

An abstract painting with a vibrant blue sky and dark, swirling forms. A large, white, stylized letter 'A' is superimposed over the center. The text 'ARTESPRESSIONE' is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font to the left of the 'A'.

ARTESPRESSIONE

GALLERIA ARTESPRESSIONE - Via della Palla, 3 - 20123 Milano

PAULA NORA SEEKY

presenta

DIMITRIS KOUKOS

I paesaggi dell'anima

a cura di

MATTEO PACINI

24 novembre / 29 dicembre 2011

ARTESPRESSIONE



presents

DIMITRIS KOUKOS

“Soul landscapes”

Thu 24 November - Thu 29 December 2011

project

PAULA NORA SEEKY

curator

MATTEO PACINI

translation

DOMINIC SELL

photos

MATTEO PACINI

press office

STUDIO DE ANGELIS

lighting

VIABIZZUNO

print

GRAFICHE CMF Foligno

“It is impossible to put into words the variety of expression conveyed by a landscape’s infinite color gradations.

As an artist, I am inspired by and work from nature, observing and rendering the fleeting quality and changing effects of light, to capture the essence of truth.

The landscape generously offers its abundant wealth to all art forms and stylistic choices.

The wind, the breeze, the scents of nature are all part of our environment, perceived by every human being and, depending on individual sensibilities, transmuted into sounds, words and colors. This is our world.”

Dimitris Koukos



SOUL LANDSCAPES

When observing an artist during his daily routine one can notice some little connections between his behavior and his own personal artistic style.

At first sight, Dimitris Koukos seems a little detached, if not so say rough. He lacks any kind of affectation and showing-off is not what he does. Koukos gives the impression of a rather introverted reserved person but his powerful handshake lets his strong and determined character come through.

His workshop represents him perfectly, everything is essential and there are no superfluous decorations. One can literally smell art, even when standing outside, just a few inches away from the "creative chaos" and a footstep way from the cities' noise.

This is exactly how Koukos likes to live: close enough to the city to be able to participate and socialize, yet with the possibility to retrieve and elaborate his thoughts. It is this kind of distance that enables one to observe and to get a more detailed vision of the essence of things.

Being the great observer that he is, Koukos is always polite, attentive and simple in his behavior. He sometimes appears to be a little mysterious and reflective with a serious glance and a laugh that that is contagious.

Observing his paintings is the opposite process of focusing with a camera. In fact from a certain distance Koukos' paintings seem very and defined. Coming closer to the canvas the shapes become less and less clear and tend to be more abstract.

Hi style could be defined as abstract, but not in the traditional meaning of the term, which implies an artistic representation without actual references to reality. All of the paintings express the artist's unique and personal style, which is the result of a continuous evolution and which tends to capture as many feelings as possible on the canvas, leaving out any superfluous elements.

In Dimitris Koukos' art every color corresponds to a certain feeling. This emotional approach is very important. Although the shapes and forms are hardly recognizable, one can perceive some architectural elements and landscapes every now and then.

His abstraction clearly represents the loss of shape and form, thus referring to a certain nostalgia of the things he has perceived, which are now visible only through the use of color. His rapid use of the brush sometimes leaves lumps of color on the canvas and is in contrast with the slow process of choosing and mixing his colors. This ritual is comparable to the soul, in other words the essence of a body, which is able to awaken a memory that attributes a meaning to, what otherwise would be nothing but a plain stain of color.

Dimtris Kouko has a very deep relationship with nature, especially the one of his country. He frequently goes to places such as Paros, Tinos, Kithira, Saronide, where he places his canvas on the plain ground and repeatedly portrays the landscapes, thus immortalizing his personal experiences and emotions.

I PAESAGGI DELL'ANIMA

Osservando un artista alle prese col quotidiano, si possono individuare affinità tra i suoi comportamenti e i principali caratteri distintivi del suo linguaggio artistico.

A prima vista, Dimitris Koukos appare ruvido e distaccato. Pochi i convenevoli iniziali e poche le smancerie di rituale. Si ha l'impressione di avere a che fare con una persona riservata e schiva, ma che già dalla vigorosa stretta di mano lascia trapelare un carattere deciso e determinato.

Il suo studio lo rappresenta alla perfezione: essenziale e privo di fronzoli, si respira arte già da fuori della porta, al riparo dal caos ma a un passo dal movimento della città. È proprio così che all'artista piace vivere: partecipa e socialmente presente, ma con la facoltà di potersi appartare per elaborare i propri pensieri. È a una certa distanza, infatti, che si ha un punto di osservazione privilegiato delle cose, più distaccato e d'insieme.

Grande osservatore della realtà, Koukos, si dimostra persona attenta e cordiale, semplice e riflessiva, uomo misterioso e dallo sguardo serio, ma dalla risata contagiosa. Osservare un suo dipinto è come avviare il processo contrario della messa a fuoco di un soggetto lontano che, con la vicinanza, tende a diventare nitido e definito. Infatti, i paesaggi di Koukos, che osservati da lontano risultano chiari e definiti, tendono, man mano che ci si avvicina, ad un disfacimento delle forme proprio di una rappresentazione astratta piuttosto che paesaggistica.

Il suo stile si discosta dalla definizione oggettiva di "astratto" come rappresentazione della realtà distaccata da qualsiasi riproduzione del vero. Le sue composizioni sono testimonianza di una lingua pittorica riconoscibile, personale e unica. Sono il risultato di un'evoluzione continua che porta a catturare quante più sensazioni possibili, immortalandole velocemente nella tela, e a tralasciare il superfluo.

Nella pittura di Dimitris Koukos ogni colore corrisponde a un sentimento e a un'emozione. L'artista sostiene il peso di questo sentire emozionale e, nelle forme che diventano indefinibili, si rintracciano elementi di architettura, monti, porti, città, isole... paesaggi lontani. Dentro l'astrazione di Koukos s'intuiscono i sentimenti della forma perduta, che è nostalgia di quanto i suoi occhi hanno visto, visioni di cui rimangono segnali nei segmenti cromatici.

Alla velocità dei tratti, che sulla tela lasciano grumi di materia, si contrappone il minuzioso lavoro di ricerca del colore. Esso è l'anima di un corpo, ne rappresenta l'essenza in grado di risvegliare il ricordo che inconsciamente dà forma e identità a una macchia informe.

Il rapporto con la sua terra, poi, è viscerale. È un legame attraverso il quale essa lo attira a sé anche nell'atto del dipingere in quanto è a terra che Koukos stende le tele e dà vita alle sue opere. In ginocchio e ricurvo come se volesse prostrarsi al suo cospetto, la ritrae ripetutamente, ma con luci e stati d'animo differenti. Paros, Tinos, Kithira, Saronide, Aegina soprattutto, sono i luoghi che a lui piace frequentare, imprigionando nella tela sensazioni da rendere eterne.



SARONIDE I

Acrylic on canvas, cm 190x90

2009



THE SUBSTRUCTIVE AND COHESIVE LANDSCAPE OF DIMITRIS KOUKOS

Spurred by poetry and using poetry as a unifying element, in other words creation in all its essence, the latest landscapes of Dimitris Koukos reveal a renewed, throbbing script and also signal a new diapason in the very impressive, creative and inspired course of this significant artist.

Dimitris Koukos, is without doubt the only one of his generation, who felt, grasped and reshaped the proverbial, transparent, rich in hues and alterations, Greek light handing it with excessive clarity, passion and rhythm.

All of the Aegean Sea, the quintessence of the Mediterranean, the Greek sky, the sea breeze, the metaphysical atmosphere of our countryside those elements which have permeated or better occupied his work shining a pure Greek character with the most modernized meaning of the term. It so happens because of the fact that Koukos, as a genuine and talented creator, expresses, within the framework of his era, the fundamental incentives provided by the environment of his home country. [...]

The light and morphology of Serifos, Rhodes and Tinos, places often visited by the artist during these past years, are transfused to the inner part of our psyche thus conveying to us an abundance of sentiments and situations.

The mobility of the paintbrush, the vibrancy of color, the confident gestures and an innate ability for composing renders Koukos' paintings landmarks of Modern Greek art and mainly archetypes of Greek light and the aura arising from it. [...]

In short, these are paintings that are impressed in our psyche so that we are able to draw vigor and strength from the aura radiating from them, contrary to the contemporary atrocities and torpor to which damned globalization has condemned us. [...]

*Extract from the article by
Dora Iliopoulou-Rogan
Dr. Art Historian-Art Critic*



SERIPHOS II

Acrylic on canvas, cm 103x93
2002

DIMITRIS KOUKOS WAS ONE OF MY MOST BRILLIANT STUDENTS

“Art is a boundless garden created by man. Man cultivated it, cultivates it now and will cultivate it ad infinitum.

The marriages that took place in this garden produced astonishing seed and fruit and shall continue to do so, because there is no stopping it, nor will there be as long as man keeps caring for it. We live in an age in which a birth is about to take place, producing new seed and new fruit.

Can anyone doubt that Renoir had something Greek in him? For him too, feeling comes through touch, through a caress. And that scent of sweat, emanating from the Greek statues, can't you detect it, that same scent, in Goya's women?

In those fabulous female bodies, drenched in cool sweat? Human senses shall forever be unchanged, forever making us love what suits us best. Thus, we too shall be able to give something back, however small or insignificant, as long as it reflects the truth within us.

But, you may ask, what is truth? Truth in a work of art, if there at all, is clearly evident, provided we let our senses guide us. We reach a point in our work where our senses, rather than our mind, take over. We see this in Picasso.

His work are not fabrications or fairy tales, so to speak. They are reflections of his inner truth that emerge pure out of his senses”...

Nikos Nikolaou



TINOS III

Acrylic on canvas, cm 100x100

2009



KITHIRA II

Acrylic on cardboard, cm 70x50
2011





TINOS I

Acrylic on canvas, cm 95x57
2009





SERIPHOS I

Acrylic on canvas, cm 205x112

2006





TINOS IV

Acrylic on canvas, cm 210x125

2007





RODI

Acrylic on canvas, cm 110x90

2008





DIMITRIS KOUKOS nasce nel 1948 ad Atene. Già alla tenera età di cinque anni comincia ad entrare in contatto con il mondo dell'arte. Incoraggiato dal padre, frequenta con successo la Scuola di Belle Arti ad Atene dove, per merito, gli vengono conferiti riconoscimenti e una borsa di studio. Durante il suo periodo di studi ha la fortuna di prendere lezioni da grandi nomi dell'arte greca del Novecento come Nikos Nikolau e Yannis Moralis, fondatori del gruppo artistico "Armos", creato negli anni '50. Parte delle sue opere sono dedicate all'isola di Aegina, luogo magico e punto di incontro di artisti e luminari dell'arte, dove i suoi due insegnanti avevano trascorso molti anni delle loro vite. Dimitris continua la sua formazione in stage designing con Vassilis Basiliades e studia a Parigi all'École des Beaux Arts per tre anni. Dal 1977 ad oggi Dimitris espone le sue opere in gallerie di Atene, Cipro, Rodi e Salonicco. Rilevante è la presenza di sue opere in collezioni pubbliche internazionali dedicate all'arte contemporanea in Grecia e all'estero. Sono infatti presenti suoi lavori alla National Art Gallery di Atene, al Vorre Museum, alla Peridis Art Gallery e presso il Ministero della Cultura e dell'Educazione di Cipro, ma anche in collezioni pubbliche e private tra l'Europa (Francia, Italia, Inghilterra) e gli Stati Uniti.

DIMITRIS KOUKOS was born in Athens in 1948. At the age of five he became interested in art and following his father's advice entered the Art School of Athens, which granted him a scholarship. During this period he had the opportunity to study with some of the great Greek artists of the 20th century, such as Nikos Nikolaou and Yannis Moralis, who both founded the artistic group "Armos" in the 1950s. Some of his work is dedicated to the island of Aegina, which became an artistic meeting point ever since both of his teachers had spent several months there. Dimitris continued his studies with Vasilis Basiliades, focusing on scenography and later moved to Paris where he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts for three years. From 1977 to today Dimitris has shown his work in art galleries in Athens, Rodi and Salonicco. However, his most important work is part of international public collections dedicated to contemporary art. In fact some of his paintings can be admired at the National art Gallery of Athens, at the Vorr Museum, at the Peridis Gallery and at Ministry of Culture and Education of Cyprus, as well as in private collections in Europe and the United States.



ACROPOLI III

Acrylic on cardboard, cm 60x50

2011

ARTESPRESSIONE

