

Vangelis Pliarides

ZONAMACO 2019

February 6 - 10 2019

Booth NP30

Centro Citibanamex, Hall D

AV. Conscripto 311, Lomas de Sotelo

CDMX, 11200

VIP & Press Preview: Wednesday February 6, 11am - 4pm

Opening: Wednesday February 6, 4pm - 9pm

General Opening Hours:

Thursday February 7 - Saturday February 9, 12pm - 9pm

Sunday February 10, 12pm - 8pm

For immediate release

Christine Park Gallery is delighted to announce its first participation at ZONAMACO Arte Contemporaneo 2019. The gallery will present a 10 year-retrospective of watercolors by Thessaloniki and London-based painter Vangelis Pliarides, whose works are shown for the first time in Mexico.

From South Africa to Laos, from the tropical islands of Sihanoukville in Cambodia to the cosmopolitan city of Bangkok, Pliarides's painting trips have been playing an essential role in his paintings. Inspired by experiences and adventures from the trips, his *Traveling Watercolors* were created and carried during the trips and upon his return, such experiences were results in a big sized oil paintings in his London and Thessaloniki studio.

Through the numerous watercolors by Vangelis Pliarides, one can enter a space and time utterly subjective and enigmatic. The laws of reality cease to exist (bodies are often invertebrate, or even permeable), ghosts are real and singing songs, often made of sharp looks or deafening silences.

Then again, perhaps in this pictural world the laws of reality apply more than anywhere else. The vast world of desire meets the finite world and cracks, holes, wounds and fantasies are established for good. In this world, individual memory (which one might call it imagination, if they did not believe in its power), shaped in the innermost recesses of the Self, seems to launch a full-scale attack on the order and logic of what we call "reality."

The hybrid body figures of Pliarides (the body is still the embankment of the "new age") are fluid and unpredictable, often fragmented and cracked, crowded and insolent, obsessive and curious, unfaithful and undying, familiar and immature, potentially competitive and therefore threatening or threatened. And so, the artist renews the exhausted symbolic repertoire of

identity with great doses of vitality, incorporating the repertoire of difference to it. This is where the Ego fleetingly meets the Other in order to create the real condition for both sides to change, perhaps for us spectators to change as well.

His Garden is not an Academy. Tourists, hunters, wannabe conquerors, invalids, couples, balls, swim rings, coconut trees and tropical huts create the narrative setting. Traveling, places, love, accidents, violence and tenderness, broken men and women, where topsy-turvy life seem to be his endless pool of inspiration.

Pliarides' paintings and journey draw a large map from Laos to South Africa, from Sri Lanka to Burma and from Thailand to Cambodia. In this map, art is reinvented not as a visual universe but as a representative enigma, an existential bet, a metaphysical challenge, a visual paradox, theological hubris, anthropological threat.

Thus, the wild joy in the paintings of Pliarides vividly redefines the notions and nuances of contemporary painting. This chapter had a triumphant opening in the 1980's in the wake of the excited times of abstraction painting claiming the freedom of gesture, yet hasn't closed yet with the paradoxically concurrent recognition of traces of the collapse of faith in the modernity of such expressions.

In these watercolors of Pliarides there is the representation or a "creation" of space of a psychoanalytical anthropology, along with the idea of a utopic Paradise (or an almost demonic Hell).

With his solid techniques and stylistic thematic orientation, Pliarides can awaken all of our nightmares along with the hedonistic side of life. While preserving his own moral independence as an artistic subject, he often presents an allegorical, almost cinematic dimension to the episodes of his narratives. The emotional resonances are well hidden in his imagery of tropical forests and strange heroes, while the painter painstakingly draws the "diary of his day and night". Those who live with love and lust at all times. Even if they get sent to hell by mistake, the devil himself will send them back to Paradise.

Thouli Missirloglou

Art Historian, Curator & Director of Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art

June 2018

About the Artist

Born in 1964 in Thessaloniki, Greece, he 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).

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.

His recent group exhibitions include *Prints of memory*, (Museum of Macedonian Struggle, Thessaloniki, 2018), *All Idea Di Quel Mettalo* (curated by Peter Ungeheuer), (Verband Deutscher Burgschaftsbanken, Berlin, 2018), *New Look*, (Christine Park Gallery, New York, March 2018). Following his solo exhibition *Vangelis Pliarides: Traveling Watercolors 2007-2017* in June 2018, he will participate in ZONAMACO (February 2019) and Dallas Art Fair (April 2019) with Christine Park Gallery.