

GREEK ARTISTS IN PARIS DURING THE DECADE OF 1990: THE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP ON A NEW BASIS

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ABSTRACT

The global social and economic processes that took place in the 1990, known as globalisation, exerted a decisive impact on the mechanisms of art production and circulation. The concept of nationality is redefined and contemporary art, now on an international level, continues to draw inspiration from national cultural symbols. The political version of neo-avant-garde in the 1960s and 1970s was the last significant period of Parisian contribution to Greek art modernization, appearing to complete its course around 1980. Until the last decade of the 20th century, though, many young Greek artists still visit Paris, as it transpires from the French National Archives. We shall research the causes of this artistic practice, the origins of their artistic background and their relation with the previous generations that created a European consciousness and artwork defining a critical attitude and perception of the world as well as mobility of space and meaning. As far as the presence of Greek artists in Paris is concerned, the decade of 1990 finds representatives of all ages and artistic currents coexisting and creating together. Their artistic activity is evident through their participation in major artistic events, while their publicization is depicted in the Greek and Parisian magazine press of the time.

Keywords: Greek artists in Paris, art exhibitions, contemporary art, art and globalization

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization in the years of the 1990s will induce significant changes and a shift of focus in art, the latter experiencing in a sense an “identity crisis”. These changes, along with the old institutions to be upgraded, will also bring new ones to the surface, such as global events. Within the institutions, for the first time and in an organisational and curatorial manner, the issue of a politically radical art will be addressed, an art able to question global political consents, discuss the global political reality and offer the vocabulary for the critical reception of a new globality. The quest for cultural complexity, diversity and contrast will become an imperative for the

dynamic agents of the new field of art. At the same time, the new institutions will both try to bring back the art public and, on the other hand, attract a new one, which they will have to convince that the new art propositions relate to the current social issues of globalisation and can provide a reflective language for the reception and interpretation of deeper global changes.

And as the global art field widens, there arise a series of artistic events advocating radicalism, a politically and socially ground-breaking art, as a “contradiction-antinomy”, identified within the disputed institutions that claim their role in the global economic and political scene, an art that can be perceived as “contradiction-tension” within postmodernism itself. These international and Greek contexts marked the end of the migratory flows of Greek artists to the artistic centres of the West and especially to Paris. Sufficiently informed about the developments of contemporary art, artists are now able to create pioneering work in their place, comparable to that of their colleagues in any part of the world. In Greece there is now an almost autonomous art scene. Athens, formerly dependent on what took place abroad, now develops into an important artistic centre. This is owed to a large extent to the return of many artists living abroadⁱ.

Despite the above, Paris still attracts a small number of artists in the 1990s, yet no longer as a centre of the avant-garde, rather as a symbol of tradition and as the city that nurtured so many Greek artists of the great post-war cultural migratory flows (1945-1955, 1960 and 1970), many of whose representatives are currently teachers at the School of Fine Arts in Athens. Some of this information derives from their inscriptions to Ecole National des Beaux-Arts, as stated in the Archives Nationales de Paris (site de Pierrefitte-sur-Seine), where research was conducted. On completion of their undergraduate or postgraduate studies, a work project or a visit to get informed, they return to their country, where they develop their artistic activity, since there is no intention of further residing or integrating in the French society. As early as 1960 and mainly from 1974 onwards, the gradual change of artistic conditions in Greece initiated the rapid return of Greek diaspora artists, who asserted and achieved an active role in the political and cultural processes, as well as transmitted modern art directions to the structures of the modern Greek cultural landscapeⁱⁱ.

2. THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

The global social and economic processes taking place in the decade of 1990, known as globalisation by many different schools of thought and processes, will decisively influence the mechanisms of art production and circulation. The radical changes and the shift of focus that the field of art will undergo is characterized by many analysts as an "identity crisis". The prevailing new economy and the following view, for many a chimera, of a global culture, of multiculturalism, led to the revision of existing “international artistic events” and the emergence of young people from Sao Paolo to Shanghai and Istanbul, all resulting in redefining several

theoretical, organizational and curatorial standards of international art organization in response to the new climate of international co-operations.

Independent curation will emerge as the critical regulator of the image of the newly established institutions, replacing national representatives or national spaces, pavilions hosting what “represents” the national cultural eventsⁱⁱⁱ. The curator is regarded as a prominent factor in artwork signification, and, most importantly, in the connection between works of art from different parts of the world, in the environment of periodic super-exhibitions^{iv}. In the 1990s, curators will turn to reflecting global changes through the production of a discourse, to be institutionally materialised through publications, periodicals, curatorial and theoretical texts, reviews, interviews, collective volumes, conferences and dialogue platforms. Such a cultural project presupposes persuading the potential spectator-visitor that the new exhibitions touch on the current social issues of globalisation and can offer a reflective language for the reception and interpretation of profound global changes^v.

In the official art events (Documenta Cassel, Biennale), videos, constructions or environments coexist with paintings, sculptures, photographs and digital prints so as to create a total aesthetic outcome, in which the spectator perceives the concept of boundaries also as a concept of relations. Thus, modern art becomes an open experience of concepts and forms, eliminating the concept of nationality, yet retaining the privilege of drawing inspiration from national cultural symbols^{vi}. At the same time, the Internet, widely utilised by younger artists for eliciting visual material and exchanging information, decisively contributes to the intercultural character of artwork. The modern work of art detaches itself from its old social signification and, far from being abolished, the latter becomes the subject of modern communication. The new “common” internationalist spirituality is an assembly of images, containing truths of local scope that become hyper-local^{vii} through high technology. Satellite media, computers and the Internet are dominant, while internationalization is the prevalent issue of the age. Art, though, seems to express a subjectivism and even in recent years appears to be heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory. The means of expression vary, ranging from traditional sculptures, paintings and engravings to the contemporary technological ones: digital photography, video, computers, websites and so on.

3. SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

In the decade of 1990, despite the uncertainty over art, rhythms seem to balance. Unlike the established artists, the new generations are no longer characterised by the coexistence of artists under the umbrella of a group or a movement, but by each artist’s individual development. After the restoration of painting and the shift to tradition, the new decade marks the return of the new media predominance. Thus, on the one hand, we have the explosive presence of Damien Hirst

and, on the other hand, in the mid-decade, the Arts Council of Great Britain could not find a museum space for Lucian Freud's retrospective exhibition^{viii}.

Art historian Christos Ioakimidis (1932-2017) notes accordingly: *"In recent years we have witnessed an overload and overproduction of modern art, but also an excess supply of theorems and narratives of varying quality. It is obvious that we undergo a phase in the history of art without recognizable controversies or groupings"*^{ix}. Some, like Jean Clair, a French art critic, argue that the continuous proliferation of museums is directly proportional to this widespread bewilderment over art^x. The painters of the younger generations, using the usual media (easel, paintbrush), portrayed this dysfunctional era, inspired always by the range of art history. Such artists as Lari Pittman, Elizabeth Peyton, John Currin, Neo Rauch have become known by capturing the violence, fears, brilliance and traumatic experiences of people at the dawn of the new millennium^{xi}. Thus, the dilemma of "painting or new media" has ceased to be important, that is, rather than focusing on the expressive medium, we should start wondering about "the kind of art we want and why", that is, to focus on the artistic result itself^{xii}.

The collapse of dividing lines in art, politics and other areas of human activity seems to be the main characteristic of the age. French art historian Jean Clair's criticism of the state of museums and avant-gardes, as mentioned above, found a response to a new generation of French painters, with two of them, Vincent Corpet and Marc Desgrandchamps, impressively establishing themselves in the French art system. Corpet's new reading of painted nude, enriched with thorough knowledge of anatomy and medical drawing, will establish him. In the summer of 2012 in his exhibition with the provocative title *Fuck Maîtres*, he stirred a turmoil in France for the daring deconstruction of some of the sacrosanct dogmas of French painting tradition. A parallel course will be taken by Desgrandchamps, an artist honoured with major exhibitions in powerful strongholds of modernism, such as the Centre Pompidou and the Museum of the City of Paris. His inventive anatomies of everyday life, holidays and consumption have been called *Wet weavings*. These important painters will be followed by others, such as Gilles Marrey, Philippe Perrot, Benyounes Samtati and Djamel Tahah^{xiii}.

Nicholas Bourriaud (1965), a curator and director of contemporary art institutions, with his well-known "relational aesthetics", compiled one of the most critical manuals, *Esthétique Relationnelle* (1998), considered by many curators to be a "bible" for contemporary practices in art and the role that it has claimed since the 1990s. He attempted to analyse the role of modern conceptual, interactive and participatory art in the creation of a new relationship of artwork and the public as well as a new attitude towards contemporary art works as a whole, one pertaining to a game^{xiv}. Bourriaud, while accepting that art cannot exist outside the social web, maintains, at the same time, the belief that "aesthetic islets" of alternative sociality can be built within the

social web, claiming that an art exhibition provides an alternative space or a space for experimentation for the “parallel mechanics” of human relationships that would wish to be different from the commercialized relations governing the dominant mechanics of capitalist logic^{xv}.

John Welchman in *Art after appropriation: Essays on Art in the 1990s* does not identify any distinctive element in the art of this decade. In his view, the trends that form the 1990s generally stir and at best “modernise” elements of the past, without being clearly differentiated from what preceded them. The evaluation of this decade, guided by practices of appropriating elements of modernity, directly indicates isolated concerns of the period 1968-1988^{xvi}.

In the context of recent research, let us mention Nikos Papastergiadis (1962), a modern researcher, who focuses on the operation and pursuit of contemporary art to intervene in the public space^{xvii}, always a significant, yet distinct category of contemporary art, to claim its conquest and articulate a discourse for contemporary reality^{xviii}, along with its occupation with everyday life, which it studies through the prism of globalization, the post-colonial theory and the dynamics of the local^{xix}.

In 1997 a particularly important international exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, entitled *Artists facing History/Face à l'Histoire 1933-1996*, illustrates with artistic works, with a massive volume of paintings, sculptures, installations, prints, videos, posters, photographic archives, editions and publications, social and political positions-through their work- of contemporary artists from Picasso to Beuys, in the last sixty years in relation to the major historical events of our time. The fourth period 1980-1996 is featured in the exhibition as indicative of the artist's own identity quest. The thematic outline and the rationale of the exhibition are that the artists, after their resistance to the authoritarian political systems (1933-1945), turn back to themselves (1945-1960), to open to the public sphere and subject the latter to their own critical expression (1960-1980). By the end of the century (1980-1996), the artists are led to wonder who they are. A remarkable exhibition, a point of reference for the years ahead, according to the critics, as it illustrates a different perception of the art of the time, through the idea that art works are not modules restricted to supporting themselves by themselves; rather, they correspond to the political and social conditions in which they are formed. Greece was represented by the great Greek artist Vlassis Kaniaris (1928-2011), who participated in the unit *Amorphous* next to Tapies with the painting *Tribute to the walls of Athens 1940-1949* and in the section *Critique of the Image* with the installation *Image*, next to J. Beuys, a synthesis of worn-out migrant suitcases roughly left aside just before the journey^{xx}.

4. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE FORMULATION OF CONTEMPORARY GREEK ART

Following Keynes' standpoint, John Deney mentions that art is the most direct expression of human and social growth, its experience. To those who perceive growth only as an economic process, many younger artists cite experiencing friendship, peace and culture as the primary criterion of humanised growth. It is known that the artistic origins of those artists are directly related to the previous generations who worked and lived through the boundaries of borders, ideologies, layers of power and economic discrimination. The artists who created a European conscience and a work defining a critical attitude and perception of the world and a mobility of space and importance constitute the *topos*, on which younger generations rely to claim the right to dream, to a better world and to a fair and humane society^{xxi}.

At the onset of the 1980s, the ideological and cultural transformations in Greece, subsequent to the social, economic and political changes, initiated the repatriation of many Greek artists residing abroad. They would dynamically assert their involvement in political and cultural processes as well as shaping the social institutions in their country^{xxii}. N. Kessanlis, D. Alithinos, St. Antonakos, A. Akrihakis, G. Gaitis, Daniel, Diohandi, A. Drougas, O. Zouni, Thodoros, Chr. Karas, Vl. Kaniaris, M. Katsourakis, D. Kokkinidis, St. Logothetis, Chr. Botsoglou, Y. Bouteas, K. Xenakis, L. Papakonstantinou, Pavlos, D. Perdikidis, Takis, P. Tetsis, K. Tsoklis, Chryssa, D. Mytaras et al., each with their personal work, have brought to the surface the broader nexus of interactions between the artist's experience, tradition, modern conditions and historical events; they acted as the nuclei for the experimentation of the 1990s to unfold. Carriers of changes in art images, they achieved to fuse the New Greek Art with the problematics and the morphoplastic characteristics of post-war Western art and the various types of expressionism, pop art, constructions, various forms of realism, events, environments, installations^{xxiii} and other forms of contemporary artistic creation.

The end of the century finds artists of all ages coexisting and representatives of all artistic currents creating side by side, the older generation alongside the younger one. G. Zongolopoulos in sculpture and N. Kessanlis and Vl. Kaniaris in painting continue to have a leading role in the Greek art scene with their original creations, and to exert influence on younger artists' work^{xxiv}. Kessanlis, a professor at the School of Fine Arts in Athens (ASFA) from 1982, with his inspiring teaching urged his students to waive the traditional forms of painting and begin experimenting with various materials in constructions, environments, installations, but also realise how important it is for the artist to create ruptures in the system, having a new proposal ready so that there is a creative continuity in the history of ideas and forms^{xxv}. Also important is the presence of G. Kounelis, who for all artists, Greek and foreigners, became a point of reference and pole of attraction for their visual expectations^{xxvi}.

Through their teachers, the young artists adapt and get initiated μούονται στην the painting tradition. With their work and through a dialectic confrontation of generations and ages, they seem to expand and question the problematics of the older ones. With the use of various materials and drawing elements and inspiration from the whole body of the history of art, persisting in the possibilities of painting, they create works aiming at modern everyday life, social structures and generally the world and situations surrounding us. They are often inspired by and explore areas of the subconscious and human psychology^{xxvii}.

Accordingly, the sculpture of recent years also reflects the concerns of young artists over political, social and economic conditions prevailing in the country. The artists, more than ever, align themselves with the visual arts status of Europe and America, while the diversity and multiplicity of their works shows imaginative ways of approaching the daily experience and multiple values^{xxviii}. Their wish for a new sculptural perception, a peculiar experiential constructivist type, after 1995 will lead them to implement ambitious modern and postmodern architectural designs, framed by original and bold sculpture compositions, created by such artists as Kostas Varotsos, Giorgos Lappas, Pantelis Chandris, Lambros Gatis, Angeliki Korovessi, Angelos Papadimitriou, Thodoris Poukamissas^{xxix}.

5. THE CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GREECE AND PARIS ON A NEW BASIS

The politicised version of neo-avant-garde during the 1960s and the 1970s was the last significant period of Parisian contribution to Greek art modernization, which appeared to be completed around 1980. Surely, up to the last decade of the 20th century, many young Greek artists visit Paris for studies, retraining or work, yet with no intention of a permanent or long-term settlement, a quest for the modern or modernisation. Rather, we would say, it is more of as a tradition or a tribute to the city that nurtured so many previous generations of artists and more so those who would later be the teachers of the younger ones.

In comparison to such art centres as London, Rome, Berlin or New York, equally accessible to anyone at the time, Paris still attracts Greek artists, though no longer inspiring awe or great expectations. It certainly holds a new special place as a traditional cradle of European painting and as an older centre of innovation in European culture^{xxx}. At the time, it holds a fascination as a symbol of French tradition, a fascination of a longer duration and one inspiring the kind of respect that waives all intent of dismissive criticism. For example, Greek contemporary art will most likely continue to honour the modern artists of Montmartre, Montparnasse or the Latin Quarter, however far removed it may be from their teachings^{xxxi}.

In France we encounter a great number of Greek artists. A few years ago, an overview recorded two hundred Greek artists residing in Paris. Even today, many artists study at Cremonini's atelier and actively participate in Parisian artistic life, such as Kouliantanos, Liberaki, Byzantios, Andreou, Raftopoulou, Philolaos, Christoforou, Pavlos, Pierrakos, Fassianos, Sperantzas, Simossi, Tsolaki, Eleftheri, Patsoglou, Samios, Thomadaki, Clonaris, Vordoni, Venieri^{xxxii}.

6. GREEK ARTISTS IN PARIS IN THE DECADE OF 1990

In the first half of 1994 (01/01/1994-30/06/1994), near the end of the Greek Presidency in the European Union, the Greek Embassy in Paris organized four exhibitions of artists who had lived and worked or were still active in France. The exhibitions aimed to demonstrate their artistic contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the country, continuing the long influence of Greek culture on the French nation. According to the curator Dimitris Papastamos, the idea was owed to the consul of Greece in France, Dimitri Macris, who wished to present the modern work of Greek artists, who either had lived or still resided there at the time, with a long involvement in the activity of such an international art centre as Paris. The exhibitions were incorporated into a broader cultural programme and were hosted in the magnificent building of Hôtel de Coulanges-Sévigné in Marais district, specifically granted for this purpose by the Président de la Maison de l'Europe de Paris, Monsieur Michel Junot^{xxxiii}.

These exhibitions displayed works by Greek artists who lived and created in Paris throughout the 20th century, thus featuring the Greek presence in the French capital as unruptured. Among them we encounter the artists who were there in the early 1990s, such as Alexis Veroucas (1968), who was in Paris from 1986 and studied History of Art at the Institut d'Art et d'Archeologie in Sorbonne (Paris IV) (1986-1988), painting in Leonardo Cremonini's studio and lithography in Abraham Hadad's studio at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) (1988-1993) and from 1993 continued with postgraduate studies in lithography. Helene Kotsoni (1967) in 1990-1991 took her D.E.A. in History of Art from the University of Paris III, and between 1991-1994 attended the "Jean Bertholle" Académie, while in 1994 attended the fourth year in ENSBA. Philippina Livistsanou (1967) after her studies in the School of Fine Arts in Athens (ASFA), from 1992 until 1994 studied painting in ENSBA at V. Velickovic's atelier, as did Dimitri Souliotis (1966), between 1992-1993 on a scholarship by the French government as a guest student of their teacher. He has been awarded the Prix Eddy Rugale Michailov, Fondation Taylor Premier and Prix Charles Oulmont, Fondation de France.

Erika Dourali (1966) studied in ENSBA at P. Carron's atelier (1989-1994) and in 1992 she was awarded the Prix de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts. Eleni Pediotaki (1966) at the beginning of the 1990s completed her studies in painting in ENSBA (1986-1991), continued her postgraduate studies at the Atelier de Lithographie et Technique de la Photographie (1991-1992) and took the

Licence d'Art Plastique From Université Paris VIII. Ioannis Michalou(di)s (1965) with scholarships by Leventis Foundation, Onassis Foundation (1992-1994), the French State (1991-1992) and EOMMEX from 1989 studied product design at the École Normale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs (until 1991), obtained a Postgraduate diploma in Plastic Arts (D.E.A.) from the University of Sorbonne (1992) and in 1998 he completed his PhD thesis on "The Garment of Androgynous: a dis(cover)y of an elastic parenthesis in the field of art". Constantina Korfiati (1965) after her studies in Greece continues with postgraduate studies in sculpture in ENSBA on a scholarship by the Greek government (1989-1991). Dimitrios Andreadakis (1964) after his studies in ASFA, continued his studies in painting at ENSBA at P. Caron's and V. Velickovic's ateliers on scholarships by the Greek State Scholarship Institute (IKY), the French government, Leventis Foundation and Onassis Foundation from 1991 to 1996. His first solo exhibition in Paris at *Bernandes Gallery* took place during his studies. In his later exhibitions in Greece he balances between Impressionism and figurativity, as a tribute that the artist assigns to the family and the environment that endowed him with a sense of safety and trust in himself. "... *All I aspire is to make a person after me stop in one of my work and feel something, to have a meaningful contact, a conversation with it, some emotion... Painting is infinite and inexhaustible*".^{xxxiv}

Also, in the 1990s, several other Greek artists lived in the French capital, including Kostis Velonis (1968), who, after his studies in Greece and England on a scholarship by the Onassis Foundation (1996-1998), attended postgraduate studies at the University of Paris VIII (Maitrise, D.E.A., Esthetiques, Technologies et Creations Artistiques). Chryssa Vergi (1959), after studying in California and at the Athens School of Fine Arts on a scholarship by IKY, attended a postgraduate course in painting with P. Carron as her teacher at ENSBA (1990-1992). Katerina Zacharopoulou (1958) following her art studies in Greece, attended pedagogical seminars on contemporary art at the Centre Georges Pompidou (1990-1994). Eva Mavridou (1975) after the Saint-Etienne School of Fine Arts continued her studies at ENSBA in the 1990s, where she worked in Pat Andrea's studio. Christos Pallantzas (1962) after ASFA, on a scholarship from the French State had postgraduate studies at ENSBA (1990-1992).

Achilleas Papakostas (1970) studied at the Schools of Fine arts of Thessaloniki and Athens. On Scholarships from Erasmus (Paris 1996) and the Onassis Foundation (1997-1998), he continued his studies in painting at ENSBA under V. Velickovic (1996-1998). He was awarded the first prize in the Paul-Louis Weiller competition, Academy of Fine Arts, Institute of France (1997), and was granted a studio at Cite International des Arts (1996-1997). Nikos Tranos (1957) after the ASFA continued his studies in sculpture at ENSBA (1990-1991) on an Erasmus scholarship. Also, on an Erasmus scholarship after the ASFA, Alexandros Psychoulis (1966) continued his studies at ENSBA in 1994.

According to the agreement signed between ASFA in Athens and ENSBA in Paris, the following students visited Paris for studies with the exchange program Erasmus: in the academic year 1991-1992 three Greek artists studied in ENSBA, whose names are not mentioned.^{xxxv} In 1993-1994 also three artists: Desfinitou Melina (1962), Sardi Marie (1968) and Tzimeros Alexandros (1972). In 1994-1995: Betsou Vassiliki (1971) in the atelier of V. Velickovic, Garavela Vssiliki (1960) to study design and Papadimitropoulou Catherina (1961) also to study design. In 1995-1996 two students: Krithara Kyriaki (1963) in order to study sculpture and Papacostas Achilleas (1970) in order to study painting. In 1996-1997 also two students: Bechraki Eugenie (1974) and Michalaki Evangelie (1975), both to study painting. And finally, in the academic year 1998-1998 Charos Orestes (aged 24) to study sculpture.^{xxxvi}

7. THE PRESENCE OF GREEK ARTISTS IN THE PARISIAN GALLERIES AND EVENTS

Sixty-seven Greek sculptors of various trends and materials gave a sampling of contemporary Greek sculpture, but also the mark of the Greek artistic presence in Paris in an exhibition organized by the Greek Cultural Centre and the Association of Sculptors of Greece in the context of an exhibition exchange agreement with French architects in the Chamber of the School of Architecture from 21 May to 20 June 1991. "During the exhibition, the difference between Greek sculptors living abroad and in Greece was stressed. Diaspora sculptors adopt the trends and the international avant-guards without losing their Greek distinctive character, while those living in Greece cultivate more of a faith in classicism and a preference in figurative art, which they express through marble and bronze. Both tendencies are permeated by harmony and austerity..."^{xxxvii}

In 1994, one hundred and sixty galleries from around the world participated in the *F.I.A.C. International Contemporary Art Exhibition*, first held in a tent complex next to the Eiffel Tower. Considered to be the greatest perhaps event of its kind, *F.I.A.C.* had the advantage of displaying the latest emerging in art, but also what is sold or purchased and at what prices, thus reflecting the taste of the age. The Greek participation pioneered this time with the presence of two galleries: *Athens Art Gallery* and *Zoumboulakis Gallery*. The former exclusively presented works by K. Vyzantios, an artist residing in Paris since 1946 and is well-known and loved by the French public. In his works, where the human figure is dominant, rigid and ecstatic, surrounded by naked intensely coloured geometric surfaces, the difficulty and necessity of figurativity in the postmodern painting are manifested. *Zoumboulakis Gallery* exhibited an exquisite painting by Moralis next to two works by Fassianos, as well as the triptychs by Bokoros and Sacaillan. There were also exhibited works by Chryssa, Psychopedis and Rauschenberg^{xxxviii}. In many *F.I.A.C.* pavilions there were works by Greek artists, such as Pavlos, Takis, Kounellis. Also displayed

were works by Sophia Vari, with sculptures and collages as well as by Maria Karella, who dared to emerge in the three-dimensional space with the same delicacy expressed in her paintings. A French art gallery hosted almost the entire exhibition with a tree theme by Marios Prassinos. The Parisian *Galerie Samy Kinge* exhibited a set of Kotti's works in a lively, narrative and pleasing style, demonstrating the painter's ability to renew himself. Many galleries presented Kalfas, a Greek painter residing in France. His works, large monochrome squares, intersect amusing miniatures, forms and objects: Graphisms and phrases compose a narrative full of humour and unforeseen incidents^{xxxix}.

The International Bazaar of Contemporary Art on its 23rd anniversary in 1996 hosted one hundred and forty galleries from France and other countries, with its exhibition philosophy being the strictest selection of works representing the modern trends and featuring new galleries and artists. Greece was represented by *Jean Bernier Gallery*, while the French and foreign galleries hosted several Greek artists. The Parisian gallery of the Greek Xippas, 108 rue Vieille du Temple, presented works by Takis. Works by Pavlos were displayed by French galleries, works by P. Samios were hosted by *Galerie Samy Kinge*, 54 rue de Verneuil, works by Michalis Katzourakis were included in *Denise René Galerie's* collection. Other galleries presented works by Fassianos, Kounellis, Samaras, Stamou, Lappa, Katzourakis, Kalfa et al. The exhibition was depicted as follows: "The visit to it constitutes wandering in an imaginary world. A world dominated by images, fantasies, visions, human existential anguish and quest"^{xl}.

The artists participating were Kostas Argyris (born 1957), Alexis Veroukas (1968), Stefanos Daskalakis (1952), Evita Zola (1964), Irini Iliopoulou (born 1950), Eri Mastoridou (1963), Kelly Mendrinou (1961), Spyros Kritikos (1960), Kostas Markopoulos (1957), Tasos Missouras (1963), Kostas Ntaoulas (1962), Marina Papalampridi (1963), Maria Papafili (1961), Giorgos Rorris (1963) and Edward Sacaillan (1957), Anna Maria Tsakali (1959) and Maria Filopoulou (1964)^{xli}.

Under the motto *Vers Un Nouvel humanisme*, seventeen young Greek artists showed their work to the exhibition organized in the Parisian municipality of Villejuif between 10-23/05/1990. An exhibition that received thousands of visitors, was commented favourably and excited the wider public. All seventeen artists of the exhibition had spent a few years in Paris, some for studies, others to continue their studies after graduating from the School of Fine Arts in Athens and a few, after their studies, shared their time between the French capital and Athens. Eleven of the seventeen attended postgraduate studies in the atelier of the distinguished Italian painter Leonardo Cremonini, a professor at the *École*^{xlii}. As regards the organization of this exhibition and this atelier, the curator of the exhibition Marina Lambraki-Plaka mentions: "I have long since identified the communication, the invisible bridge that connected this atelier with the

School of Fine Arts in Athens. I have sought, therefore, to pinpoint the reason for this mutual trust, the common chromosomes of a declared affinity...". The artists participating were Kostas Argyris (1957), Alexis Veroukas (1968), Stefanos Daskalakis (1952), Evita Zola (1964), Irini Iliopoulou (1950), Eri Mastoridou (1963), Kelly Mendrinou (1961), Spyros Kritikos (1960), Kostas Markopoulos (1957), Tasos Missouras (1963), Kostas Ntaoulas (1962), Marina Papalampridi (1963), Maria Papafili (1961), Giorgos Rorris (1963) and Edward Sacaillan (1957), Anna Maria Tsakali (1959) and Maria Filopoulou (1964).

Galerie Flak, 8 rue des Beaux-Arts, from 17 March to 4 April 1992, organized an exhibition entitled *Jeune Présence Grecque*, dedicated to three artists still engaging in figurative painting and maintaining their personal style and individual peculiarity, thus continuing the painting tradition. The press release of the exhibition mentions that "in the spirit of globalization and homogeneity that it has induced, in the name of modernism, artists turn to conceptual and abstract art, resulting in the last and only atelier of *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* to teach figurative art closing its doors at the end of 1992". The artists were George Hadoulis (1966), who studied painting at Antonio Segui's atelier in ENSBA between 1984 and 1992, Giorgos Rorris (1963), who, after completing his studies in the Higher School of Fine Arts in Athens, studied painting in ENSBA at Leonardo Cremonini's studio between 1988-1991 and Alexis Veroukas (1968), who studied History of Art at the Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie at Sorbonne (Paris IV) (1986-1988) as well as painting at Leonardo Cremonini's atelier and lithography at Abraham Hadad's Studio in ENSBA (1988-1993) and from 1993 continued with postgraduate studies in lithography^{xliii}.

In the exhibition *100 Bronzes et Peintures de petits formats*, held from 27 November to 29 December 1990 at *Galerie Sculptures*, 11 rue Visconti, owned by Alexandra Patsoglou and Christian Roblin, participated several Greek artists who had lived at one time or still lived in Paris. These were A. Patsoglou, G. Simossi, A. Angelopoulos, K. Charalabidis and I. Florou^{xliv}. At *Galerie Sculptures*, 11 rue Visconti, there were displayed works from 02-27/02/1990 by Rania Kapeliari, Clio Makris, Yevso Papadaki and Michel Yzorche under the title *Aventures de la matière, peintures-sculptures*. Paris is the third stop of this exhibition after Athens and Normandy^{xlv}.

Aside from the participation of Greek artists in group exhibitions, individual artists also presented their work in solo exhibitions in France and especially in Paris, such as Sarantis Karavousis (1938-2011), an artist who lived in Paris since 1967, but also spent long periods in Greece. Between 21/03 and 12/04/1990 he presented his seventh in a row exhibition at *Galerie Coard* of Saint Germain de Pres, 12 rue Jacques Callot, and imparted a breath of Greek art replete with innerness and sensitivity to Paris, to be enthusiastically welcomed by the French critics^{xlvi}.

From 20/05-29/06/1990 was presented the eighth exhibition of the artist in the French capital at *Galerie Coard*, while at the same gallery between 29/05/1997 and 29/06 in 1997, the artist invites the public to see his latest work, as stated in the catalogue published^{xlvii}. Irene Iliopoulou presented her third solo exhibition in Paris at *Galerie Flak* from 14/11-15/12/1996, with which she extends her problematics on the dialectic relationship between nature and culture. Pavlos Samios exhibits painting works on the destruction of forests and the importance of tree planting at *Galerie Samy Kinge* in 1992. Nikos Yorgos Papoutsidis^{xlviii} also exhibits at *Galerie La Hune Brenner Gallery*, 3 rue Ravignan in Montmartre. At *Galerie Eonnet-Dupuy*, 27 rue Tholoze, Maria Filopoulou presented her second solo exhibition between 09/04 and 04/05/1991^{xlix}. Alexis Psychoulis (1966), with works inspired from his hometown, Volos, represented Greece at the *Biennale of Young artists* in 1990, while in 1991 he participated in the third Biennale in Marseille^l. From 23/05 to 23/06/1996, Giorgos Rorris, a Greek living abroad, exhibits his new work of the years 1993-1996 at *Galerie Flak*, drawing inspiration from his city, Athens, met with rave reviews, as the press reports^{li}.

With the attendance of painters, art historians and many people, French, Italian and Greek, the painting exhibition by Yorgos Lazongas opened in Paris at *Le Chainon Manquant Gallery*, Rue Keller, Bastille^{lii}. G. Lazongas (1945), following his studies at the School of Architecture in Greece, studied painting in Paris on a scholarship by the French government (1976-1977). Through his works, the artist expresses the concern of the new generation over the changes taking place in the artistic sphere in the 1970s, with his continuous transformations at a stylistic level (abstract processing and minimalism, figurativity but also with the contradictory use of technical methods of visual research (ready-made objects, collages, choroplastic relations, etc.)^{liii}. In the course of his work with different methods, with his *palimpsests* on sheets, where traces of bodies are imprinted, he firmly highlights painting as one writing in the space of multiple writings inhering in life^{liv}.

8. CONCLUSION

The decade to complete the 20th century, the decade of 1990, of globalization, constitutes a multidimensional chapter of contemporary art history, during which explosive events occurred (the collapse of the Soviet culture), slow but steady determining processes (a leading role of the curator over the critic) and a digital revolution, which launched new prospects of artists engaging in technology as a conventional object. It was then that a technological culture evolved into a catalyst for the expectations of the public, the morphology of the artwork and its integration into the social space, as well as the social role of the artist.

In the history of art, this decade has been recorded in fragments, and rather with some uncertainty. At best, it represents a period when attempts to withdraw from the dominant

ideological patterns of postmodernism were made, yet without the expected results. In other words, one could say that it has not been possible to distinguish between what is ending and what is beginning.

In the context of art globalization and internationalization, Greek artists, as early as the 1980s, being informed in their country about the development and course of artistic currents at an international level, stopped migrating to advanced centres in the field of art abroad and especially in Paris. This, naturally, did not mean that they would stop travelling, studying abroad, being trained or informed, working or socializing with their foreign colleagues, whether covering their own expenses or on a scholarship. In the 1990s, though, significantly fewer artists, compared to previous decades of the post-war period, visit Paris for studies or the latest in art. Their journey is no longer associated with pursuing the modern or a long stay, since immediately after the completion of their studies they return to their hometown, where they live and act. They head for Paris mainly for sentimental reasons and especially because the city of light is considered to be a traditional cradle of European art, which bred many earlier generations of Greek artists, from which the younger ones drew to fulfil their own dreams, but also as a tribute to the traditional cultural ties between the two countries.

Diaspora artists fall to a special category of the “Greeks abroad”. Their course differed from the one of their counterparts in Greece. It has been established that they influenced the evolution and course of Greek contemporary art, although their role was questioned or overestimated at times and in some cases. The majority permanently or temporarily reconnected with the local artistic life from the early 1960s, as the Greek society modernised rapidly, and the local art market developed to some degree. It was not until 1974, though, that the great repatriation began, after the fall of dictatorship and change of regime. After returning to their country, the expatriate artists did not cease to have/ break their ties with the country that hosted them, gave them the opportunity and the means to develop their talent and get distinguished, as well as with the international visual arts scene. They continue to travel, get informed, participate in international artistic events, conferences or seminars, present their artistic production in group or solo exhibitions, in galleries and many art galleries, promoting their homeland internationally. Their activity is promoted and praised by both the domestic and the Parisian daily and periodical press.

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