as well as texts for many artists' catalogues. She was director of the monthly art magazine *Eikastika* (1985-1986) and an editor of numerous artistic monographs.

In 1996 she began her curatorial work as a freelance curator. She has since curated many solo and group shows

in Greece and abroad, mainly in Municipal Galleries but also in some of the country's most important museums, such as: National Museum of Contemporary Art (ΕΜΣΤ), Athens, 2005-2006, "The years of defiance: Art of the 1970s in Greece" ; Benaki Museum, Piraeus Str., 2017-2018, "Christos Tzivelos: Modelling Phenomena" ; National Archaeological Museum, Athens, 2022, "Lazongas. Myths and Antiquity. The Past is Now". Her latest group exhibition "Women's Matters" at the City of Athens Art Gallery, 2024, inaugurated the Municipality's access program for blind and deaf-mute people.

LIST OF ARTISTS AND WORKS

The artworks with an asterisk (*) were presented at the exhibition.

Yannis Gaitis

Portrait of Gabriella Simossi
1951
Oil on canvas
109 x 74 cm
Private collection
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* *Untitled*
1957
Acrylic on canvas
114.5 x 81 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
Inv. No. 1161
p. 277

Untitled
n.d.
Mixed media on canvas
32.5 x 24 cm
Private collection
p. 279

* *Composition*
c. 1962
Mixed media on wood
114 x 164 cm
National Bank of Greece
Art Collection
p. 278

* *Myth anecdote…*
1965
Oil on canvas
130 x 96 cm
Annie Costopoulos
collection
p. 268, 275

The Holy Fathers
1966-1967
Oil on canvas
98 x 130 cm
Private collection
p. 282

* *Funfair* or *Carousel-horses*
1967
Oil on canvas
160 x 200 cm
Annie Costopoulos
collection
p. 283

Self-portrait
1967
Oil on canvas
92 x72 cm
Franco Cérès collection
p. 293

* *Motorcyclist*
1967
Oil on canvas
132 x 99 cm
National Bank of Greece
Art Collection
p. 284

* *Chasteté* or
The beautiful Dulcinea
1967
Oil on canvas
95 x 130 cm
Douzeni collection
p. 285

* *Shadows of men*
1971
Installation of painted wood
70 x 106 x 17 cm
Annie Costopoulos
collection
p. 281

* *Metro*
1972
Installation of painted wood
61 x 88 x 7.5 cm
Private collection
p. 290

* *Oh Gods* or *Symplegades*
1980
Oil on canvas
200 x 150 cm
Collection of European
Cultural Centre of Delphi
p. 287

Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghika

* *Washing line*
1930
Oil on paper
32.5 x 25.2 cm
Benaki Museum /
Ghika Gallery, ΠΧΓ4
p. 57

* *Women and garments on a line*
1934-1936
Charcoal on rice paper
38 x 52 cm
Benaki Museum /
Ghika Gallery, ΠΧΓ791
p. 58

* *Linen on a line I*
1936
Oil on wood
9.5 x 35.5 cm
Private collection,
ιδιωτΧΓ534
p. 60

* *Linen on a line II*
1936
Oil on wood
16 x 31 cm
Private collection,
ιδιωτΧΓ3197
p. 62

* *Terrace in Athens*
1939
Ink on paper
15 x 19.6 cm
Benaki Museum/
Ghika Gallery, ΠΧΓ983
p. 58

* *Mitropoleos square*
1940
Oil on canvas
42 x 34 cm
Private collection,
ιδιωτΧΓ3202
p. 63

* *Washer women*
1946
Oil on wood
46 x 56 cm
Benaki Museum /
Ghika Gallery, ΠΧΓ4041
Donated by the descendants
of Rex Warner ΠΧΓ4041
p. 64-65

* *Athenian balcony*
1947
Tempera
29 x 46 cm
Private collection,
ιδιωτΧΓ3985
p. 66

Hanging cloths in the garden
1954
Oil on canvas
130 x 162 cm
Inv. No Π.7321
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 52, 72

* *Plants and trellis*
1954
Oil on canvas
54 x 72.5 cm
Benaki Museum / Ghika
Gallery, ΠΧΓ3711
Donated by Patrick and
Joan Leigh Fermor
p. 71

* *Athenian balcony*
1955
Oil on canvas
115 x 146 cm
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum, Π.7322
p. 67

Balcony II. Street scene
1955
Oil on canvas
81 x 100 cm
Private collection,
ιδιωτΧΓ3544
p. 70

* *Neoclassical building
with griffins*
1955
Oil on wood
40 x 30 cm
A. G. Leventis Gallery,
Nicosia
p. 68

* *Garden on Hydra*
1959
Coloured pencils and pastel
on paper
48 x 69 cm
Benaki Museum /
Ghika Gallery, ΠΧΓ62
p. 74

*Washing line amongst olive
trees*
1981
Oil on canvas
35.5 x 53 cm
Private collection,
ιδιωτΧΓ4365
p. 75

Vasso Katraki

* *Landscape*
c. 1941-1942
Oil on unstretched canvas
49.3 x 41 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 179

* *Women at the olive grove*
c. 1941-1942
Oil on canvas
50 x 72 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 179

* *Aetoliko, summer 1942
(This is how the Germans
punish)*
1942
Pencil on rice paper
50 x 35.5 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 172

* *Demonstration during
the Occupation*
1943
Woodcut on paper
7.9 x 19.5 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 173

* *Funeral during
the Occupation*
1943
Woodcut on paper
7.2 x 14.2 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 173

* *The poor and deadbeat
life of fishermen*
1950
Woodcut on paper
45 x 14.3 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 181

Bare trees – Aetoliko
c. 1950
Woodcut on paper
32 x 20.7 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 184

* *Athens 1944*
1952
Woodcut on rice paper
52.5 x 31 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 172

* *Lumumba lament*
1962
Engraving on stone
77 x 48 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 175

* *Three good mornings*
1962
Woodcut on stone
77.5 x 42 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 183

* *Representation*
1970
Engraving on stone
37.5 x 65 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 169

* *Forest*
1972
Stone mold
153.5 x 99.5 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 187

The duty of Antigone
1972
Engraving on stone
92 x 78.5 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 176

* *Aurae and Icarus*
1984
Engraving on stone
53 x 140.5 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 164, 177

* *Trees*
1986
Engraving on stone
84.5 x 26 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 185

Platytera III
n.d.
Woodcut on paper
100 x 65 cm
Marianna Katraki Despotidi
family collection
p. 182

Alekos Kontopoulos

The artist's mother
1923
Oil on wood
30 x 26 cm
Municipal Gallery of Lamia
"Alekos Kontopoulos"
p. 221

Kostis Palamas
1928
Pencil on paper
15 x 13 cm
Municipality of Agia
Paraskevi – Alekos
Kontopoulos Museum
p. 235

* *Procession*
1939
Oil on canvas
52 x 74 cm
Municipality of Agia
Paraskevi – Alekos
Kontopoulos Museum
p. 222

* *Despair*
1945
Drawing with Chinese ink
34 x 23.5 cm
Private collection
p. 235

Still life
1949
Watercolour on paper
30 x 24 cm
Municipal Gallery of Lamia
"Alekos Kontopoulos"
p. 225

Study
1949
Acrylic on paper
26 x 18 cm
Municipal Gallery of Lamia
"Alekos Kontopoulos"
p. 227

* *Recital*
1951
Mixed media on burlap
148 x 200 cm
Inv. No. Π.4887
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum, donated
by Alekos Kontopoulos
p. 230-231

Composition
1952
Acrylic on paper
17.5 x 12 cm
Municipal Gallery of Lamia
"Alekos Kontopoulos"
p. 228

Pottery
1959
Painting installation
340 x 550 cm
Hellenic National
Archaeological Museum
p. 233

* Final study
for the Archaeological
Museum's painting *Pottery*
1959
Acrylic on plywood
38 x 56 cm
Inv. No. Π.4881
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum, donated
by Alekos Kontopoulos
p. 233

* *Composition – Image*
1962
Oil on hardboard
125 x 160 cm
Inv. No. Π.3802
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum, donated by
the Ministry of Education
p. 238-239

* *From now on, the knife will
cut a red line on your bread*
1970
Oil on canvas
140 x 125 cm
Municipality of Agia
Paraskevi – Alekos
Kontopoulos Museum
p. 241

* *Balcony with flowers*
1973
Oil on canvas
140 x 125 cm
Vorres Museum
p. 216, 226

* *About 18 years old*
1974
Acrylic on canvas
110 x 100 cm
Private collection
p. 223

* *Self-portrait*
1975
Oil on canvas
85 x 70 cm
Municipality of Agia
Paraskevi – Alekos
Kontopoulos Museum
p. 221

Yannis Moralis

* *Love, Pleasure, Mother*
1933
Woodcut on standing wood
17.4 x 14.4 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
Inv. No. 5233
p. 107

* *Love – Hope*
1934
Woodcut on paper
17.6 x 10.6 cm
Inv. No. Π.3548
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 107

Self-portrait
1934
Oil on canvas
65 x 54 cm
Benaki Museum
p. 117

* Preliminary design
for the masquerade
decoration of the Ball
of the Artists' Society
"Atelier"
1937
Collage
21.5 x 52 cm
Private collection
p. 115

* Preliminary design
for the masquerade
decoration of the Ball
of the Artists' Society
"Atelier"
1937
Collage
21.5 x 52 cm
Private collection
p. 115

* *Café*
1939
Woodcut on paper
31 x 26 cm
Inv. No. Π.2914
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 109

* *Nude*
1939
Oil on canvas
70.5 x 144.5 cm
Inv. No. Π.7687
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 112

* *Portrait of the painter*
Theodossios Christodoulou
1939
Oil on canvas
92.5 x 53.5 cm
Inv. No.Π.7695
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 118

* *Portrait of Ioanna*
N. Lourou
c. 1940
Oil on canvas
117 x 84.5 cm
Inv. No. Π.7578
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 119

* *The table*
1947
Oil on canvas
100 x 63 cm
Inv. No. Π.7692
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 120

* *Nude*, 1947, from Nikos
Kavvadias – *Pousi* (Fog)
1947
Woodcut
5 x 10 cm
Benaki Museum
p. 123

* *Seated nude*
1952
Oil on canvas
160 x 103 cm
Municipality of Rhodes,
Museum of Modern
Greek Art
p. 125

* *Funerary composition II*
1958-1962
Oil on canvas
116 x 168 cm
Inv. No. Π.7703
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 102, 126

* *Girl painting*
1970
Oil on canvas
101,5 x 116 cm
Onassis Collection
p. 128

Girl that unties her sandal
1973
Acrylic on canvas
147 x 100 cm
MIET 0216
Art Collection of the
National Bank of Greece
Cultural Foundation
p. 129

* *The island*
1976
Acrylic on canvas
114 x 165 cm
Maximos Mansion
p. 113

In addition, the essay
on Yannis Moralis makes
reference to the following
works:

Nikos Nikolaou
Mural painting
in the Ceremonial Hall
of Panteion University
1949
4.5 x 10 m
Panteion University
p. 124

Giorgio de Chirico
Reclining bather
(Il bagno di Diana)
1933
Oil on canvas
173 x 77 cm
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte
Moderna e Contemporanea
p. 112

André Derain
Portrait de Madame
Maurice Renou
c. 1925
Oil on canvas
61 x 50 cm
Private collection
p. 119

Pablo Picasso

Self-portrait (Autoportrait)
1906
Oil on canvas
65 x 54 cm
Musée National Picasso,
Paris, Inv. MP8
p. 117

Harlequin and woman
with necklace (Arlequin
et femme au collier)
1917
Oil on canvas
200 x 200 cm
Centre Pompidou, MNAM,
AM 3760 P
p. 113

Dimitris Mytaras

* *Elderly woman*
1956
Ink on paper
41 x 29 cm
Private collection
p. 250

* *Woman in profile*
1957
Ink on paper
40.5 x 26.5 cm
Private collection
p. 250

* *Mirror*
1957
Ink on paper
29 x 21cm
Private collection
p. 254

* *Table*
1957
Oil on canvas
80 x 45 cm
Inv. No. Π.2892
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 256

* *Interior*
1958
Tempera, gouache,
charcoal on paper
32.5 x 47.5 cm
Inv. No. Π.2900
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 257

* *Charikleia*
1960
Ink on paper
27 x 20 cm
Private collection
p. 252

* *Mirror with green*
1964
Powdered pigment on burlap
218 x 161 cm
Inv. No. Π.3220
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 255

Dictatorship
c. 1969
Acrylic on canvas
148 x 180.5 cm
Private collection
p. 261

Antiquities of Delos
(tetraptych)
1970
Acrylic on plywood
122 x 528 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
Inv. No. 4763
p. 258-259

* *Composition*
with sunglasses
1970
Acrylic on canvas
140 x 180 cm
Art Collection
of the National Bank
of Greece Cultural
Foundation
p. 263

* *Tombstone*
with a motorcyclist
1971
Acrylic on canvas
155 x 121 cm
Private collection
p. 264

* *White hat*
1972
Oil on burlap
100 x 69.5 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
p. 244, 265

Leather gloves
1975
Oil on canvas
200 x 134 cm
Inv. No. Π.5139
National Gallery –
Alexandros Soutsos
Museum
p. 266

Chryssa Romanos

* *Study*
1954
Oil on canvas
39 x 58 cm
Private collection
p. 301

* *Still life*
1959
Oil on cardboard
70 x 33 cm
Private collection
p. 302-303

* *Monotype*
1960
Ink on paper
29 x 20 cm
Private collection
p. 305

* *Monotype*
1960
Ink on paper
29 x 20 cm
Private collection
p. 305

* *Monotype*
1960
Ink on paper
26 x 15 cm
Private collection
p. 305

* *Painting*
1960
Oil on canvas
82 x 66 cm
Private collection
p. 307

* *Myth*
1963
Oil on canvas
130 x 81 cm
Private collection
p. 296, 309

* *Repetitions*
1964
Collage of monotypes
on canvas
50 x 61 cm
Private collection
p. 311

* *Zodiaque 13*
1965
Collage on canvas
60 x 70 cm
Private collection
p. 316

* *Reportage*
1965
Collage on canvas
60 x 70 cm
Irene Panagopoulos
collection
p. 313

* *Labyrinth*
1965
Collage on canvas
55 x 65 cm
Private collection
p. 315

* *Roma*
1965
Collage on canvas
30 x 40 cm
Private collection
p. 317

* From the *Bloc-notes No5*,
on the poetry
of Andreas Pagoulatos
1980
Décollage on gelatin
50 x 65 cm
Private collection
p. 319

* *Images*
1981
Décollage on gelatin
50 x 65 cm
Private collection
p. 320

* *Map-Labyrinth*
n. d.
Décollage on plexiglas
200 x 132 cm
Private collection
p. 321

Jannis Spyropoulos

Still life with pitcher II
1950
23 x 31 cm
Oil on paper
Spyropoulos Foundation
Collection
p. 196

* *Dry-stone walls*
in Mykonos IV
1954
Oil on hardboard
69 x 87 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation
Collection
p. 196

* *Ladders III*
1955
Oil on hardboard
100 x 45 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation
Collection
p. 190, 197

Houses of Paros
1956
Oil on paper
49 x 52 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation
Collection
p. 199

The red sentry box I
1956
Oil on plywood
48 x 68 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 200

* *Dancers C*
1956
Oil on canvas
47 x 58 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 204

* *Anafiotika A-IV*
1957
Oil on hardboard
130 x 80 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 210

* *Writings II*
1957
Oil on paper
49 x 39 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 201

* *At the forest VI*
1958
Oil on canvas
70 x 110 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 202-203

* *Lindos No 2*
1959
Oil on canvas
162 x 97 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 205

* *Ithaki B*
1959
Oil on paper
50 x 61 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 206

* *Prologos D*
1964
Mixed media on canvas
130 x 97 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 209

* *Return H*
1965
Mixed media on canvas
130 x 97 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 208

* *Passage No 17*
1972
Mixed media on canvas
92 x 73 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 212

* *Ladder*
1985
Mixed media on paper
48 x 34 cm
Spyropoulos Foundation Collection
p. 213

A. Tassos
(Anastasios Alevizos)

* *Every morning*
1932
Woodcut
19 x 32 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
Inv. No. 2648
p. 140

* *In the harbour*
1934
Woodcut on paper
26 x 20 cm
Inv. No. Π.7190
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 141

* *Hunger*
1943
Woodcut on paper
32 x 50 cm
Inv. NoΠ.7222
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and L. Maggiorou
p. 151

* *Partisans*
1944
Woodcut on paper
15 x 13 cm
Private collection
p. 156

* *The altar of freedom*
1st of May 1945
"Rigas" Publishing Company
Petros Vergos collection
p. 157

* *The organist*
1946
Woodcut
37.2 x 31 cm
Yannis Papaconstantinou collection
p. 159

* *Noon*
1952
Woodcut on paper
43 x 60 cm
Inv. No. Π.7253
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 142-143

* *Peasant women*
1958
Colour woodcut on paper
29 x 56 cm
A. Tassos Society of Visual Arts Collection
p. 144

Fishermen (of Aegina)
1958
Colour woodcut on paper
49.9 x 69.8 cm
Inv. No. 814
Bank of Greece Art Collection
p. 145
* The exhibited piece is a loan by A. Tassos Society of Visual Arts

* *Civil War. Detail.*
a. *The women*, b. *The dead*, c. *The men* (triptych)
1961
Woodcut on paper
79.2 x 59 cm, 74 x 155 cm, 77.5 x 59.5 cm
Inv. No. Π.3080/α, β, γ
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 152-153

* *Fatigue*
1964
Woodcut on paper
69 x 70 cm
Inv. No. Π.7279
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 147

* *To Liakos Iliopoulos*
1966
Ink-covered wooden plaque
133 x 44 x 2 cm
Private collection
p. 160

* *In memory of Che Guevara. The Archangel with the machine-gun A*
1968
Woodcut on paper
140 x 56 cm
Inv. No. Π.7136
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 134, 154

* *The ladies of the rebetika songs – The lady of Kokkinia*
1970
Woodcut on paper
148 x 40 cm
Inv. NoΠ.7171
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 161

* *In memory of Panagiotis Elis*
1973
Woodcut on paper
88 x 63.5 cm
Inv no. Π.7128
National Gallery – Alexandros Soutsos Museum, donated by A. Tassos and Loukia Maggiorou
p. 158

Yannis Tsarouchis

* *Tomatoes and cooking pot*
1926
Watercolour on paper
18.9 x 24 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No 652
p. 85

* *Monastiraki*
1926
Watercolour on paper
21.3 x 17.0 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No 636
p. 88

* *The cheese platter*
1927
Watercolour on paper
17.4 x 25.0 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 639
p. 86

* *Oil and votive candle*
1927
Watercolour and pencil on paper
24.5 x 30.3 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 638
p. 87

* *Pink houses in Nafplion*
1927
Watercolour on paper
22.5 x 31 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 645
p. 89

* *Coffee-house and barber shop in Aegina*
1933
Watercolour on paper
24.5 x 34 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No 780
p. 90

* *Still life with ruby red background*
1934-1935
Oil on plywood
40.5 x 49.5 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 667
p. 92

* *Evzone and family*
1936
Mixed media on canvas
61.5 x 41.5 cm
Anastasia Sgoumpopoulou collection
p. 94

* *Cyclist dressed as Evzone, with a temple at the bottom right corner*
1936
Oil on canvas
34.5 x 29 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 499
p. 78, 95

* *The thinker*
1936
Pigments with animal glue on paper
138 x 87.5 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 6
p. 97

* *Youth in white linen suit*
1937
Pigments with animal glue on canvas
91.5 x 60.5 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 5
p. 96

* *Seated dark-haired youth with a topcoat*
1937
Pigments with animal glue on paper
98 x 62.5 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 8
p. 99

* *Nude Italian, seated in profile*
1937
Pigments with animal glue on paper
99 x 65.7 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 563
p. 98

* *Youth posing as a statue from Olympia*
1939
Pigments with animal glue on canvas
69 x 99 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No.567
p. 100

* *Nude youth with oleanders and a bandage on his hand*
1940
Oil on canvas
171 x 65.5 cm
Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation, Inv. No. 575
p. 101

Spyros Vassiliou

* *Exarchia*
1929
Oil on cardboard
60 x 50 cm
George N. Niarchos collection
p. 34

* *Galatsi*
1929
Oil on wood
60.5 x 66 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
Inv. No.1744
p. 37

* *Construction site*
n.d.
Oil on wood
31 x 61 cm
George N. Niarchos
collection
p. 28, 36

* *Athens*
1930
Oil on wood
50 x 70 cm
George N. Niarchos
collection
p. 35

Ardettus
1930
Oil on canvas
86 x 117 cm
Alpha Bank Art Collection
Inv. No.1033
p. 38-39

* *Staircases*
1959
Oil on wood
80 x 100 cm
George N. Niarchos
collection
p. 42-43

* *City*
1965
Acrylic and paper
on particle board
54.5 x 211.5 cm (triptych)
(54.5 x 69.5 cm each)
Inv. No. 710
Bank of Greece Art
Collection
p. 46-47

* *Athens*
1978
Acrylic and collage
on canvas
Diameter 110 cm
Inv. No. 779
Bank of Greece Art
Collection
p. 49

* *The white wall*
1978
Acrylic and collage with gold
leaves on canvas
130 x 195 cm
Dimos and George Kokotos
collection
p. 48

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