

**ARTISTIC PURSUITS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION: THE
PRESENCE OF GREEK ARTISTS IN THE PARISIAN VISUAL ARTS
SCENE (2000-2010)**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the new conditions prevailing in the art world of the early 21st century, which were gradually initiated in the previous decades. Thus, artistic creation is held in an international, globalised context, since limits are no longer restrictive in this age. As art globalization progresses, Greek artists continue to display a particular preference to Paris, as French education and culture undeniably had a decisive influence on Greece. There has been a discussion over the new standards and the country's effort to formulate a cultural policy adapted to the new realities of globalization, the emergence of new artistic institutions, where we encounter the Greek artists, alongside their presence in traditional group or solo events. Articles in the daily and periodical press document the strong bond that still exists between Greece and France, yet its nature is honorary rather than fundamental, as Greek artists no longer choose the Schools of Fine Arts of Paris.

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

INTRODUCTION

Initially, globalization was researched and interpreted as a phenomenon, whose effects had an impact solely on the economy. Yet, since the mid-1990s, its cultural dimension has been examined.ⁱ Globalization has now been established in human conscience as a reality overwhelming almost all aspects of modern life -economic, cultural, moral, educationalⁱⁱ-, imposing itself on existing realities and human activityⁱⁱⁱ, such as lifestyle and thinking, customs, choices, organization, value systems, communication media and ways, symbols, language and

the art, all of which shape the culture of a people or a community.^{iv} It is considered to reinforce culture homogenization, determining the modern life perception and philosophy, as the latter is formed under the influence of electronic communication media, rapid scientific development, digital technology, modern information flow and increased human mobility^v. In their effort to fully understand the phenomenon of globalization, artists seek an identity, a sense of belonging to the world in which they live.

In view of the above, there follows the examination of the new conditions pertaining the artistic scene at the onset of the 21st century, already apparent in the previous decades. Artistic creation is thus an element of an international global context, since these boundaries are more fluid at this time. This is further demonstrated by the organization of major exhibitions. Greece adopted the Biennale institution, which reinforces the concept of pluralism and visual media diversity, while at the same time poses issues of a collective or personal artistic identity towards shaping a modern culture. Greek artists' presence in the international art centres is a fact, in the context of the information age and the current technological, political and economic advancements, as they appear.

Greek artists maintain a special preference to Paris, as French education and culture undoubtedly have had a decisive influence on Greece, although the migratory flows of the previous century have ceased, since the French capital is no longer the sole and dominant artistic centre. Even there, though, depending on international practices and the country's effort to formulate a cultural policy adapted to the new standards of globalization, new art institutions emerge, such as *Art Paris* and *Art Capital*. Greek artists appear in the latter institutions as well as the established group or solo events. The daily and periodical press provides evidence on the ever-lasting strong bond between Greece and France, despite the honorary rather than substantial character of this affiliation, as artists no longer choose to study at the Parisian Schools of Fine Arts.

THE NEW CONDITIONS IN THE FIELD OF ART: CHANGES AND FEATURES

In recent years, and while the press and academic research have multiplied their references to globalization, artwork itself has experienced a shift towards the economic axis and the working subject.^{vi} Investing in the artist-authority along with the pluralism of styles will reinforce an art market, soon to be changed, as in the age of globalization, internationalization and capital mobility will formulate new institutions, complex conditions and new criteria for developing values. In the cultural industry, the major changes to ensue will affect the major international cultural events and lead them to adopt the idea of globalization and its impact on global economy as their basic thematic axis from the 1990s onwards.^{vii} The intelligentsia will be concerned about the new world order, and they will attempt to explore it under the dilemma of homogenizing or

maintaining idiosyncrasies, considering that the modern spirit of globalization is not derived from an ideological vision of togetherness, rather, from purely material needs.^{viii}

Since the decade of 1990, the term globalization has been integrated into a daily communicative speech, contributing to the formation of a collective consciousness, yet without a clear meaning and open to many interpretations. In this context, globalization is seen as an intensification of the economic, social and ideological processes ensuring, and to a great extent, consolidating, planetary expansion, structure and hegemony of the capitalist mode of production from 1990 onwards. Intensification has had a direct impact on the art scene, instigating qualitative changes that impose a periodization of contemporary art, taking into account the historically specific conditions forming "contemporary" art.^{ix}

The main features of contemporary art are pluralism, multiformity of expressive means (painting, sculpture, photography, art video, installations, performances, works of synesthesia with the use of technological media) and the absence of a dominant style.^x The distinguishing characteristic of modern artists is the freedom to create as they wish, without a dominant movement, a protocol or any hesitation. Their interest focuses on the subject of their work and they prioritise the concept over its form.^{xi} Formalism no longer prevails. They are concerned with the way they will paint and not what painting is.^{xii} According to Danto: *"part of pluralism characterizing our culture is the many more media that artists today have so as to express their original ideas and convey their message... Art material can be anything, in combination with anything else and in the service of any ideas. This evolution requires that the viewer should have advanced interpretative skills in order to understand the manner that the artist has chosen to present his ideas. These ideas (or, in other words, the meanings of the work) are perhaps at the core of the philosophical answer to the question of what constitutes art"*.^{xiii}

Art in the era of globalization, even more so than in any other era, comprises practices with multiple orbits through, from and to a multitude of areas of social intercourse, and by extension, of competitions^{xiv}. The centres pursue their expansion to the periphery to receive feedback from them. Peripheral countries seek to abolish the dividing lines inhibiting their equitable participation in shaping the physiognomy of modern civilization. Electronic reality ensures this new form of interconnection between the centre and the periphery, as it accomplishes the dramatic enhancement of information exchange, though at the expense of essential interpersonal association and communication.^{xv}

Despite appearing and being formed in the 1990s, some trends of contemporary art are only recognized as particularly important retroactively, through the 21st century perspective. Such is the case of participatory and collaborative art forms, already gaining ground since the 1990s, yet receiving recognition as the avant-garde of the age only after 2006.^{xvi} In this case, the public,

rather than maintaining its established role of the passive "receiver", is involved in the production process of the work. The modern work of art seems to seek to abolish the fundamental distinction between producer-artist and consumer-public. And as Kester notes, the immediacy of the goals posed by fusing activism and art has had a significant impact on the structure of the art mediation mechanism.^{xvii}

In the age of globalization, art demonstrates such a strong desire to approach its social field that the principle of art autonomy is redefined to become compatible with its extroversion. Bech, a curator and director of contemporary art institutions, in view of the well-known "relational aesthetics", argues that the term art autonomy is now understood as self-determination and self-regulation of art with any thematic or morphological concerns, within the limits set by the particular historical circumstance and not the voluntaristic (illusory, anyhow) start and implementation of an art with an onset outside the social space.^{xviii}

In his manual (*Relational Aesthetics*) published in 1998, in its English translation in 2002, Bourriaud showed that Relational Aesthetics exerted global influence after 1998, as it coincides with the broader emergence of the social parameter in art. Bishop's "social turn", signifies the early 21st century artwork. The main issue posed by Bourriaud is "how to learn to inhabit the world in a better way".^{xix} Despite his numerous references to Marx, the word "better" seems to denote an ideal field of moral values, a safe distance from competition and the social equality deficit constituting the political theorist's reality. In his note entitled "Letter from Berlin on Relational Aesthetics", Bourriaud explains that in his theoretical work, he considered the concept of "relationship" as referring to such artists' practices as Liam Gillick, Christine Hill, Vanessa Beecroft, Mauricio Cattellan, Jorge Padro and others^{xx}, who, surpass the symbolic private space of "a masterpiece" to create conditions of "human interaction" and social contacts, which he calls "Microtypies", following Cuattari's thinking. "Interaction" signifies human contacts as much as the symbolic network of works, as these artists derive from, link and process existing material from urban life, other artwork or cultural products, films, animation, corporate logos, music, sounds etc.^{xxi} Artwork's turn of the document constitutes a distinctive form of appropriation of the social space by the art system.^{xxii}

In today's art the dominant current entails installations, constructions with ready-made objects (40% video art, 30% photography, painting etc.). Artists derive their subjects from science and have used technological advances in the past decades. Photography has prevailed as the dominant expressive means of art. In particular, with the use of digital techniques, most artists prefer to "make" rather than "take" photos. Also, painters use light with digital interventions as a blueprint for their painting. Curators maintain their preference to the so-called "conceptual constructions and conceptual painting".^{xxiii} Cindy Sherman's work has substantially contributed

to these changes^{xxiv}. A major shift in the art scene is the retreat (not extinction) of the superstar artist model, with British Damien Hirst or Japanese Tokasi Murakami being the last ones.^{xxv}

The end of modernism marked the end or disappearance of leading figures or acclaimed artists and their substantial impact on art evolution. This deficit has been covered by the art world, the art scene or the arts consortium, which consist of the organizers of international exhibitions, museum directors and great collectors altering the art market through the rate at which they acquire works. With their donations to institutions and museums, they change the physiognomy of their collections.^{xxvi} The constantly rising in value role of the curator, as an archivist, a moderator, a narrator and an exhibition creator, today depends on their new role as an "explorer and inventor". The "new internationalism" shows "international" selection criteria in place of local ones, which at the same time conceal their dependence on specific institutions.^{xxvii} From the decade of 1990 onwards, the multiplicity of the Biennales is interpreted as a tendency towards homogenization of the global art scene, but also as an enhanced expression of the local—therefore as a resistance to the homogenization trends. According to some critics, the emphasis on the local and particularly on the local in the Third World demonstrates the retreat of the American hegemony in the globalised art scene.^{xxviii} The dramatic increase in biennial exhibitions, the Biennales, displaying predominantly new art, now constitutes a visible sign of globalization in art.^{xxix} In her book "But Is It Art?", Philosophy Professor Cynthia Freeland elaborates on issues that prevail and affect the field of art: the market, inflation, the mission of the museums, the multicultural and the political views (gender, race, erotic preferences) and the modern technological media. In her book, she explores some of the theories that many philosophers, from Plato to Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, have formulated about art and aesthetics.^{xxx}

THE GREEK REALITY IN THE AFTERMATH OF GLOBALISATION

The Greek visual arts scene, traditionally pro-western, has always freely drawn from the international experience what best suited it, without naturally being attached to specific or mainstream visual arts currents. With the occasional exceptions of a mostly notational approach to hellenicity on the part of a few artists, modern Greek art was and still is oriented to the West.^{xxxi} In its effort to create and present its work, the new generation of Greek artists moves between Greece and international centres, while maintaining strong ties with local artistic agents. These artists belong to the new generation of "cultural nomadism", a trend proposed by Achille Bauto Oliva, the artistic director of the Venice Biennale in 1993, who originated the term "cultural nomadism" to indicate, among others, that artists accomplish a reconciliation of the "international" with the "local", as well as of the historical avant-garde with the local idioms.^{xxxii} In the context of modern civilization, of information and new technological and

political developments, artists move between the local and the global, where the traditional rules of national and European identities and their correlations are redefined. Research fields are examined in the context of international artistic contemplation, but also in relation to a wide range of domestic social and cultural developments of the last decade. Artists wish to understand the realities of a globalized world and seek an identity, a sense of belonging to the world in which they live. This quest for identity in the work of Greek artists takes a primarily individual form, as in the works of Alexandros Georgiou, Panos Kokkinias and Maddalena Psoma, which reveal agonising pursuits of self-definition in a modern, estranged world. Some young Greek artists adopt as their field of research many aspects of a collective identity, such as a cultural and social identity. Iris Touliatou, Vasileia Stylianidou and Lina Theodorou explore social phenomena, structures and behaviours in the urban environment, while Dimitris Foutris and Maria Antelmou probe into modern subcultures of Western civilization. Stefanos Tzivoglou's and Vangelis Vlachou's works explore the issue of national identity and its modern interpretations.^{xxxiii}

The latest visual arts generation has the possibility to test various practices that pluralistically expand to numerous expressive means to produce an art through re-hybridism and in osmosis with related artistic fields (cinema, music, advertising, fashion, multimedia). Also, they have incorporated video and installations or photography, intensively working on the urban environment and the representation of the public space. Information technology and the Internet shape pop culture and through the digital and virtual environment change the form of mass entertainment. In recent years, the relationship between art and the Internet has developed, the latter being a new form of mass culture. For contemporary artists, new technologies are both a field of inspiration and a space for presenting their artwork. A significant number of Greek artists utilize the communicative possibilities of new technologies and the Internet, including Andreas Angelidakis, Alexandros Psychoulis, Lina Thoedorou, Iris Touliatou, Angelos Plessas.^{xxxiv}

Advances in technology, such as the high-quality sound recording in digital interventions, mixes and the high quality outcomes, gave artists the opportunity to create impressive works of audio and image synesthesia.^{xxxv} There is sound coverage in Nikos Charalambides' works, Nikos Tranos' installations, Maria Papadimitriou's, Panos Charalambous', Marios Spiliopoulos', Prodromidis', Takis Zerdevas', Makis Faros' works, among others.^{xxxvi}

As regards painting, Nikos Charalambides is closer to the international painting with references, appropriations, symbols, collages, scans, interventions and other personal issues. The spirit of current European painting permeates the work of Elias Marmaras, who studied in Paris, and that of Maddalena Psoma with studies in Berlin and of M. Rigoutsou with studies in Düsseldorf. K. Mortarakis's work falls among deductive, figurative and conceptual painting.^{xxxvii} Many artists,

such as Yiannis Varelas, Xenophon Bistikas and Aspasia Krystalli turn to design, which makes a strong resurgence in the main market scene as an autonomous object on display and as a new main practice medium.^{xxxviii} Other artists adopt a visual arts language with intense influences from comics and juvenile subcultures, as in the case of Dionysis Kabaleriatou's sculptures.^{xxxix}

Surely, the concerns of the younger generation artists are not a new phenomenon in Greek art. Previous generations of artists had already raised the issue of identity or the position of the individual in the urban environment, and there were references to history, the history of art and the examination of mass culture. What differentiates young Greek artists is their frame of reference, the various strategies that they follow, as well as the new communication realities in which they are integrated.^{xl}

If we attempt to draw an analogy between the decades of 1980 and 1990 and the first decade of the 21st century, we would say that in the first two, globalization had the image of conveying an international message (hence the increase in the thematic exhibitions), while utter individualism was considered as antimodernism. In the first decade of the new century, given that the message has a transmission possibility at a transnational level, there is an inner and spiritual need of the individual and the artist to be led, even through globalized media, to their memories and roots.^{xli}

In the art scene of Greece, the central role of the art economy has been undertaken by private galleries, undermining the state institutions in the promotion of contemporary art works and the recognition of artists. This relinquish of cultural power to galleries and collectors upgrades their responsibilities and leads them to undertake new initiatives related to the transformation of the visual arts reality. The collectors, either private individuals or private companies, now emerge as the economic allies of art and by extension of galleries, thus changing into the cultural and economic agents to undertake the primary role to play the primary role in setting art criteria through the works that they collect.^{xlii}

ART IS GLOBALIZED: THE MAJOR ARTISTIC EVENTS IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE 21st CENTURY

Biennales

In recent years, the institution of national exhibitions has been flourishing for a variety of reasons: the interest displayed in things not yet known, national organisations taking initiatives or because their overall function has proven to lead to the development of active initiatives offering a good export packaging. At Venice Biennale, the number of national pavilions, which has been increasingly upward, broadened the knowledge and interest in the artistic production of various countries, hitherto artistically unknown to Europe.^{xliii}

In this context, two biennales were organized in Greece in 2007, the first in Thessaloniki and then in Athens. This institution proved successful from its onset and has since been repeated every two years. Thus, Thessaloniki at the end of May 2007 and Athens in early September of the same year made their debut in the challenging and demanding arena of the biennales, in the hope that they could submit an interesting proposal.^{xliv} They were two different types of exhibitions, complementary in a sense, with the political element as their common axis.^{xlv} The stakes for the two centres were twofold: the assertion of a presence-ex nihilo- in the world map and the clear definition of a domestic artistic production that would operate as an integration medium in the international scene.^{xlvi}

Thessaloniki Biennales

The first Biennale of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki (21/05-20/09) was inaugurated on 21/05 by the State Museum of Contemporary Art (SMCA) under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, with the general title *Heterotopias*.^{xlvii} One hundred artists from thirty-seven countries exhibited their works in Thessaloniki, aiming to initiate a dialogue on the role of art in the globalized scene.^{xlviii} The objective of the exhibition, as mentioned by the Minister of Culture Giorgos Voulgarakis, was for Thessaloniki Biennale to gain international prestige, become an institutional art organization of reference, a springboard for the development of contemporary artistic creation, but also, as the Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture Christos Zachopoulos added, for Greece to acquire a contemporary visual arts education and through the Biennale join the contemporary international art scene.^{xlix}

The idea of heterotopia is an iconic concept on which the French thinker Michel Foucault has elaborated in his text entitled 'Of Other Spaces. Utopias and Heterotopias'. The philosopher makes use of the term heterotopias as "those spaces that are found in some social spaces and whose functions are different or contrary to the functions of others".¹ The title, borrowed from a lecture by Foucault in 1967, refers to real spaces-islets, outside social life and function, where humans follow rules distancing them from normal function.^{li} Thus, the one hundred artists gathered from all over the world in Thessaloniki were invited to interpret Foucault's text on the basis of modern conditions as well as identify other forms of heterotopias, including the Internet.^{lii} Maria Tsantsanoglou, director of SMCA, will say "... *We thought of taking into account the history and the unique elements of the city and create a Biennale with an identity, not an event where works of art are recycled. Thessaloniki is a city with history, cosmopolitan, but currently introverted. The aim is also to open contemporary art to the public, create an event open to the city. But also a Biennale that will open possibilities for artists without easy access to the market of Europe* ".^{liii}

The Greek artists who presented their work were Maria Papadimitriou, Nikos Giavropoulos, Nikos Stavropoulos, Eleni Mouzakiti, Evanthia Tsantila, Zafos Xagoraris, Andreas Angelidakis, Alexis Dallas, Lydia Dampasina, Giorgos Golfinos, Giorgos Katsagelos and Danae Stratou.

Two hundred artists from all over the world participated in the exhibition entitled *Praxis: Art in Times of Uncertainty*, hosted in many venues at the port and the city centre. With their creations, all the artists opened a window to the world, from Africa to the old Soviet Republics and from there to the Middle East and South America.^{liv} "We bring artists with a consistent career, international artists not necessarily known in Europe. We ultimately propose a mixture of generations, places, artistic idioms," says Gabriela Salgado from Argentina, one of the three curators of the exhibition.^{lv} The exhibition was organized from 24/05 to 27/09/2009, by the SMCA which after the *Heterotopias* of Foucault in the second Biennale focuses on yet another global theme: *Praxis: Art in Times of Uncertainty*, a title inspired by British Terry Engleton's book entitled "After Theory". "We researched praxis from its origins in Aristotle to Marx," said the exhibition's curator and director of SMCA, Syrago Tsiara.^{lvi} This exhibition attracted an increased turnout in relation to the first event. Particularly cordial was the response of the press-Greek and foreign- (*Beaux-Arts, Heart*, etc.). The public's response was also warm.^{lvii}

The Greek artists who exhibited their work in the main programme were as follows: George Divaris, Maria Loizidou, Despina Meimaroglou, Marios Spiliopoulos, Mary Zygouri.^{lviii} In the parallel programme, the Young Artists' Workshop comprised Ioanna (Janis) Rafailidou, Vassiliki Matta.^{lix} Paul Zografakis, Demosthenes Agrafiotis, Evangelia Basdeki, Aris Prodromidis, Panos Tsagkaris, Angeliki Avgitidou, Mary Zygouri, Hector Mavridis, Danae Pappa and the Sfina Group^{lx} participated with performances. Finally, in the parallel exhibition "1000 + 1 Praxi(e)s" participated the following: Pavlina Verouki, Angeliki Valvi, Maria Glyka, Andreas Mitropoulos, Caesar Vrettos, Alexandros Tsamouris, Chryssi Tsiota, Haris Pallas, Fotini Kalle & Victoria Karvouni, Rania Bellou, Aspasia Kristala, Giorgos Komninakis, Tasos Pavlopoulos.^{lxi}

Athens Biennales

With the provocative title *Destroy Athens*, the first Biennale of Contemporary Art was held in Athens from 15/06 to 04/10/2007, with the support of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. As stated by the Minister of Culture, G. Voulgarakis, it seeks to highlight the dynamics of contemporary artistic creation in our country, promote the artists and their work, develop the dialogue of contemporary Greek artistic production with the international contemporary art scene and the public, as well as acquire international prestige and establish itself as an institutional visual arts reference organization.^{lxii} The title of the exhibition aroused a lively interest, thus attracting

participations from hundreds of artists from around the world, as each one had an Athens that tormented them daily and an ideal Athens to inspire and dominate them.^{lxiii}

Accordingly, Athens Mayor Nikitas Kaklamanis stated that Athens Biennale provided an artistic opportunity for sixty visual artists to express their objections to current shortcomings or failings, mentalities, stereotypical perceptions and prejudices, which inhibit the creative depiction of the city's potential. At the same time, the city becomes a centre of production of ideas, culture, inspiration and creativity for the Greek residents attending, while promoting a dialogue with international cultural developments.^{lxiv} The Declaration of Biennale states that the objective of the International Contemporary Art Exhibition is to attack stereotypes, and this is what the sixty artists participating in it are called to do with their new creations.^{lxv}

It should be noted that the first Athens Biennale was rated among the best exhibitions of 2007 by the international press, and immediately succeeded to focus the interest of the public, domestically and internationally, on Athens and its contemporary artistic mobility.^{lxvi} An article published by the Financial Times highlights the competition between the established and emerging forces in the scene of Biennales. Athens falls in the second category.^{lxvii} The Greek artists exhibiting their works were: Giannis Adamakos, Giannis Varelas, Eva Vretzaki, Vassilis Patmios, Nikos Kessanlis, Eleni Mylona, Giannis Savvides, Georgia Sagri, Giorgos Sapountzis, Eva Stefani, Stefanos Tzivopoulos, Stelios Faitakis, Thanasis Totsikas.^{lxviii}

Following *Destroy Athens*, the second Biennale explored the theme of paradise.^{lxix} That was a modular art event, hosting one hundred and thirty artists, exhibitions, performers, screenings and theatrical performances, harbouring the ambition to promote contemporary art in Athens along with the desire for creative networking and a dialogue with the international scene. On the subject of the exhibition the curators stated: "*we opted to see paradise as a broad thematic category, which extends from the once experienced to the metaphysical, including many of the human anxieties...*".^{lxx}

Among the Greek artists participating in the exhibition were included: Nikos Arvanitis, Athanasios Argianas, Kostis Velonis, Zoi Gaitanidou, Lydia Dambassina, Anastasia Douka, Dionisis Kavallieratos, Vassilis Karouk, Panayiotis Loukas, Miltos Manetas, Dora Economou, Angelos Papadimitriou, Nina Papaconstantinou, Angelo Plessas, Kostas Roussakis, Christiana Soulou, Alexandros Tzannis. Also, the groups Apophenia, Palaio Faliro Artists Group, Broadcast Group, Filopappou Group, OMIO and Saprophytes.^{lxxi}

GREEK ARTISTS IN PARIS: THE CONTINUATION OF A LONG TRADITION

Participation in major events and festivals

Although most Greek artists who studied in Paris in the 1980s and 1990s, have returned to their place of origin after their studies, where they are professionally active, they still maintain constant contact with the Parisian as well as the international visual arts scene. They participate in international art events or display their work in solo exhibitions in various galleries abroad. This does not exclude the much younger artists who did not study in Paris from taking part in Biennales or international exhibitions.

At the beginning of the 21st century the exhibition scene in Paris is changing. The traditional *Salons* now give their place to international art competitions. Thus, in 2006 emerged the annual institution of *Art Capital*, from the merger of *Salon Comparaisons*, *Salon de la Société des Artistes Français*, *Salon du dessin et de la Peinture à l'eau* and *Salon de la Société des Artistes Independants*. For five days, under the prestigious glass roof of Grand Palais, a fruitful exchange between artists, gallery owners, professionals of the art market, collectors and visitors is organized. These meetings, under the sign of freedom, tolerance and solidarity, allow painters, sculptors, artists, photographers, architects, talents confirmed or in the process of exhibiting their work.^{lxxii} As early as 1998, *Art Paris* was established, an institution dedicated to contemporary artistic creations^{lxxiii}, focusing on a specific topic every year, while artists from the international stardom presented their approach to that.^{lxxiv} *Art Paris* holds a prestigious position in the economic domain as a place for exchange, meetings and discoveries contributing to the dynamics of the art market and the acquaintance with new artists, as it is frequented both by amateurs and collectors. Indicatively, in 2002 Greece was represented by *Zoumboulakis Galleries*, 20 Kolonaki Square, Athens, with Christos Bokoros, Maria Filopoulou and Danae Stratou.^{lxxv} Also held are the *FIAC*, an institution organized continuously since 1973, where Athenian galleries^{lxxvi} participate as well as other events, such as various *Biennales*.

In the framework of the *13th Germination Europe* (International Biennale of Young Artists), an exhibition was held on the subject of *Religion (human, world, the earth, time, theology, mythology, identity)* in the *La Chapelle* exhibition venue at *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* in Paris from 17/01 to 16/02/2002, curated by the art theorist Katerina Pazutova. Greece participated in this interesting 26-year-old institution, represented by the graduate of the Athens School of Fine Arts, Giorgos Taxiarchopoulos. The artist constructed a special interior space, in which he composed elements of different references. It was a work inspired by the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus, with the title *My Homeland is the Human*, declaring in this way the intense need of his work and of his own, to get united with the human-visitor, inviting them to participate and leading them to an artistic experience.^{lxxvii}

As part of the *Nuit Blanche Festival*, which in 2006 was organized for the fifth consecutive year in Paris, the visual artist Danae Stratou presented a specifically made video titled *The River of*

Life, comprising images gathered travelling by a riverboat along seven of the most iconic rivers running the planet (the Danube, the Nile, the Amazon, the Mississippi, the Tiger, the Yang Che and the Ganges). The festival was considered to be among the most important artistic events organized in the French capital and is based on the idea of wandering the streets of the city on a "white night".^{lxxviii} Alexandros Psychoulis participated in the event, as well.^{lxxix}

In the exhibition entitled *Playgrounds and Toys* (09-15/02/2004), organized by *Art for the World* and *La Manufacture des Oeillets*, 25-29 rue Raspail, Ivry sur Seine, with the support of the Swiss Ambassador in France S.E. Monsieur François Nordmann, among internationally acclaimed artists such as Vito Acconci and Joseph Kosuth, were the Greek artists Andreas Angelidakis, Yorgos Nikas, Maria Papadimitriou and Theodoulos.^{lxxx} Greek artists Lizzie Calligas, Maro Michalakakos, Leda Papaconstantinou, Gisele Prassinou, Mario Prassinou and Alexandra Roussopoulos, who also curated the exhibition, presented their work in *L'eau et les rêves* organized in Kamchatka Galerie, 23 rue Charles V, between 03 May and 30 June 2007.^{lxxxi}

The institutional bodies that traditionally supported Greek artists in Paris^{lxxxii}, such as the *Fondation Hellénique* and the *Hellenic Culture Organization*, in the first decade of the 21st century continue their activity in order to promote the work of Greek artists, but also of Hellenism and the Greek element in general, as illustrated in the content of the exhibitions presented below. The *Fondation Hellénique* in the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, 47B Bd Jourdan, continues its exhibitory activity and on 19th January 2007 inaugurates the exhibition *Paysages hybrides* with the participation of landscape sculptress Nella Golanda and landscape architect Aspasia Kouzoupi. The theme of the exhibition was also inspired by Greece and, more specifically, the inactive Dionysus quarry in Penteli Mountain as well as the Hymettus ring road in Athens; it explores the concept of an architectural exhibition through the integration of the exhibits in a principally functional space.^{lxxxiii}

Similarly, the *Organisation Culturelle Hellénique* along with the *Maison Européenne de la Photographie* organized the exhibition *The Athens Effect-L'image photographique dans l'Art contemporain* (12/06-02/09/2007) as a reminder to the younger generation of the important mythological significance of Attican landscapes. The participating artists, Kostas Bassanos, Christina Dimitriadis, Panos Kokkinias, Pandelis Lazaridis, Dimitra Lazaridou, Nikos Markou, Despina Meimaroglou, Nikos Navridis and Maria Papadimitiou, reflect with their images important elements of an extremely personal, sentimental and political experience in order to create new and surprising stories.^{lxxxiv} Moreover, the *Association Franco-Hellénique Logos A* under the auspices of Unesco and the Greek Embassy in Paris in 2010 launched the exhibition *Terre Brulee* with the aim to support the villages that were destroyed in 2007 by the fires in Peloponnese. With the participation of 77 artists- Greek in their majority and from various

generations- the exhibition communicates that through art, culture and liberty of expression a local tragedy transforms into an occasion for global interest.^{lxxxv}

In addition, in the context of promoting modern creation, the *Association sculptures au Palais Royal* and the French Ministry of Culture hosted an exhibition by Vana Xenou from 02-24/06/2000 at *Chapelle de la Sapletiere* in Paris.^{lxxxvi} The artist studied in Paris from 1973 to 1978 and is a typical example of a creator with a strong inner and spiritual life, dedicated to the values of research, memory, collectibility, repositioning against history, interpreting myths in a subjective and individual way, capable of assigning the power of the unique to the collective. In her exhibition titled *Eleusinian Mysteries*, the artist presented paintings and sculptures inspired by the archaic myths. With her approach to the Eleusinian Mysteries, through the creation of forms for the divinities and spaces for the union of heaven and earth, Xenou raises both old and modern issues. The underworld and the upper world, in an endless cycle of life and death, fruition and infertility, rapture and supply, divine and human.^{lxxxvii} The artist will say "in this work I start from the symbolism of the rise to the light and descent into the darkness that represents the memory and oblivion of a collective unconscious. I wish to introduce the sacred in art, because I believe that the sacred is related to the sign, the appearance."^{lxxxviii}

Solo exhibitions

At the same time, the solo exhibitions of Greek artists established in the art scene of the French capital continue. Inter alia, we mention the two exhibitions presented in the heart of Cartier Latin by two Greek artists. With studies in Paris after his settlement from 1969, Sculptor Aristidis Patsoglou (1941), an acclaimed artist with a massive award-winning work adorning numerous international collections, museums and public places in municipalities in France, presented his work at *Galerie Sculptures*, 11, rue Visconti, run by his wife Alexandra until 20/05/2000. The exhibition revolved around two central themes: the angel and the thinkers who, as the artist said, have "coherence".

Sarantis Karavouzis, a painter, a distinguished artist with participation in major international art events and exhibitions, presented 22 of his works of the last two years at *Galerie Nicola Dumont* until 06/05.^{lxxxix} His subjects have always been related to human and the environment and through clarity and transparency exude a strong sense of adding form to thinking, conceptual extension, serenity, nostalgia and evoke an atmosphere of distant memories.^{xc}

PRE-EPILOGUE: PARIS IN ATHENS

"*The... people from France at Psychari 36*" is the title of the *Exousia* newspaper on 29/05/2000, announcing that 14 known young and renowned painters met at *Psychari 36 Gallery*, Kypriadou Street in Athens, in the exhibition "*Athens-Paris, Paris-Athens*", a visual journey that lasted until

30/06. The participating artists were all successful and established in their field, having conquered a distinct share in the art market since the early 1990s. What connected, though, such a numerous group, as mentioned by the curator of the exhibition art historian Irene Sabani, were two things "on one hand, the fact that they all lived in Paris at the same time (late 1980s to early 1990s), most of them continuing their studies after graduating from the Athens School of Fine Arts, and on the other hand, their choice to serve figurative painting, with each one of them giving their own perspective on things."^{xci}

The aim of the exhibition was to present the course of a younger generation of painters, most of whom appeared in the late 1980s, as follows: Dimitris Andreadakis, who focuses his research on deserted spaces, where human presence is indicated by its absence; Chryssa Vergi directly observes nature and invites us to re-open a dialogue with it; Alexis Beroukas utilizes the refractive qualities of light; Internal scenes of the studio, spaces experienced, worn and everyday materials dominate the work of Stefanos Daskalakis; Irene Iliopoulou is working with thematic units from scenes outdoors or in the countryside; Kostas Markopoulos' reference point is the daily family environment or that of the studio.

Tasos Missouras approaches his subjects through a symbolic and metaphysical dimension. Christos Pallantzas seeks the truth of things in the simple objects that surround him. George Rorris is experimenting with colour scales ranging from dark to light. Edouard Sacaillan's research is anthropocentric. Anna-Maria Tsakali shifts her research to the calm, almost silent recording of the world surrounding her. Maria Filopoulou records the outdoor natural environment and especially the sea. Evita Fratzola delivers scenes from natural landscapes with vivid colour depictions. Vicky Chatzilakou attempts to exceed the finite character of her objects by using photoshading.^{xcii}

EPILOGUE

In the modern globalized reality of artistic production networks the migratory flows of Greek artists to Paris have long ceased. In the first decade of the 21st century, having left behind the tragic occurrence of dictatorship (1967-1974), Greece seeks its new identity within the European family. In this course, the Greek artists respond enthusiastically to the challenge to open the boundaries of their art, experiment and test their strengths.

The new generation of Greek artists is active in Greece and international centres, seeking to create and display their work, without forgetting their compatriot fellow artists and what connects them to those: beyond their common past, their common roots they represent the continuous dialectical processes of cultural exchanges and dialogue. Within modern culture, information and current technological and political-economic developments, artists operate in a

field between the local and the global. Yet, the nostalgia for their place, far from inducing fear or introversion, inspired their continuous quest, thus enabling them to go beyond past accomplishments, study and research contemporary ideas and artistic forms.^{xciii}

Greek artists of both older and younger generations exhibit their work in major international artistic events in all the art centers of the world. They have a particular preference to the French capital, since it is undeniable that French education and culture have had a decisive influence on Greece. Throughout the migration process from Greece to Paris during the postwar period, but also in previous years, since the founding of the French School in Athens in 1846, the uninterrupted presence of French education played a substantial role. Especially for visual artists, their visits to Paris have been an integral part of their artistic education. Still, in the postwar period Paris will become a second homeland to many artists.^{xciv}

Although Paris has long since ceased to be the artistic capital of the world, it still retains its radiance, and for Greeks it is the very place that moulded so many generations of artists after the war, most of whom, following their return to their home, and especially after the political transition of 1974, along with the local artists created the modern Greek art, many of them as teachers in the School of Fine Arts in Athens educated the younger generations of artists. With their participation in international exhibitions, Greek artists broaden the artistic boundaries of Greece and create conditions for artistic exchanges between Greece and other countries; above all, they further advance, promote and honour their place of origin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article constitutes part of post-doctoral research conducted by the author. The post-doctoral research was implemented by means of an IKY scholarship, funded by the Act "Support for Post-Doctoral Researchers" from the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning" with priority axes 6, 8, 9, and is co-financed by the European Social Fund – ESF and the Greek State.

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