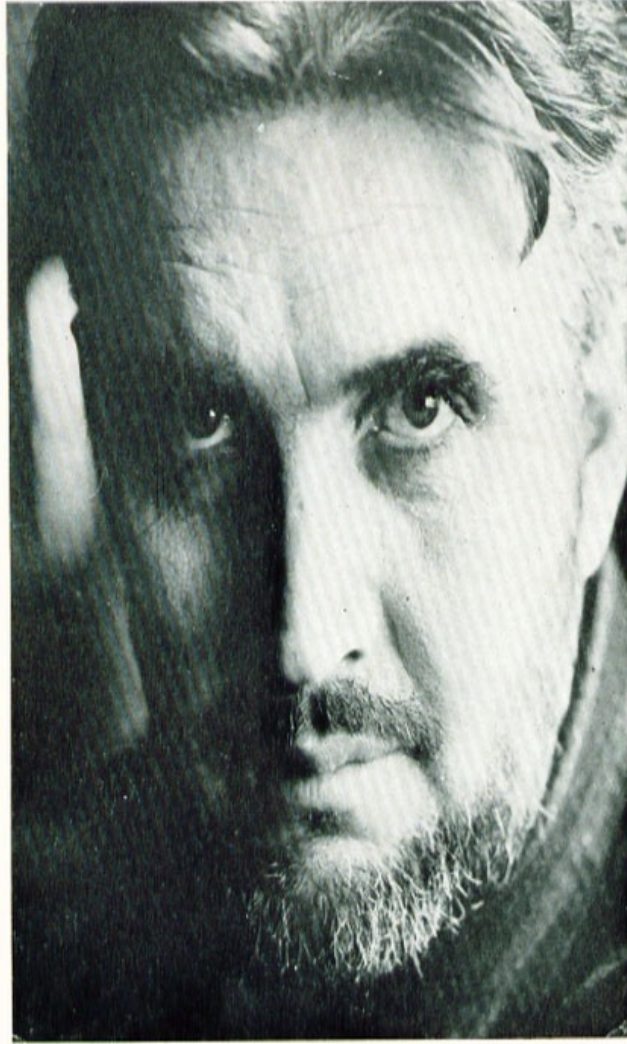


1597



PERDIKIDIS
XXXIII VENICE BIENNIAL





Collection Anthony Hubbard



TORSO



PERPENDICULAR HOMAGE



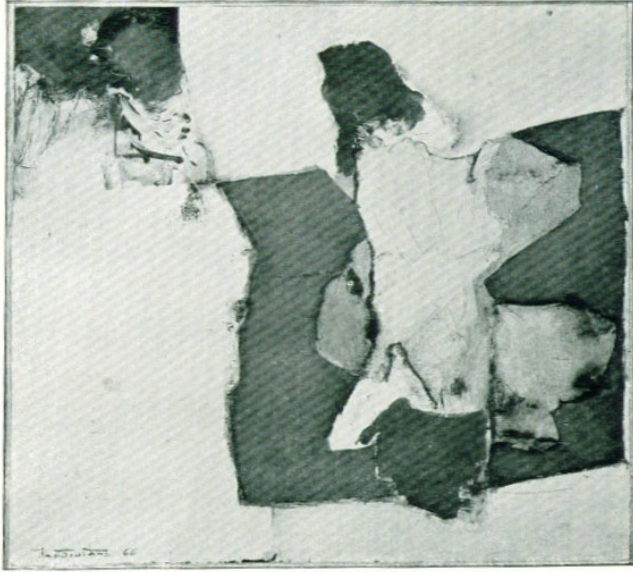
ALENTANDO

Collection don Pablo Martínez de Almeida

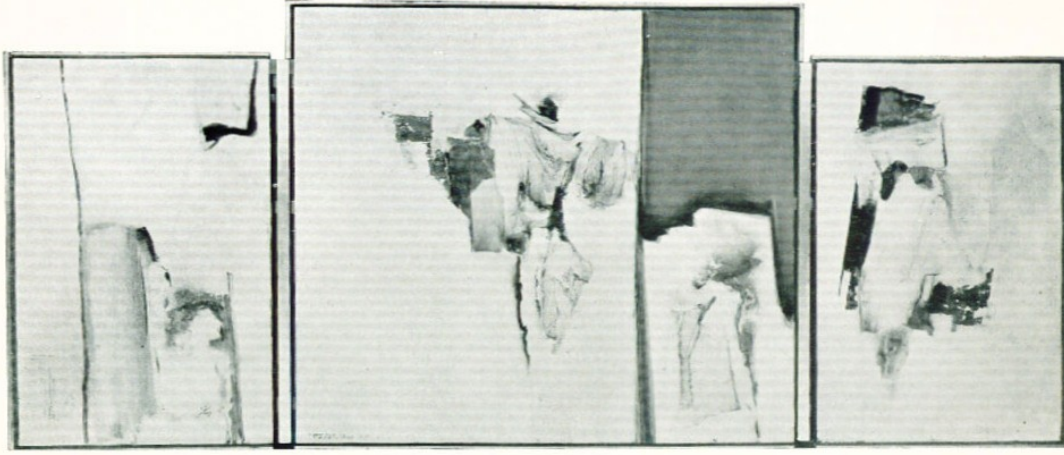


HOMAGE TO ARES

Collection Milton Sperling



CENTAUR

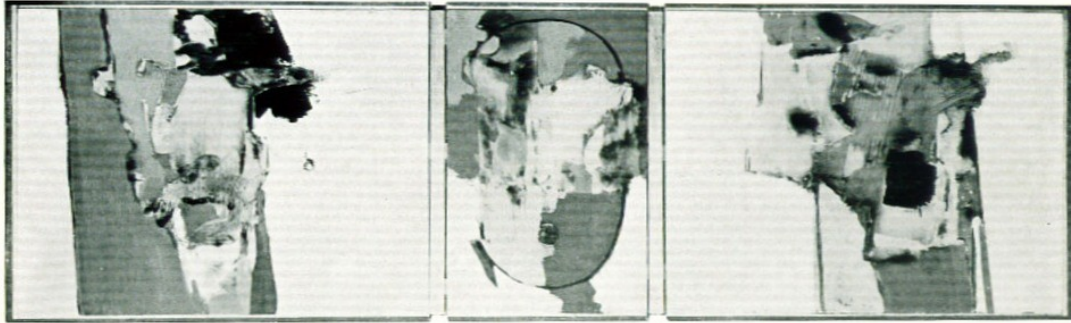


REQUIEM FOR A QUIET PERSON

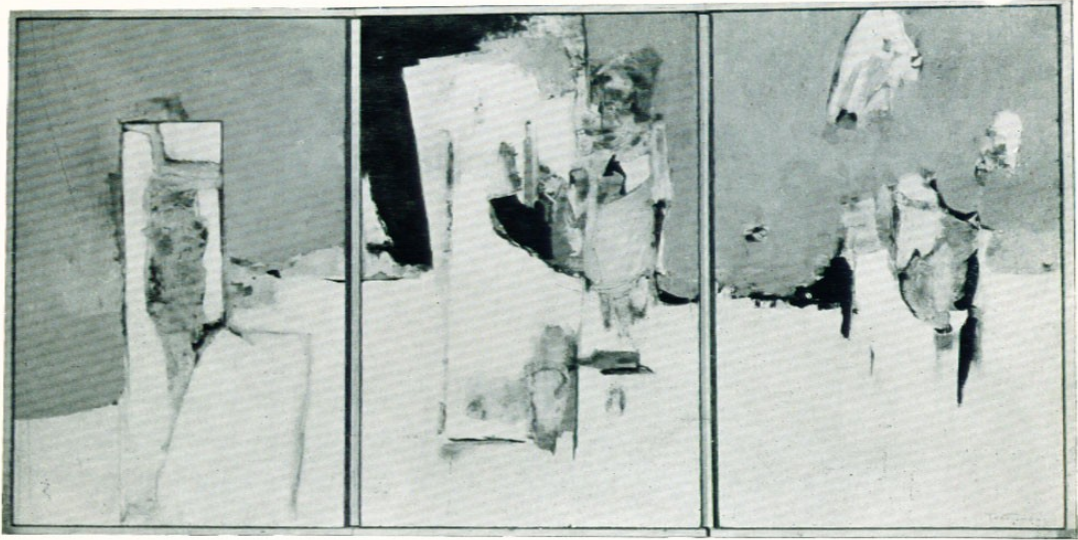


NIGHTMARE FOR SOME

Collection Jorge Pequera



HELEN AND PARIS



DISINTEGRATION OF A GOLDEN HEAD

MAJOR EXPOSITIONS

INDIVIDUAL:

- 1957 Museum of Modern Art, Madrid.
- 1958 Sala Bucholz, Madrid.
- 1960 Sala Nebli, Madrid.
Woodstock Gallery, London.
- 1961 Atheneum, Madrid.
- 1963 Tartesios Gallery, Torremolinos.
Hotel Hilton Gallery, Athens.
- 1965 Ivan Spence Gallery, Ibiza.
- 1966 Museum of Modern Art, Madrid.

GROUP SHOWS:

- 1954 III Hispano-American Biennial, Barcelona.
- 1960 Biosca Prize, Madrid.
- 1961 Biosca Prize Exposition, Madrid.
VI Biennial of Sao Paulo, Brazil.
Atheneum Critic's Show, Madrid (First Prize).
International Painting, Gallery 59, Ashafenburg and
Wolframs Eshenbach, Germany.
Contemporary Art, Helsinki.
Prize of Switzerland International Abstract Art Expo-
sition, Kasper Gallery, Lausanne (Second Prize).
- 1962 Five Spanish Painters, Casablanca.
Contemporary Spanish Art—Berlin, Bonn, Rabat.
Retrospective Exposition of Contemporary Spanish
Art, Seville.
Anthological Exposition, Association of Art Critics,
Museum of Contemporary Art, Madrid.
International Exposition and Sale of Contemporary
Art, O'Hana Gallery, London.
- 1963 Foreign Painters in Spain, Barcelona.
- 1964 Venice Biennial, Spanish Pavilion.
Hotel Hilton Gallery, Athens.
New York World's Fair, Spanish Pavilion.
- 1965 Pantechnica, San Francisco.
René Metrás, Barcelona.
Juana Mordó Gallery, Madrid.
Svea Gallery, Stockholm.

MUSEUMS:

- Evansville Museum, Evansville, Indiana.
- Witte Memorial Museum, San Antonio, Texas.
- Peabody Museum, Nashville, Tennessee.
- Private collections in Spain, England, Switzerland, Belgium,
United States, Greece, South America, etc.

ADDRESS: VALLEHERMOSO, 54, MADRID-15

DIMITRI PERDIKIDIS— A GREEK IN SPAIN

The works of Dimitri Perdikidis are shown here as representatives of the rich art of present day Spain, but he and his work remain firmly and irrevocably Greek. Born in Piraeus in 1922, he was a member of that generation which grew up in war and civil strife and found themselves left with little more than bitter memories and an aggressive spirit. To escape this, he left the country and moved to Spain, a land with a strong tradition in an art that was both tragic and dramatic; the home of Goya, El Greco, Picasso, and Solana, with a blood tie that linked them to powerful Mexican painters like Orozco.

Another reason for his departure was the belief that the great artistic tradition of his own country was far too imposing to allow its young painters to develop. The great cloud of fictions which had gathered in the centuries since the Golden Age had made it impossible to know what really was Greek, and for Perdikidis that problem was as essential as it was for any other painter of the time.

In Spain he purged himself of both bitterness and tradition, working at first in an academic way and assimilating post-war figurative art. When the powerful wave of Informalism broke over Spain in the mid 'Fifties he held his ground, drawing slowly and selectively from the new ideas and techniques and using them as tools in a renewed search for a Greek art. What Tapiés became for the Spanish wall, Perdikidis became for the Greek ruin. With his new materials and textures he created rock-like fragments and surrounded them with large, quiet spaces, capturing the harmonious spirit of apollonian Greece. Though they evoked calm and tranquility, they held a feeling of drama as well, like the large and simple masks through which Greek actors once spoke.

Perdikidis has come a long way in these last few years, but the basic features of his work remain roughly the same. He now works with many more planes, and they are

no longer limited to quiet ones. The figurative elements, which were once no more than the inorganic remains of a past civilization, have come to life, lurking in lines which echo the attitudes of the human body and in nearly completed figures. He has added triptych wings to give a sense of time, of the separateness of different states—youth, maturity and death, for example—without destroying their essential unity. **Disintegration of a Golden Head** shows three equal moments, three stages in the destruction of a rectangular form. The narrow wooden frame serves to divide them, but the two broad areas of color, the white and the gold, extend practically unbroken behind them.

Perdikidis rarely paints on any but a monumental scale. His work tends to be large, in proportion with his own tall figure. The material is not flimsy canvas but tough wood, the surface which gives him the most opportunity for emotional expression, a surface he can cut, gouge, burn, scar. He likes wood «because I can fight it. An artist isn't just a brain, you know. If he doesn't feel these things in his body he can't express them. In a painting you should feel the hand of the man who worked on it.» And Perdikidis' own powerful hand leaves its unmistakable mark on every one of his works.

Color plays an essential role in his art, and he has carefully extended his mastery of tones over nearly all of the spectrum. He is particularly skillful with reds, enjoying them because «red is a difficult color, very hard to work with, aggressive, sometimes extravagant and dionysian,» and he has learned to draw the full range of feelings out of every shade from deep carmine to almost-orange. He is equally adept with blacks, making them solid or empty, somber or vital, but he prefers to keep them «just a little part of me. I would rather use white than black because it is a life color, like red. For the oriental peoples it is the purest, most spiritual color.»

These three hues comprise the foundation of his palette and are, not coincidentally, the three colors of ancient Greek pottery. But he accepts no limitations for history's sake. He supplements and replaces them with a rich variety of other colors: earth browns, sea greens, sky blues, stone greys, lemon yellows... any color with which he can express the pulsing of life. If other painters find color to be a stumbling block, Perdikidis treats it as a friendly wrestling match. «I am a painter,» he insists. «Of course I want to use colors!»

Discovery is the greatest pleasure art holds for Perdikidis. The creative act is his limitless, endless Odyssey, and nothing will lure him into a fixed and undeveloping style. On the contrary, as he has come to master the basic aesthetic problems he has slowly turned to other thornier, but, to him, equally important ones.

It is his wish «to be involved with the problems of my age, to participate in it, struggle with it and contribute something through my work. How else am I to justify my existence as an artist? Everyday I read about people fighting, starving, dying all over the world, and I have to ask myself whether I am acting as a man as well as an artist. We are human beings and should take part in life. We have no right to hide in ivory towers!»

In adding this demanding element to his art he released a flood of feelings which have made themselves felt in bolder forms and colors. It has also carried him closer to all that is Greek, for no matter how much our lives change, human problems remain the same. The tools change, the weapons change, but we go on resolving those same problems. The anxieties of Homeric Man were the same as those of Man Today. For this reason I paint myths—not for their story content, but for the transcendence and essence they contain.»

In his career as a painter, Dimitri Perdikidis has struggled with the difficult problems of tradition, aesthetics, content and development which every artist must face, and he has successfully overcome them. If this unique fact has not made him internationally famous, it has at least served to insure him a place among the painters of quality and sincerity—which in the end is far more important to him. His art is first and foremost a tool for understanding. «We Greeks are distinguished by our capacity to deal with life,» he observes. «We can reason it into terms which we understand and therefore master it.»

Bill Dykes

DIMITRI PERDIKIDIS— UN GRIEGO EN ESPAÑA

Un pintor griego que vive en España... las palabras tienen como una antigua resonancia. Ser griego —es decir, haber heredado un sentido del equilibrio, o tal vez una lógica para la comprensión del desequilibrio— y vivir en España —es decir, ser testigo de la violencia y de la contradicción—: eso es la que caracteriza fundamentalmente a Dimitri Perdikidis. Claro está que nadie es nada fundamental por derecho divino y Dimitri Perdikidis no es "griego" por el

solo derecho de su nacimiento. Lo es por elección personal, porque su manera de ser coincide con una "manera" cultural establecida y reconocida. No entrará ahora en discusiones sobre ese particular. Me interesa solo dejar establecido el doble ingrediente constitutivo de un arte— el sentido de la armonía y el sentido de la violencia— desde el punto de vista de sus posibles orígenes.

No quiero caer tampoco en la fácil tentación de ver aglutinadas —ahora en Dimitri, antes en Dominico— las dos fuerzas antagónicas de "El Origen de la Tragedia". Pero, por vía muy distinta y en estilística muy distinta, lo característico en ellos, con respecto a la vida española, no es sólo el ser testigos (todo artista es, en realidad, un testigo), sino el ser espectadores conscientes. Se es espectador cuando se está, de alguna manera, fuera del espectáculo —en este caso, fuera del drama de lo español— aun cuando no se sea necesariamente neutral. Dimitri sería un pintor español si tratara de ver al equilibrio desde la violencia; pero en realidad es un artista griego porque trata de ver a la violencia desde el equilibrio. Adviértase que uso, con toda deliberación, dos tópicos caracterizadores: el equilibrio, para lo griego; la violencia, para lo español. Yo sé que a ningún pueblo le corresponde una característica de derecho divino, pero muchos de ellos las poseen de hecho histórico. Y al menos en lo que a nosotros respecta, esa caracterización histórica no ha sido aun modificada.

Basta. Interesa ahora sólo ver cómo se materializa en Perdikidis esa descubierta de la violencia desde el equilibrio o de la contradicción desde la armonía.

No es suficiente romper una columna dórica para que ella adquiera el gesto de la agresión: incrustada en el más sutil de sus pliegues formales supervive la armonía, es decir, la ausencia de gesto, la ecuación que promueve el equilibrio. Tampoco, en los lienzos de Perdikidis, se esconde la violencia allí donde aparece la alusión a la forma, por mucho que ella esté agredida por el germen de la desintegración: es necesario plantar, frente a ese signo del equilibrio, el signo del desequilibrio; contra ese sintoma de la mensura, el sintoma de la desmesura. Nace así, en una parcela de su arte, "lo informe" deliberado, que lo es mucho más en su caso porque su raíz generativa está en la representación transformada, es decir, en la *forma deformada*. Perdikidis no necesita, como un español, luchar contra la pintura con la materia ni luchar contra el color con el anti-cromatismo del negro violento. Es una pintura que vive en la pintura, sin hierirla, organizando armonías desde los colores más prístinos. Pero organiza con toda deliberación la violencia oponiéndole lo informe —que es el gesto, la descompostura, la violentación del equilibrio— a lo formal, a lo verdaderamente abstracto porque vive enclaustrado en la fórmula del equilibrio. La violencia, pues, no está en el signo de la violencia sino en la violentación, por oposición negativa, del contraste con lo armonioso. Hay, pues, en su obra una reversibilidad mutua de las negaciones que conducen a su afirmación fundamental: la crítica, el sarcasmo, la denuncia y, en definitiva, el testimonio sintético y significativo de una realidad.

José María Moreno Galván

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