

Walter Sickel

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ΤΟ ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΚΟ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ

ΕΓΚΑΙΝΙΑΖΕΙ ΣΕΙΡΑΝ
ΚΑΛΙΤΕΧΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΚΘΕΣΕΩΝ
ΣΤΙΣ ΑΙΘΟΥΣΕΣ
ΤΟΥ
ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΚΟΥ ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟΥ
ΠΛΑΤ. ΦΙΛΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑΣ, 17

ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟ 15-25

Νοεμβρίου

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ΕΡΓΑ ΖΩΓΡΑΦΙΚΗΣ

ΤΟΥ

Χ" ΚΥΡΙΑΚΟΥ ΓΚΙΚΑ





ΜΕ τὸ ἔργο τοῦ Ν. Χατζη - Κυριάκου Γκίκα ἢ νεώτερη Εὐρωπαϊκὴ Τέχνη ἀγγί-
ζει τὸ γνήσιο πνεῦμα τῆς ἀρχαίας ἐλληνικῆς.

Ἡ συνάντησις αὐτὴ εἶναι ἱστορικὴ.

Ἡ ἀλήθεια ποὺ βγαίνει σὰν ἐξαγόμενον ἀπὸ τὰ πειράματα καὶ τὶς ἀναζητήσεις
τῶν ἐπαναστατικῶν σχολῶν τοῦ μεσοπολέμου ἔρχεται νὰ ταυτισεῖ μὲ τὴν ἀπλὴ καὶ
βασικὴ ἀλήθεια ποὺ ἀνέκαθεν εἶχε χαρακτηρίσει τὰ δημιουργήματα τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ
στὶς πρὸ καλῆς στιγμῆς τῆς ἀνόδου καὶ τῆς ἀκμῆς του.

Μιά μέρα ὁ ζωγράφος αὐτός, ποὺ πρὶν ἀπ' ὅλα ζητοῦσε τὴν ἀρχικὴ μαθημα-
τικὴ ἀκρίβεια τοῦ κόσμου τῶν μορφῶν, ἀνακάλυψε ὅτι οἱ ἴδιοι κανόνες ποὺ εἶχανε
ἄλλοτε ἰσχύσει στὰ νησιά τοῦ Αἰγαίου, στὰ παράλια τῆς Ἀττικῆς καὶ τῆς Ἰωνίας ζοῦ-
σαν καὶ σήμερα πραγματοποιημένοι σωστὰ μέσα στὰ ἔργα τῶν ἀπλῶν ἀν-
θρώπων ποὺ κατοικοῦνε τὰ ἴδια αὐτὰ μέρη.

Ἀπὸ τὸ δρόμο αὐτὸν ἔρχεται σὲ ἐπαφὴ μὲ τὴ λαϊκὴ παράδοση τοῦ τόπου του,
ποὺ σὰν δροσερὸς ἀέρας ἀναζωογονεῖ καὶ μετουσιώνει ὅλα ὅσα τοῦ εἶχε ὡς τότε προ-
φέρει ἢ θητεία του στὴ Δυτικὴ ζωγραφικὴ. Ὁ παλιὸς μαθητὴς καὶ φίλος τοῦ Braque,
τοῦ Le Corbusier καὶ τοῦ Picasso, χωρὶς ν' ἀπιστεῖ κατὰ βάθος στὸ πνεῦμα τους,
στρέφεται τώρα κατὰ τὴν Ἀνατολή. Νιώθει νὰ ξυπνᾷ ἢ νησιώτικὴ του ἰδιοσυγκρα-
σία. Συνειδητοποιεῖ τὴν ἀνάγκη ν' ἀποδώσει μὲ ἀντίστοιχα μέσα, μὲ χρώματα καὶ
μορφές, τὴ νεοελληνικὴ συναισθηματικὴ φύση. Ὁχι ὅμως μὲ τὴ γραφικὴ ὄψη τῶν
πραγμάτων, τὸ τοπικὸ χρῶμα, τὴν ἐντύπωση. Ἀλλὰ μὲ τὴν ἀνεύρεση τῶν κοινῶν χα-
ρακτηριστικῶν ποὺ συνοδεύουν ὑποσυνείδητα τὴ φύλῃ σὲ ὅλες τὶς προσπάθειές της
γιὰ τὴν ἔκφραση, καὶ μὲ τὴ σωστὴ μεταγραφὴ τους, ὕστερα, στὴ γλώσσα τῆς πλαστικῆς.

Ἔτσι ὁ Χατζη - Κυριάκος Γκίκας πηγαίνει δλόισα στὴ χρυσὴ τομὴ τοῦ ἰδανικοῦ
του. Ὅλα τὰ στοιχεῖα ποὺ κατέχει, τὸ φῶς μὲ τὴν ἐξαιρετικὴν ποιότητα, τὸ πνευ-
ματικὸ ἦθος τῆς γῆς του, τὰ μουσικὰ τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς παράδοσης, ποὺ τὰ χρησιμο-
ποιεῖ σὲ ὅσο βαθμὸ καὶ οἱ τεχνίτες τῆς ἀρχαϊκῆς προκλασικῆς ἐποχῆς, τοῦ ὑπαγο-
ρεύουν μιὰ τέχνη οὐσιαστικὰ συνθετικὴ καὶ ἀντιμιμητικὴ. Ἡ καμπύλη ἀπὸ
ἓνα κανάτι, τὸ τρίγωνο μιᾶς στέγης, ἓνας χαρταετός, ἓνα φύλλο φραγκοσυκιᾶς, ἢ πο-
διὰ μιᾶς κοπέλας, αὐτὰ τὰ ταπεινὰ πράγματα (ποὺ ἐνορχηστρώνονται μέσα στοὺς πί-
νακές του μὲ ὅ,τι χαρακτηριστικότερο ἔχουν σὲ συνθέσεις σχεδὸν μουσικῆς) εἶναι γιὰ
τὸ ζωγράφον μας καὶ οἱ φορεῖς μιᾶς αἰσθαντικότητος ἐλληνικῆς, ποὺ μὲ κάθε τρόπο
πρέπει νὰ αἰσθητοποιηθεῖ καὶ νὰ λάμψει σταθερὴ σ' ἓνα σημεῖο ἀπρόσβλητο ἀπὸ τὸ

χρόνο. Τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ ὕλικου κόσμου ἀποσκοπιζοῦν ἀπὸ τῆ συμβατικῆς θέσης πρὸς κατέχουσαν μέσα στὴν καθημερινὴ ζωὴ, καὶ μὲ τὴν ἐπανασύνθεσίν της συγκροτοῦν μιὰ «δεύτερη φύση» πρὸς εἶναι πρὸ ἀληθινῆ ἀπὸ τὴν πρώτη, γιατί ξέρεται ν' ἀνταποκρίνεται πρὸς τὴν τάξιν, τὴν ἀκρίβειαν καὶ τὴ διαύγειαν τοῦ πνεύματος.

Ἡ αἰθρία τοῦ Αἰγαίου κατακτᾷ τὴ ζωγραφικὴ ἔκφραση. Ὁ ἥλιος, χάριν στὰ ἔντονα λυρικά χρώματα καὶ στὴν καθαρότητα τῶν μορφῶν, ξαναπαίρνει τὴν πρωταρχικὴν θέσιν του στὸ ὕπαιθρον. Ἡ σύγχρονη εὐαισθησία, ἡ τόσο ζωηρὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ τόσο ἀπειθάρχητη, ἀποκτᾷ στερεότητα καὶ ὕψος αἰώνιο.

Μὲ παρόμοιες ἀρετὲς ὁ Χατζη-Κυριάκος Γκίκας ἀπλώνεται σήμερον καὶ ἀγκαλιάζει ὅλα τὰ θέματα πρὸς τὸν ἐνδιαφέροντα πλαστικά, διατηρώντας μιὰν ἀπαράμιλλην ἐνότητα. Ἡ ἀναγωγή ὄλων τῶν αἰσθήσεων στὴν ὄραση συντελεῖται μέσα στὸ ἔργον του μ' ἓνα τέτοιο τρόπο πρὸς μᾶς κάνει νὰ ἐπικουνοῦμε μὲ τὰ πράγματα σὴ βαθύτηρον οὐσία τους καὶ μᾶς βοηθεῖ νὰ τὰ βλέπομε νωπὰ καὶ ἀκτινοβόλα ὅπως τότε πρὸς τὰ γνωρίσαμε γιὰ πρώτη φορά, ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴ φθορὰ τῆς συνήθειας. Ἡ σταθερὴ νεότης τοῦ φυσικοῦ κόσμου καὶ ἡ ἀδιάκοπη μεταμόρφωσις τῆς ὕλης, σὰν κινητήρια στοιχεῖα τῆς φαντασίας, ἰσορροποῦν μέσα του καὶ ἀντικατοπτρίζονται κατόπι σιτὸς πίνακες αὐτοῦς μὲ μιὰ τελείωσιν σπάνια γιὰ τὴν ἐποχὴν μας, σχεδὸν κλασικὴ. Πιστεύω ὅτι ὁ Γκίκας εἶναι ὁ πρωτὸς ζωγράφος τῆς νέας γενεᾶς πρὸς ἀνυψώνει τὸ ἔργον του — καὶ μέσ' ἀπὸ τὸ ἔργον του τὴ σημερινὴ Ἑλλάδα — στὸ ἐπίπεδον τῶν οἰκουμενικῶν ἀξιών.

Ο Δ Υ Σ Σ Ε Α Σ Ε Λ Υ Τ Η Σ

ON a qualifié M. Ingres de « Chinois égaré dans Athènes » : Ghika, sans nul égarement, habite, au pied du Parthénon, un vieil hôtel orné de toiles tibétaines. Toutefois ce peintre athénien, ce « Grécobouddhique », s'est formé à Paris, entre les Deux-Magots et la rue du Dragon. De retour à Athènes, il apportait dans son pays une somme d'inquiétudes qu'il essaya de résoudre par l'azur. Les problèmes les plus sinueux de la géométrie le tourmentaient, et la Grèce lui parut, dans sa pleine lumière, une réponse éblouissante à ses angoisses. Dans Hydra, Ghika se grisa d'un paysage marin qui repousse les discordances végétales au profit des



pesanteurs ordonnées de la pierre — rocs et bâtisses. Mais la lumière de l'Égée est si volatile que spontanément les cerfs-volants, les ailes des moulins, les oiseaux y frémissent et couronnent les architectures. Ici l'azur et les pierres font assaut de sensibilité et entremêlent leur essence : la pierre se dissout dans l'éther et l'azur se marmorise. Nul n'a mieux que Ghika exprimé les Cyclades ; il a su joindre à l'abstraction une puissance incantatoire. Le mystère et la magie habitent les toiles, en apparence les plus rationalistes, de Ghika, et restituent la Grèce toute pétrie d'azur.

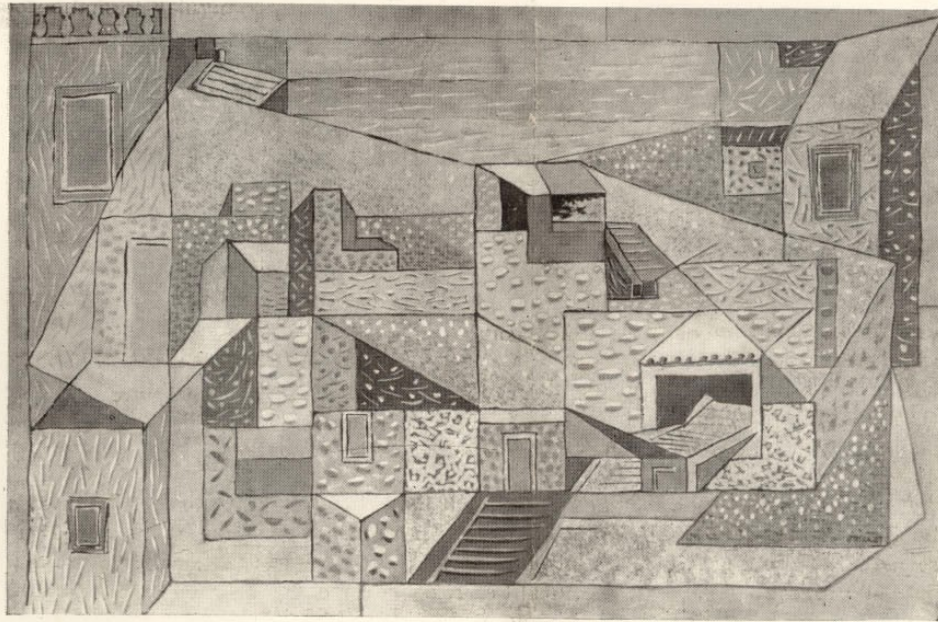
R O B E R T L E V E S Q U E

The following appreciation of Ghika's work forms part of an article written for «The Spectator», London.

MANY foreign painters have been frightened by the intensity of light and the colours of the Greek landscape, but Ghika has harnessed both this light and colour to his abstract designs, and this is one of the reasons why he is the most remarkable of the younger Greek painters. At the same time, he has all the traditional Greek sense of form and design. Born of this century, he loves abstractions, and his view of the contemporary Greek scene is essentially modern. Like Picasso and Braque, he has a classic sense of form. There is nothing haphazard about Ghika's paintings. Like the masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese painting which he admires so much, each of his pictures is the result of long meditation and a carefully evolved technique. Essentially an intellectual, his use of line, form, and colour has a carefully built-up design which gives his work an unique intensity of colour and the visual pleasure of a perfectly conceived work of art. There is an Eastern economy in these still-lives and scenes of the Greek countryside. These intense blues and the glowing reds and greens all belong particularly to Greece, and it has remained for a modern Greek painter to transmute them into contemporary abstract art. He has also captured the miraculous clarity of Greek sunlight, this light which tinges the buildings, mountains, and valleys of Greece with tones of varying colours.

Ghika is already a painter with a European reputation. His paintings have been admired and bought by connoisseurs in London, Paris, and New York. It is a great honour for Modern Greece that one of the greatest masters of modern abstract art should be a Greek. But it was Ancient Greece that first taught the world to appreciate perfection of form, line, and colour. Ghika, by his special interpretation of abstract painting, has opened new horizons for contemporary Greek art.

D E R E K P A T M O R E



THE works of Ghika are composed: that is, they contain the elements of both composition and composure. Objectively, they are precisely arranged in a composition of deliberate proportions. Subjectively, whatever emotional or intellectual force they radiate, whether the violence of *Assault* or the quietude of *Composed Houses*, *Hydra*, is rigidly controlled into a composure. Thus, both subjective and objective values are pitted one against the other so that each partakes of the other's quality, changes and is changed. The subjective force in a painting by Ghika enlivens the abstract composition; the objective sense of order and proportion controls whatever force it encloses. The result is that the composition takes on the force of the represented object, and that the object takes on the abstraction of the composition. We have here, then, that marriage of power and restraint, that vibrant synthesis which has always characterized the Greek genius whether in the past or the present, best symbolized by the Parthenon itself (that omphalon of every criterion) in which a riot of brush colors and an arrangement of architectural lines and proportions were so boldly blended.

In *Assault*, for instance, the agitation of the plants and the onrush of the birds toward the insect cannot possibly be separated from the design by which this general

alarm is produced. The artist has taken the sharp, peaked, triangular formation of the plants and out of it arrived at an outline which in varied proportions announces and elaborates the theme. All other representational objects, such as the birds, are developed in terms of this outline, as are the larger abstract spaces in which various groups on the canvas are enclosed. The outline itself and the theme are announced, as if a tuning fork were struck, by the lengthwise triangle at the extreme left, and the vibration thus set up is continued and varied, as abstraction and as object, throughout the entire canvas. By small and large triangular formations, by carefully matched and disjointed colours, by the impetus of all spaces and objects toward that insect at the very top center of the canvas, the general alarm is stated, varied, controlled and disrupted until the entire picture comes to a vibrant rest as in the center of a whirlpool or the spoke of a wheel, into that still center of composure which reveals that the artist is in control of almost uncontrollable material, that he has imposed on the chaos about him a proportion and a meaning, but a meaning that is neither moral nor immoral and which declares itself only in terms of power and composition. This is what we must mean when we call a work of art, or a way of life, Classical. And this is Ghika.

As the preceding of *Assault* indicates, it is almost impossible to describe a work by Ghika without the use of musical terms. In a sense, in looking at his work, one seems to hear with the eye. In all of his work, abstracted or not, colors, lines and special proportions take on the tonalities and movements, the range of warm and cold notes, the rhythm and, what is more, the *timing* (the duration of the size of one space in relation to another) which is equivalent to the arrangement and orchestration of musical composition. In *Composed Houses, Hydra*, for instance, the relation of one space to another, the treatment of each surface-unit, the choice and arrangement of colors continuously play upon the eye as sound plays upon the ear. The eye advances and recedes, rises and falls, pursues a theme and is led to counterpoint or to syncopate it with others, and all in a steadily accentuated rhythm infinitely varied until, in effect, we find ourselves involved in a complex yet essentially strong rhythm as if we were listening to the compositions of Bach. This is a purely aesthetic delight which Ghika never fails to induce even in his most abstract paintings and which oftentimes is found to be lacking in the works of purely abstract painters, in Mondrian, for instance. And yet such musical overtones, coupled with the dynamic use which Ghika makes of his representational objects, arouse in the spectator a series of creative associations not ordinarily derived from painting so strongly composed. In *The Caterpillar*, for example, the placement and arrangement of objects—human, animal and landscape—the lines by which they are defined and the colors by which they are embodied show not only two children in a suburban courtyard under the merciless Attic sun, but also arouse an almost subconscious recognition that we have been gazing upon a despoiled Garden of Eden, upon a dispossessed Adam and Eve amid an indifferent Nature. If we have chosen to describe a few of Ghika's paintings

it is only because they were convenient compositions with which to demonstrate qualities which are as evident, in a fecundity of variety and emphasis, in all of his other works. They are all examples of the artist's control over his medium and his meaning, and they are all witnesses of that triple counterpointing of the verb «compose»: they are a designer's *compositions* in line, color, and space; they are the work of a musical *composer*, and their final resolution is a *composure* which the classical artist imposes on the recalcitrant materials of life to create a cosmos for which we all long and dream and which the artist can thus invoke for us.

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ΚΑΘΕ ΜΕΡΑ ΤΟ ΠΡΩΙ ΑΠΟ 9.30 Π.Μ. — 1.00 Μ.Μ.

ΔΕΥΤ., ΤΕΤ., ΠΑΡΑΣΚ. > 3.00 Μ.Μ. — 7.30 Μ.Μ.

ΤΡΙΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΜΠΤΗ > 3.00 Μ.Μ. — 5.30 Μ.Μ.