

An Exhibition of
GREEK ART
TODAY

to commemorate the 150th Anniversary
of Greek Independence

UPPER GROSVENOR GALLERIES

19 UPPER GROSVENOR STREET, LONDON, W.1

01-493 3091

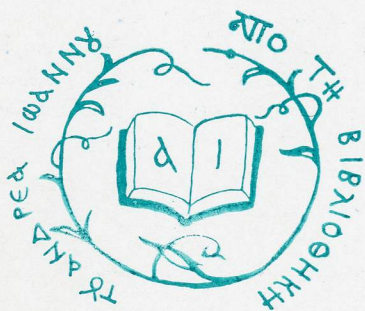
24th March - 8th April 1971

English Speaking Union

22 ATHOLL CRESCENT, EDINBURGH

6th - 22nd May 1971

An exhibition of Contemporary Greek Art,
held under the patronage of
His Excellency the Greek Ambassador.



To evaluate contemporary Greek art, one has to see the subject under two basic considerations : one, the influence of modern European art on its evolution ; two, the use of local visual elements in relation to forms and shapes of modern Greek artistic expression.

In the area of fine arts, Greece has always accepted influences from the big artistic centres of Europe. The first European influence came from Venice and entered Greece through the Ionian Islands between the years 1700 and 1850, with the works of Ceicento. The second important influence came from Munich; numerous Greek painters of the 19th Century derived their inspiration and colouring from the Academy of Painting of this Bavarian city and formed the so-called " School of Munich " which lasted until the First World War. At about the same time the School of Canova and its neo-classical style hovered over the scene of 19th century Greek sculpture.

In the first decades of the 20th century, French impressionism began to influence modern Greek painting and this influence lasted to the end of the Second World War. The influence of French impressionism was mixed with characteristic local elements (e.g. blue out-door light, soft lines of the Greek landscape, everyday life scenes in Greek villages and islands) setting thus, the framework of a peculiar Greek impressionism.

This is just a brief historical sketch of what we call " Greek Art Today." It is relevant in the presentation of this Exhibition which represents the period of 1950-70 and expresses some of the trends and problems of recent times.

From 1950 onwards a new generation of Greek artists, more sophisticated and less bound to conventional shapes and forms, tried to find new ways of expressing themselves. More radical and with more confused and differentiated attitudes towards life and its everyday problems and anxieties these artists have used new and varied channels through which to express themselves.

There is no intention of course to give an analysis of all trends and forms of Greek contemporary art in this short introductory note. All we can do here is to give some representative forms of artistic expression, examples of which can be found in this exhibition.

In the sphere of painting : There is an obvious touch of expressionism in the works of Marangopoulou, and Chronopoulos; a futuristic post-impressionism in the works of Cleopa, Boulgoura and Papadaki; a symbolic surrealism in the works of Derpapas and Guinis, sophisticated pop-art with a touch of surrealism in the work of Ioannou; a harsh realism in the still-life paintings of Kanakakis; a touch of post-Byzantine iconographic element in the small paintings by Kopsidis; a touch of naïve-popular art in the works of Maria Pop and Fanourakis; a feeling of flat loneliness in wide horizons in the works of Paralís; a soft popular “pointillism” in the work of Pentzikis; a delicate “neo-naturalism” in the watercolours of Lagana and a formalistic conception in archaic compositions in the work of Prekas.

In the sphere of engraving : The technically advanced composition of the coloured engravings of Prof. Grammatopoulos; an almost abstract “Space-cubism” in the engravings of Papadakis; a feeling of warm humanity in the compositions of Siotropou and the constructive graphism of Velissarides.

In the sphere of sculpture : The strong expressionism of Karahalios; the free plastic compositions of Moustakas; the archaic forms of Kapadais; the naturalistic idealism of Perantinos and the simple forms of Georgiou.

The organisers of this Exhibition thought that it would be interesting if two well-established Greek painters of the early 20th century were to be included. That is how Andreas Georgiades, a former professor at the School of Fine Arts of Athens, well-known as an academic portraitist, and Theodoros Lazaris, a great exponent of the Greek impressionist movement, both of them now in their seventies, are exhibiting here.

Their work forms, one could say, the two ancient columns of the Temple, which in every other respect is dedicated to the artistic generation of 1950-70.

Athens, February 1971

ANDREAS IOANNOU

Secretary General to the Artistic

Committee for Exhibitions Abroad.

Member of the Council of the Athens

National Picture Gallery.

PAINTERS

1. EVA BOULGOURA (a) Interior with a figure
(b) Still-life
2. NICOS CHRONOPOULOS (a) Figure in the sun
(b) A game of backgammon
3. THALIA CLEOPA (a) Interior
(b) Composition
(c) Griffin
4. GEORGE DERPAPAS (a) Summer night
5. THOMAS FANOURLAKIS (a) A Child's maquette
(b) Portrait of a Cretan village girl
6. ANDREAS GEORGIADIS (a) Portrait of R.P.
(b) Two friends
(c) The girl in the green dress
7. ALKIS GUINIS (a) Dewy eyelash
(b) The 70w. light bulb
8. GEORGE IOANNOU (a) Approach in memory
(b) Existing menace
9. ELEFThERIOS KANAKAKIS (a) Object I
(b) Object II
10. RALLIS KOPSIDIS (a) Macedonia
(b) Profession : " Housewife "
(c) Girl, 1970
11. IPHIGENIA LAGANA (a) Perama port
(b) The monastery of Mega-Spileon
in Calabryta

12. THEODOROS LAZARIS (a) Acropolis
(b) Autumn in Leivadia
13. KOULA MARANGOPOULOU (a) Hydra (oil)
(b) Hydra (water colour)
(c) Saroglou's Arcade
14. JENNY PAPADAKI (a) Desertion
(b) Children with fruit
15. GEORGE PARALIS (a) Silent invocation
(b) Supine figure
16. NICOS PENTZIKIS (a) Houses in Veria
(b) Prayer : " Christ help
Anthony and Ann "
17. MARIA POP (a) Athens
(b) The Paleochora and the convent
of St. Nectarios
18. PARIS PREKAS (a) The rider (oil)
(b) Rider, 1970

ENGRAVERS

1. COSTAS GRAMMATOPOULOS (a) Fantasia V
(b) Aegean V
2. YANNIS PAPADAKIS (a) Sigri of Lesbos
(b) Earth rise in space
3. NOTA SIOTROPOU (a) War No. 1
(b) War No. 2
4. GEORGE VELISSARIDES (a) Composition (Shipyard materials)
(b) Composition (Construction materials)

SCULPTORS

1. GEORGE GEORGIU (a) Ruth
2. VASSILIOS KAPADAIS (a) Idylls in Thessaly
(b) Ismene
3. ANTONIS KARAHALIOS (a) Bull
(b) Crucifixion
4. EVANGELOS MOUSTAKAS (a) Freedom
(b) The Dance of Victories
5. NICOS PERANTINOS (a) The Maiden of Athens
(b) Lord Byron, the Philhellene

OLYMPIC AIRWAYS
extend their best wishes for
the success of the exhibition
GREEK ART TODAY

Phydias, Polyclitus, Praxitelis, Myron, these are the names of Greek sculptors known the world over. They lived over 2,000 years ago and left a galaxy of masterpieces which have greatly enriched the culture and civilisation of the western world. The Upper Grosvenor Galleries have now brought to England in this exhibition of present day Greek painting and sculpture the works of five of that famous country's leading sculptors who are, in their way, continuing the tradition of their country's art and adding to the great mass of bronze and marble works-of-art which are being made all over the globe in the twentieth century.

These sculptors were all trained at the School of Fine Arts in Athens. Four of them have also studied in France and Italy while each one has exhibited extensively in Greece and overseas : the eldest of them is sixty and the youngest forty. With similar training and not of very dissimilar age group they express themselves quite differently. Their individuality would seem to have been developed rather than impeded by their common training and that the freedom of their artistic ethos has been preserved is evidenced in their contributions to this exhibition.

It is not difficult for an art historian to determine, within a quarter of a century, when an ancient Greek marble was executed. Historians of the future (if our civilisation were to disappear) would be puzzled, if unearthing the sculptures in this exhibition, to give the date when they were made, so much do they differ in style and execution. Archaic traces are evident in the two earnest bronzes by Vassilios Kapadais; Renaissance influence in the charming head " Ruth " by George Georgiou. There are nineteenth century echoes in the excellent Parian marble busts (works of compelling craftsmanship), by Nicos Perantinos, and modern expressionism in the exciting loosely handled bronzes by Evangelos Moustakas and Antonis Karahalios.

Freedom in artistic creation is, of course, imperative if art is to flourish and this was never truer than it is in this time of violent change in behaviour and thinking. This exhibition illumines that freedom. There is beauty, there is tenderness, there is strength, there is excitement and there is great variety in these sculptures. I am confident that they will be much enjoyed and we should be grateful to the Upper Grosvenor Galleries for giving us the opportunity of seeing something of what the current compatriots of the ancient masters are doing to maintain the noble art of sculpture.

SIR CHARLES WHEELER, K.C.V.O., C.B.E., P.P.R.A.