

CHRISTINE PARK GALLERY

Vangelis Pliarides: *The Bandaged Shoulder*

22 March - 27 April 2019

Private View & Reception

Thursday 21 March 2019, 6-8 pm

515 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10011

Tuesday to Saturday, 11am – 6pm & by appointment

For immediate release

Christine Park Gallery is pleased to present *The Bandaged Shoulder*, a solo exhibition by London/Thessaloniki based artist Vangelis Pliarides. It is Pliarides's third solo exhibition with the gallery. This exhibition showcases Pliarides's most recent works following his previous presentation of his signature 'traveling watercolors' series with the gallery.

In his most-recent large-scale paintings, Vangelis Pliarides once again takes us to far-flung places in the world. The rich greenery and storm-swept skies of the tropics become the backdrop for disjointed scenes conveying vulnerability and fragmentation. Unsettling and lush at the same time, his works are monumental picture postcards from places where reality has taken an alternate course.

Each canvas is dedicated to a large human figure. Most of the works are inspired by the artist's recent trips to Sri Lanka and Myanmar. However, Death in Malyvos draws on a true story from closer to home, it shows a tourist who slipped and died from a fall in a place of breathtaking natural beauty on the Greek island of Lesbos. With his stick-like body a man, naked except for a single sock and shoe, balances precariously before a backdrop of darkened skies. The figure of the tourist is a reoccurring theme in Pliarides's works, who is often shown acting on carnal desires or in a state of injury or isolation. Although Pliarides's tourist does draw on elements of the "ugly" and inappropriate western traveler, above all it negotiates an encounter with the self, whereby the age-old trope of travel as a path to self-understanding is turned inside out by the ambiguities and ironic undertones of his paintings, where dream, memory, and harsh reality meet.

This solitary male figure appears in a number of other paintings as a huge, almost sculptural bust balancing on large feet—a disturbing mish-mash of body parts and odd colorations of skin hinting at wounds. Titles such as The Blind Poet or The Bandaged Shoulder (taken from a poem by Constantine P. Cavafy) hint at a certain pathos, at creativity driven by eros, by blind desire. This is underscored by their diptych structure; each large head is paired with a floral theme: either a single red flower set against an ocean backdrop or a more virginal white bouquet in a muted interior. Here the incongruity of the pairing has a particularly

post-modern feel, with the white bouquet seeming to reference deep-rooted traditions of painting, the studio still life, whereas its partner image, the “portrait” has undergone complete fragmentation.

Mawlamyine and Dawei Dream offer brilliant contrasts to the dusky palette of the other works. Despite a “naive” quality unabashedly borrowed from Henri Rousseau, Pliarides’s works never forgo an ironic bite. In Mawlamyine a man seems to be taking a devil out for a walk on a leash, but it could be the devil who is actually calling the shots, from the driver’s seat of a small red car. And while the sinuous erotic appeal of Dawei Dream appears to be offering a harmonic erotic respite from the conflict and contradictions of the other images, a dab of green paint on the woman’s back seems to hint that it is all illusion—not even a dream, just a painting after all.

*Laura Schelenssner, Art Historian & Curator
Berlin, 2019*

For further information or press inquiries, please contact the gallery at info@christinepark.net.

About the Artist

Born in 1964 in Thessaloniki, Greece, Vangelis Pliarides graduated from the Aristotle University, School of Fine Arts in Thessaloniki in 1989. He finished his studies in London at the Royal College of Art by obtaining a Post Experience Diploma (PED) in Painting (1992) and a Master of Fine Arts in Painting (1994).

He received awards and fellowships from the British Council, the Fulbright Foundation and the RTZ plc, his artworks are included in various public collections such as Astra Zeneca (Sweden), Alfa Laval (Sweden), Scania (Sweden), Södertälje Konsthall (Sweden), Union of Swedish Artists (Sweden), Royal College of Art (UK), British Council (UK), Fulbright Foundation in Greece, Frissiras Museum (Greece), Foundation Sana-Huja (Spain), and Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO) (Switzerland). He was Associate Professor at the Aristotle University, School of Fine Arts in Thessaloniki since 2003 and became Professor in 2018. He lives and works in Thessaloniki and London.

About the Gallery

Christine Park Gallery is a young gallery dedicated to supporting both emerging and established international artists. Located in West Chelsea, New York’s burgeoning art hotspot, the gallery has an extensive programme of solo shows, conceptually curated group exhibitions, and special installations. With a constantly developing roster of innovative artists the gallery prides itself on exhibiting works in a range of media, seeking to provoke cross-disciplinary debate and extend the boundaries of the current contemporary art scene.

Our vision is to provide a platform to allow artists to develop and gain greater recognition. Therefore, as well as providing a commercial space that artists can use as a canvas to realise their projects and present their works to the public, we actively foster relations with art foundations, public museums and private clients.