

MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS

APÓSTOLOS GEORGÍOY

SUMMARY | SOMMAIRE

ARTWORKS ŒUVRES	3
EXHIBITIONS EXPOSITIONS	19
PRESS PRESSE	42
TEXTS TEXTES	59
PUBLICATIONS PUBLICATIONS	66
BIOGRAPHY BIOGRAPHIE	69

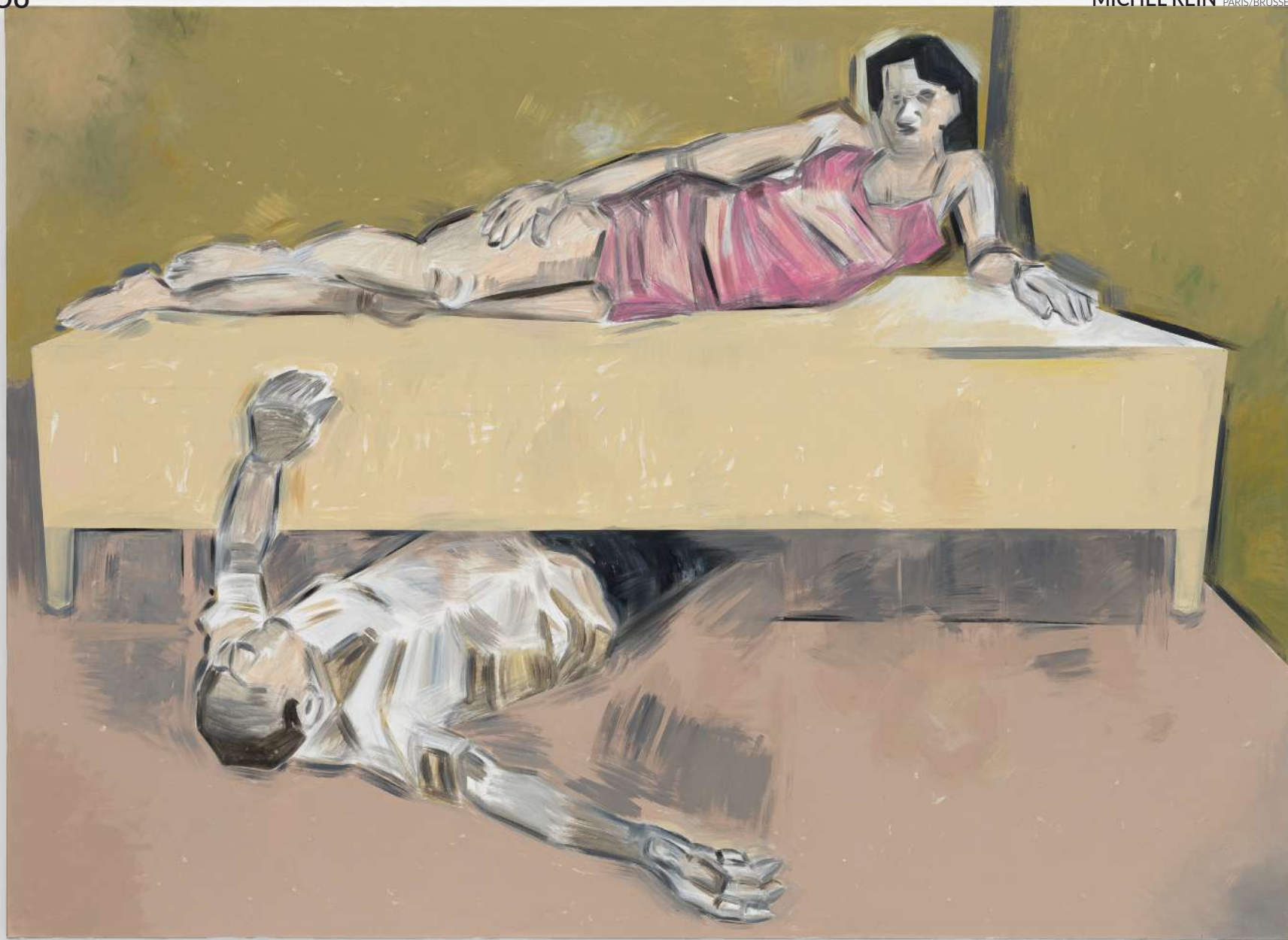
ARTWORKS ŒUVRES



Sans titre (untitled), 2024
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
170 x 200 cm
(66.93 x 78.74 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24046



Sans titre (untitled), 2024
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
135 x 165 cm
(53.15 x 64.96 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24052



Sans titre (untitled), 2023
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
230 x 300 cm
(90.55 x 118.11 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24055

Sans titre (untitled), 2023
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
230 x 230 cm
(90.55 x 90.55 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24038

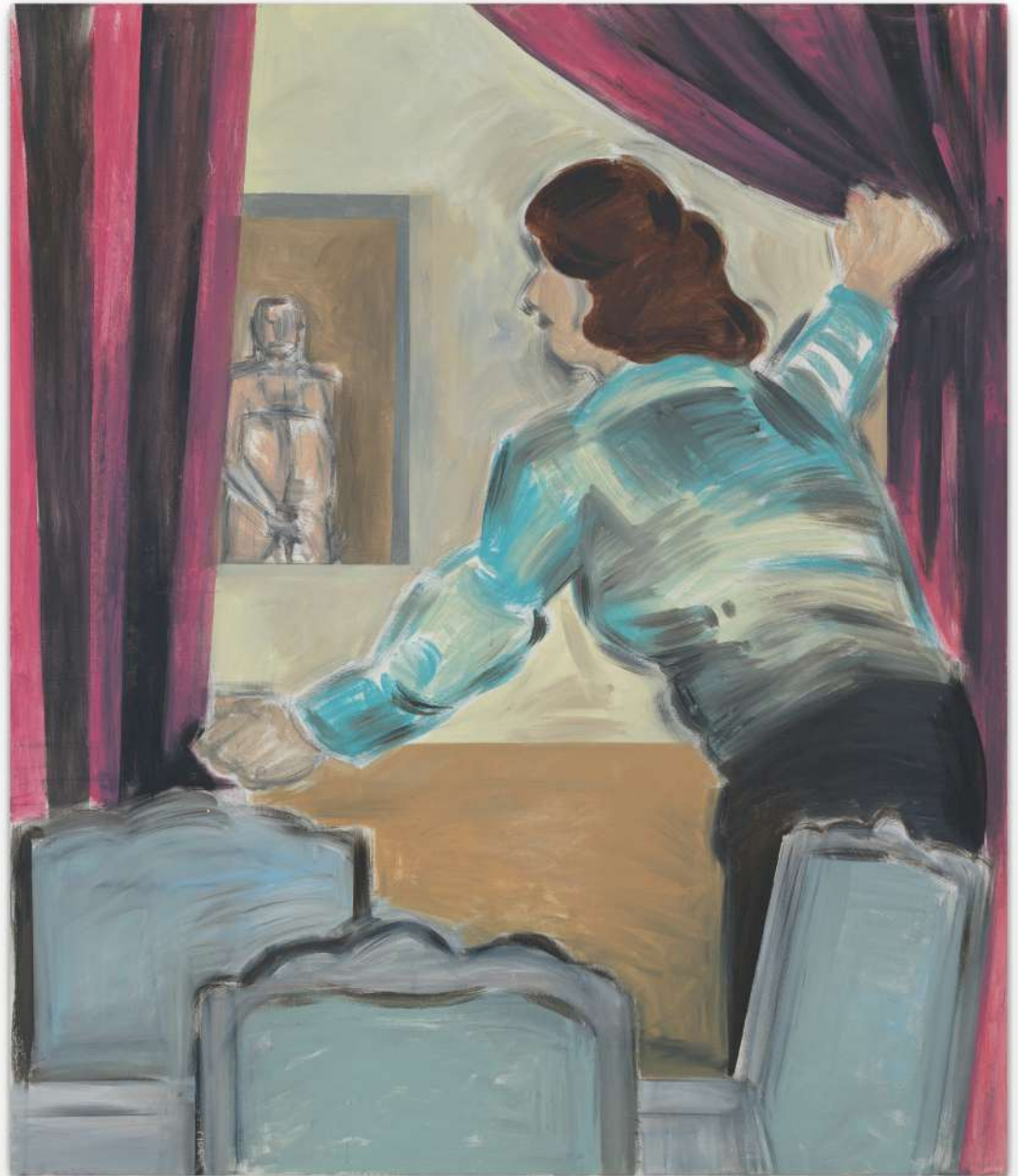




Sans titre (untitled), 2022
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
170 x 170 cm
(66.93 x 66.93 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24051

Untitled, 2022
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
130 x 110 cm (51.18 x 43.31 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24008

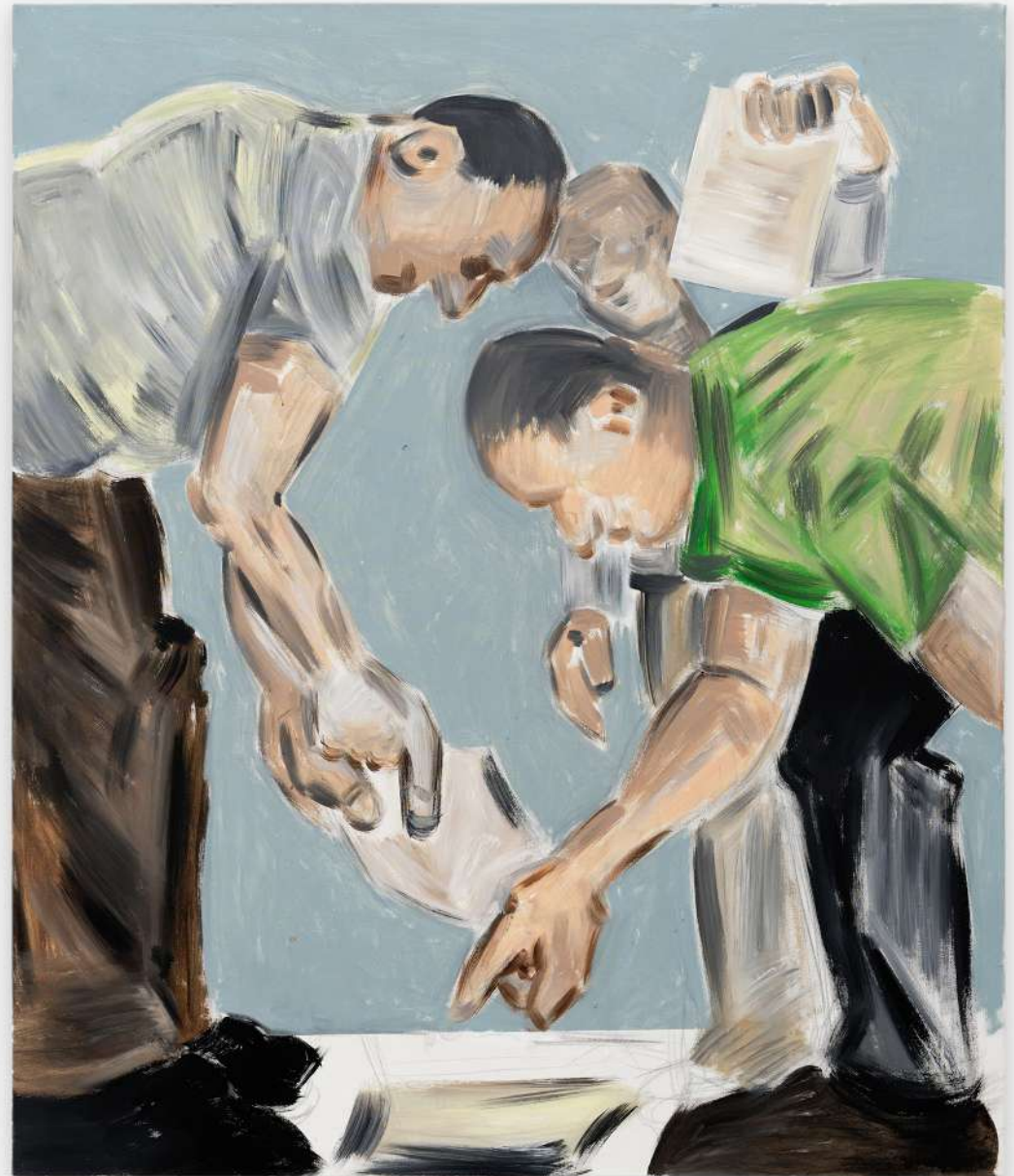
Private collection, Paris





Untitled, 2022
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
170 x 170 cm (66.93 x 66.93 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24009

Untitled, 2022
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
130 x 110 cm (51.18 x 43.31 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24010





Untitled, 2021
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
230 x 230 cm (90.55 x 90.55 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24006



Untitled, 2021

2 elements: acrylic on canvas

2 éléments : acrylique sur toiles

170 x 340 cm (66.93 x 133.86 in.)

unique artwork

GEOR24007

Untitled, 2018
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
300 x 230 cm (118.11 x 90.55 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24003



Untitled, 2018
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
170 x 170 cm (66.93 x 66.93 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24004





Untitled, 2018
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
230 x 280 cm (90.55 x 110.24 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24005

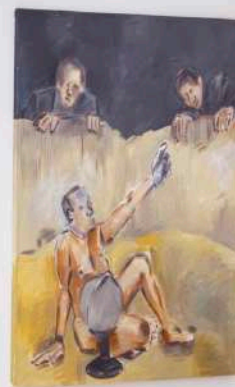


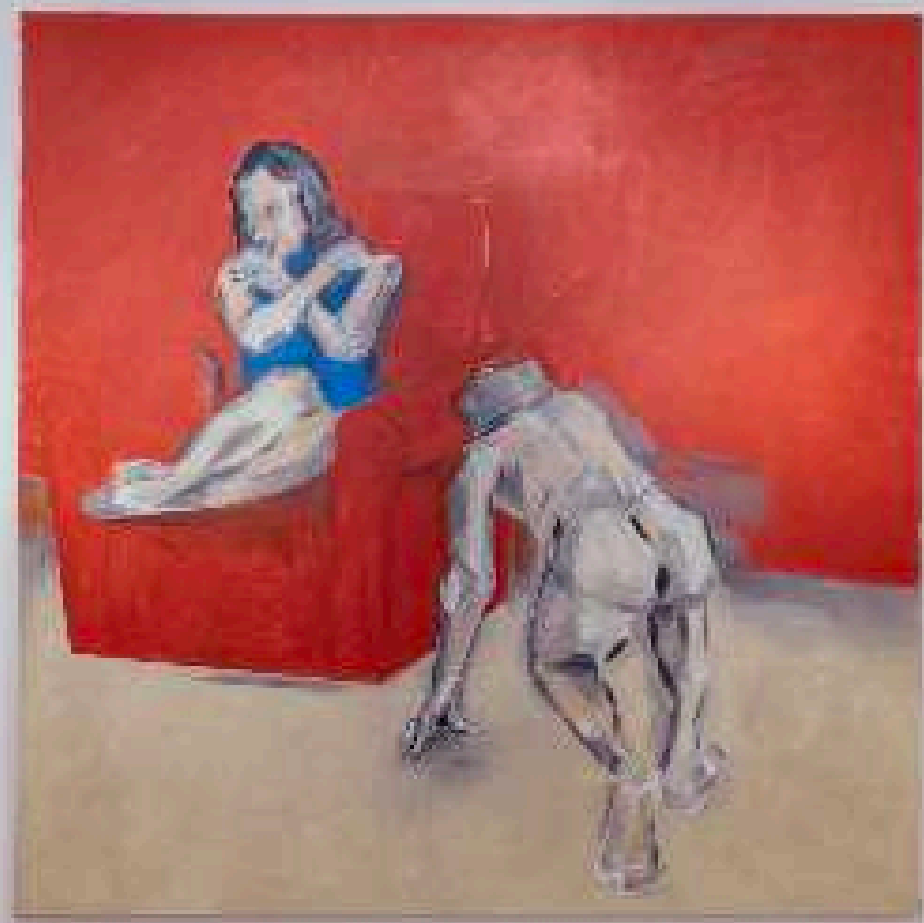
Untitled, 2016
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
230 x 230 cm (90.55 x 90.55 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24002

Untitled, 2014
acrylic on canvas
acrylique sur toile
230 x 160 cm (90.55 x 62.99 in.)
unique artwork
GEOR24001

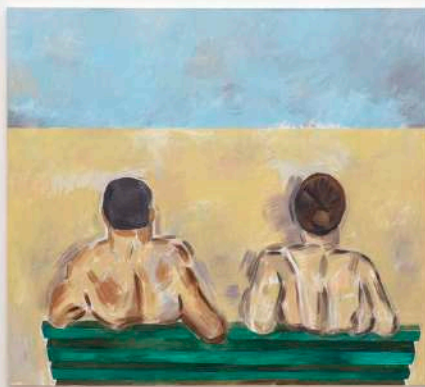


EXHIBITIONS EXPOSITIONS





LAST before NEXT, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France, 2025

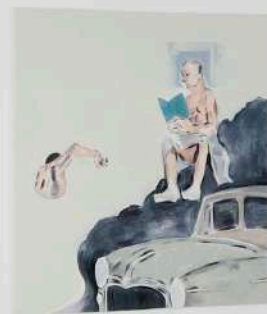


























Θεωρεία 9-15	↖
Πλατεία · Είσοδοι 3-4	↖
Θεωρεία 1-8	→
Πλατεία · Είσοδοι 1-2	→
Είσοδος Μεγάρου	→
Πληροφορίες	→
Συνεδριακό Κέντρο	→





Documenta 14, Cassel, Germany, 2017



Documenta 14, Cassel, Germany, 2017









gb agency, *Apóstolos Georgíou*, Paris, France, 2014

Απόστολος Γεωργίου

Apostolos Georgiou







PRESS
PRESSE



Apóstolos Georgíou
The Art Newspaper
25th, April 2025
By Patrick Javault

Respirations, invectice et transmission des concepts

L'actualité des galeries

Un choix d'expositions proposées dans les galeries par le critique d'art Patrick Javault



Vue de l'exposition « Apóstolos Georgíou : LAST before NEXT » à la Galerie Michel Rein, Paris.
Photo : Florian Kleinfenn. Courtesy de l'artiste et Galerie Michel Rein

Apóstolos Georgíou : LAST before NEXT

Les tableaux du Grec Apóstolos Georgíou sont caractérisés par des figures raides, des esquisses très développées aux traits peu marqués et, qu'elles soient nues ou habillées, engagées dans des actions que l'on pourra juger absurdes ou oniriques. Ils sont dépourvus de titre afin de laisser toute latitude au spectateur. Georgíou a dit un jour que ses œuvres dépeignaient des pensées quotidiennes, celles qui vous traversent l'esprit au contact de la réalité et bouleversent légèrement la perception que nous avons de celle-ci. Dans les tableaux qui composent « LAST before NEXT », les rapports homme-femme sont marqués par la plus grande distance, pour ne pas dire l'incommunicabilité, tandis que ceux de l'individu et du groupe ou des groupes entre eux paraissent de nature conflictuelle. Telle œuvre montre trois hommes nus qui s'agitent au sol devant un mur derrière le sommet duquel cinq hommes habillés ont tout l'air de les invectiver. Ce que nous avons identifié comme mur pourrait aussi bien être un tableau vide qui serait l'objet de la dispute. Se risquer à l'allégorie ou lui préférer l'action terre à terre ? Au sein de l'accrochage, il est un tableau qui fait un peu plus de bruit. Il montre un mâle nu un peu gras qui, debout sur un tabouret, vient de laisser échapper le crucifix qu'il s'apprêtait à fixer au mur, comme en atteste le marteau resté dans sa main. Au-delà de l'incident, du gag, le sujet, c'est l'individu, pas tout à fait au centre mais qui divise la composition en deux et porte en quelque sorte la responsabilité de celle-ci. Le badigeonnage de gris substitué au fond terre de Sienne au-dessus de son marteau – comme un mur qui s'effondre – est le signe de sa profonde détresse.

Du 28 mars au 17 mai 2025, Galerie Michel Rein, 42, rue de Turenne, 75003 Paris.

ARTFORUM

Apostolos Georgiou
ArtForum
August, 24th 2020
By Tomas Weber

CRITICS' PICKS LONDON

Apostolos Georgiou

Rodeo

July 2, 2020 - September 19, 2020

By Tomas Weber



Apostolos Georgiou, *Untitled*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 90 1/2 x 90 1/2".

Apostolos Georgiou's peculiar scenes beckon you in. The Greek painter's show at Rodeo London, "One by One"—occurring simultaneously with another Georgiou exhibition at Rodeo's gallery in the Athenian port city of Piraeus—comprises three paintings, hung low on the venue's exposed-brick walls, placing the viewer on the same level as their almost life-size human figures. Georgiou's scenarios are set in architectural spaces where one might imagine mingling, but any impressions of closeness are rebuffed with sardonic pleasure. The characters, with ashy marks for eyes and features in pasty grays, are closed off from the viewer, both entangled in and alienated from their unintelligible circumstances.

In *Untitled*, 2020, a woman is lying on top of a man reclining on a bed. The man appears sick, perhaps dying. Above them stands another male figure, with one hand on the prone man's head and another on the woman's back. A tenderness is palpable, laced with comic vacancy. While broad, blurry strokes imply motion, the overall impression is of stuckness and hesitation, like a glitchy video. In *Untitled*, 2019, a strained cocktail party takes place in front of a severe gray wall. Behind this barrier, an interloper straddles a tree, snooping on the festivities. But the outsider seems no less integrated in this dubiously convivial scene than the guests with their painterly, unresolved faces and their bulky, awkward hands.

Born in 1952, Georgiou has long been developing a distinct visual language for social relations, its effects ranging from the tragic to the hilarious. Connections are hazy, the circumstances of the present unfathomable; escape is only a faint possibility. In these paintings, the adventure of living with others is an endlessly beguiling spectacle, and the artist expresses a playful and antiauthoritarian attitude to making and seeing. Georgiou is still not kidding.

Le Monde

Apostolos Georgiou
Le Monde
 September, 20th 2019
 By Philippe Dagen

CULTURE • ARTS

Sélection galerie : Apostolos Georgiou chez GB Agency

Les toiles du peintre grec, né à Thessalonique en 1952, ne se laissent pas réduire à une interprétation assurée, mais elles captivent.

Par Philippe Dagen

Publié le 20 septembre 2019 à 15h00, modifié le 20 septembre 2019 à 16h38 ·  Lecture 1 min.



Sans titre (2019), Apostolos Georgiou, acrylique sur toile. AURÉLIEN MOLE / GB AGENCY

Georgiou est une étrangeté. Né à Thessalonique en 1952, peu montré en dehors de la Grèce avant les années 2000, il peint à l'acrylique, en s'en tenant au minimum d'indications figuratives, des situations dans lesquelles des femmes et des hommes sont comme en suspens, gestes arrêtés, bouches ouvertes sur des paroles que l'on ne peut qu'imaginer.

Objets et figures sont souvent incomplets, parce que les peintres que l'on voit représentés sur la toile n'ont pas fini leur travail, à moins qu'ils ne s'appliquent à l'effacer. Concert et conversations sont muets, ce qui les rend légèrement ridicules. Sur la cheminée du collectionneur, ce n'est pas la statue d'un homme nu qui est posée, mais, semble-t-il, un être de chair.

On n'en saura pas plus. Les couleurs sont peu nombreuses, sans éclat et comme menacées d'être envahies par un gris uniforme qui ferait tout disparaître. Les compositions obéissent à une géométrie orthogonale qui serait stable si, par endroits, lignes et angles ne s'effritaient et cassaient. Georgiou aime à citer Borges, connivence incontestable. Pas plus que les fictions du romancier argentin, les toiles du peintre grec ne se laissent réduire à une interprétation assurée, mais elles captivent.

Flash Art

Apostolos Georgiou
Flash Art
June, 18th 2018
By Alex Bennett

• REVIEWS

18 June 2018, 4:15 pm CET

Apostolos Georgiou Rodeo / London



1 2 3 4 5 6

Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2012. Installation view, Apostolos Georgiou, From My Heart, Rodeo, London, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, London. Photography by Plastiques.

Little is known of writer Peter Zabelskis. In 1986, Slate Press published his *Loop: 50 Ideas for Pictures*. These loops are peephole preliminaries for an absent narrative center: each remains phlegmatic as Zabelskis gestures toward tension, perfunctory absurdity, or cliché tragedy. For instance: "A shabby motel whose owner, whenever a murder or suicide occurs in one of the cabins, cuts a back door into the room as soon as the police investigation is over." In another, the marbelized cover of a composition book reveals words that swirl into prose but don't linger "long enough to be read." The cover is only ever a primer, Zabelskis confirms: "Inside is something completely different. Let's look..."

Of course, we never see. But Apostolos Georgiou's paintings suitably deliver on Zabelskis's cue. They are interiors to the author's deftly executed keyholes: settings without introduction, living rooms without a welcoming entrance. In his scenes, lachrymose minds stoop as narrative skulks, either bruised by outburst or wallowing in its aftermath like a ripe contusion. Action appears habitual and despairing, at times absurd, radiating coolly from tepid mobilizers: fists, rifles, unoccupied pillows, hunched postures. The powdery palette of plum, taupe, brown, and mint green is uniformly suave, like a funereal fistful of black calla lilies.

I think: *you look like you killed a man*. In *Untitled* (2000) he sits, knee to chest, atop a charcoal mattress beside a lamp glowing with emotion. His face: when anxiety and dread reduce to stoicism. The brushwork is graphic and blocky. His shoulder catches a nectarine-hued highlight. Isolated, he looks like a man containing aftershock, swallowing the tectonic consequences, moving on. The patina of the wall is layered with sequences from pale pink and lilac to a spectral buttercup yellow. Embalmed, the colors illuminate the wall — the most lavish feature of the room.



Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2000. Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, London. Photography by Plastiques.

Spaces are mostly vacant, lending Georgiou's figures a theatrical aplomb that seems to relish distraction in moments of rickety slapstick. Two people teeter on Mücke Melder-esque chairs, their ankles shaking. The rhythm feels percussive and brassy, reminiscent of Cathy Berberian's zany onomatopoeia in *Stripsody* (1966). These rooms are a woozy mind where behavior is torpid yet barbed by emotional gravitas: a woman spoon-feeds a man on her lap; another soothes a man as he crawls over her like a sartorial schlub. He could be writhing in agony. These are places of proclamation, explosion, and seclusion; places between papers, beds, desks, chairs; between servility, solidarity, and dominion. Domestic or institutional, the environment blends salon, asylum, and sanctuary: where the psyche may obsess or decay. So often it seems these people wrestle their inner saboteur or reckon with past humiliations: a woman stands at a wooden lectern, a leader, whose own corpse lies in front of her.

Stilted by melodrama, Georgiou's evocation of gallantry soon buckles, with glowering sadism slinking at its edges. Icons become specious lumber, thickset with hoodwinking tricks. Color is a low-pressure headache, its sultry quality numbing and imprisoning as though these actants sit between the emotional impasse of inevitability and the anticipation of looming change, between serenity and melancholy, total defeat and deliverance. The legibility of sincerity or revenge is never realized; rather, for Georgiou, they feel like two masks for one plucky harlequin.

This brings into question the title, "From My Heart." A tired idiom, to mention "my heart" is to sow a challenge in its very words; the loaded symbol petrifies into a heavy-handed burden. One can weaponize *my heart*, bewitch it as a tool for manipulation. It is hard to accept the heart at face value, and Georgiou gives us an escape clause from this core ambivalence, carving out the back door.

INIGO
art

Apostolos Georgiou
InigoArt
September, 13th 2017

In the studio with Apostolos Georgiou

September 13, 2017 [2 Comments](#)



"Art is a big compromise. It starts with a big lie and the success is to make it as true as possible. The moment that you want to talk about something, it becomes a copy of it. You leave out so many things or you put in many others that don't exist."

Documenta 14 closes this Sunday in Kassel, Germany. The exhibition takes place every five years. Led by a guest curator, the event carries the political baggage with which it was funded in 1955 as a way to bring international modern and contemporary art to Germany after the IIWW and the Nazi period. I visited back in June and one of my absolute highlights was Georgiou's large canvases installed as a solo show in an apartment frozen in time since the 70s. The muted blue, ochre, maroon, brown and mint green migrate from the paintings to the faded tiles and room fittings. I was sailing in Greece last week and my luck was to meet Apostolos Georgiou (b. 1952, Thessaloniki) on my last stop in Athens.





How was your experience at Documenta 14?

I have never visited a previous Documenta. After leaving for 10 years abroad during the 70s in Austria and in Italy, I came back to Greece and landed on a Greek island and lived there for more than 25 years. I was nearly cut off from the art world, shows, discussions, artists and exhibitions. This island where I wanted to live in since I was a child gave me the opportunity to live surrounded by nature and to get the maximum concentration to work and understand what I was doing without any influences and disturbances. That is what allowed me to come to the conclusion of what I am and how I am going to express it. So even though I have never been a fanatic follower of visual arts, I had all the excuses for missing any information of what it was going on in the World.

What do you think of the art world? You are represented by galleries here in Athens as well as in London and in New York and you just took part in a major art event but you don't seem to get involved in the machinery of the art industry, the openings, talks, museum activities, etc.

It's nice to know that you belong to it, especially if you manage to succeed without changing much your lifestyle and to live and breathe out of it. Even though money is a very important thing because it allows us to live in better places and get or do nicer things, the art would have been much better without the involvement of profit. I am afraid that both of us are involved in the art industry. It's just that I always have the chance and luxury to go back to my island and you manage to combine this interview with a sailing week in the Aegean Sea.

It is your livelihood at the end of the day...

I am lucky to belong to the group of artists who can make a living out of their art, meaning economically sufficient. Not all of the artists manage to do so and that is not always connected to the artistic sufficiency of their work.

I love art. Specially in the form of music. I can imagine that some people like visual arts. Maybe because I am involved in it, I cannot enjoy it very much. It is a lot of suffering, making efforts and trying to understand it. It is a responsibility.

I believe there is a sense of time and narrative in your paintings, even if it is very elusive and ambiguous. Do you think in terms of narrative or do you intend to present a narrative?

I like to start with stories. Nothing exceptional. What I paint is something that I am sure has existed a long time in my mind. It is a feeling that I know well. These stories have passed the test of time. It is not just clever ideas. In science, the greatest inventions come out of simple thoughts sometimes so simple that no one thought about them.

As for the protagonists of my work, the figures are me. But it's not only me. It's a way of talking about everybody because I am no different from anybody else, with my needs, with my fears... Talking about yourself you talk about the *All*.

At Documenta 14, you have one painting where one character is having a shower and the other one is sitting next to him. This is one example in which the characters do very common daily activities.

I wouldn't say that I paint common daily activities but common daily thoughts. On that painting, the man who is taking a shower cannot listen to the man who talks to him because of the water noise and the man who talks thinks the first one is listening to him. How many times in anger we say, "I will kill him". But we don't do it. That is what I paint.



Sometimes, I interpret your characters in one painting as the same person, duplicated or at times even in multiples. Do you see them as different people?

No, it is the same person in a different position, practically or physiologically. One figure can easily be the other. I paint the way we deal with ourselves and with others. Mainly it is about connections. Being in a studio for hours, days, years... which is a complete crazy thing if you take

it seriously, you are surrounded by thoughts that fly around your head like bees. On one hand, you have all these thoughts that never bring you to a conclusion. You try to be objective but to an absolute abstraction. On the other hand, you paint with real colors on a real canvas, creating a concrete painting. Your mind never comes to a definitive conclusion but the painting needs objectivity in order to survive in time. This objectiveness keeps the art piece alive in the future.

I want to talk about things that exist forever. I am not talking only about the quality of the work, which I hope is there... but to say that you work today and you don't care about tomorrow is a lie. All artists want the work to remain forever. It's an amazing feeling you get when you listen to a Bach concerto and addressing him you say "You bastard. You manage to bring me enthusiasm 300 years later." It is not a question of artistic ego. It is about life because nobody wants to die. People need to feel that in the end there is a continuity.

Do you find inspiration in other art forms beyond music? Any authors?

I am not reading at all. I am not a reader because I was pushed to read when I was a child. My sister was reading a lot and they would tell me "Look, your sister...". I was thinking a lot. I was quite lonely and my mother thought I was quiet and I had no problems but I did, like all kids.

Music played and plays a big role for me. It is an expression of art that I like to analyze and I am happy to understand it. Rhythm seems very important to me. Also, what really fascinates me in music is that two different hands create two completely different sounds on the same piano.





The title of the show I did in London last year, The Same Old Fucking Story is because I am doing the same thing until I die. There are some aesthetic changes that take place over time but it happens very slowly. You need time to understand how your work changes. You cannot change.

Forgive me for being so reductive but I believe that many Greek artists have a commonality in their way of approaching the work. It is not a common aesthetic but a deep and profound questioning.

That's something I cannot respond. For me, it is difficult to distinguish the work of a young Greek artist from a non-Greek. What I know is that in my work, the more direct the image goes to the spectator, the better it is.

I have read an article where you said, and I paraphrase, that you would have liked to be an abstract artist but you don't have the character. What is the character that you think it is required for abstraction, or what character do you have that brings you to representation?

It is the part of the clown that I have. A clown cannot be an abstract painter. I'm a provocateur. If I sit in a coffee place with friends, they know something will come out. I'll make a provocation. This is something that I have out of my complexes, to keep attention or who knows... but I like to provoke which means that people have to be there. It is me who provokes.

Secondly, I was ashamed for many years that I was an artist. I felt a little bit bohemian. I am very grounded and ambitious but not through... (gestures with a hand and rolls his eyes). I hated the way people talked when I said I was a painter. "Oh, you are an artist!" I hated that. Being an abstract painter you need to have the character where you won't have this complex. If you draw three lines on a canvas, you seem a little bit like a *maestro* who creates the new world. I prefer to hide all these things behind the characters. Of course, you need to be a *maestro* to also do that. I am not saying that I am, but I hope to be. I try to make my abstraction through hiding this part and then I like to put people in difficulties. I am not talking of people who understand (art). That is not the interesting part. The important thing is to paint for people who don't understand. For common people.

When you paint, you think that a great gallerist will come to your studio and look at your work because he *knows* and that is great. That is the end. When you paint, you want to think of people.

How do you reach out to those people who don't understand art?

You don't know them. You never paint for a person. You paint for the world. If you think that you paint for five people, stop painting. In the end, you paint for five but you don't want to think about it. You need to feel that you paint for the good of the world. I am not doing something to damage the world, for sure. I wouldn't be a painter who says lies. I think I am a painter who tries to say the truth and to be objective, up to the point where I cannot even move my hand without

thinking two hundred thousand times if I should put this or that or if this idea is for so long or forever. This is what my political thought is: not to lie. Not to say how it should be but at least not to lie.

Your ideas navigate existentialism. I am thinking it is very consistent with your wish to paint for people who don't understand art because if there is something they understand is life and the human subject.

Since I was a kid that I was painting, my work was well known in Thessaloniki. You didn't need to do much to get known there and I remember very clearly that my work was liked by low profile, simple people or by the intellectuals. No one in the middle.

You haven't had formal training.

I studied architecture in Vienna. I hated it. My mother pushed me to go and be an architect. I was there two years. I was working as a painter in the academy which means I was working as a painter at home. I just declared them that I did it by force and after two years I left. I didn't want to study painting. I hated studying. I hated schools. I have enough orientation through the things around me. I don't need a mouth to tell me.

You clearly have spent a lot of time on your own and debating about these ideas with yourself. When was the first time that you said to yourself...

I was in High School. I was sixteen and I said to myself "I am a professional".

I like that you say *professional* and not *artist*.

Yes, which means working a lot, looking a lot, thinking a lot. I had my first show in Athens in 1978 and then I disappeared for 17 years to make my next show. I had moved with my wife to this paradise island and we didn't need much. I never felt that I was isolated. I was always feeling like I was in the middle of Manhattan. I never felt that I was out. I knew that I was doing something very contemporary. If you have the eagerness, you will react on the work.

You have said before that you are a provocateur but to provoke means that you have a very specific reaction in mind. I wonder if you want to withdraw some information to keep it less obvious...

Or to make it so precise that you lose the meaning.

If you want to provoke someone...

You cannot provoke in the same way all the time because then they know how to defend themselves.

You play some confusion game.

It is the same confusion we live in.

I feel some of your works express a drunkenness effect on some level. There is an in-between state of people who are drunk and people who look at those being drunk and yet both are real.

There is a painting at Documenta 14 where one man is spitting and another one is committing suicide. Both men are next to each other. It is gravity. As kids, we used to spit from balconies to see it falling on the ground. All kids have done that. Suicide is something I wouldn't dare to do. I respect so much people who commit suicide. It is very dramatic. On the other hand, spitting is nothing; it is meaningless. Both are about dropping. That is why I put them together. Sometimes, it is so precise, so clear, that you cannot accept it. Other times, it is so unclear that you get soaked and feel it but can't find it.





Apostolos Georgiou
 Libération
 October, 02nd 2016
 By Judicaël Lavrador

Peinture

Les rescapés du quotidien d'Apostolos Georgiou

De scènes banales en réalité absurde, une dizaine de tableaux récents de l'artiste grec sont exposés en galerie parisienne.



«Sans titre», 2015. (Photo Boris Kirpotin, courtesy de l'artiste et GB Agency)

par [Judicaël Lavrador](#)

publié le 2 octobre 2016 à 18h11

Est-ce le réchauffement climatique et la montée du niveau des océans, la guerre, une crise financière, un naufrage qui a contraint ce trio d'hommes-troncs à se jeter à l'eau ? Si le tableau d'Apostolos Georgiou, *Sans titre*, comme la petite dizaine d'autres exposés à la galerie GB Agency, ne prend pas la peine d'explicitier les causes de la catastrophe (que l'artiste soit grec n'aide pas à en retenir une en particulier), il dépeint l'embarras et la mouise dans laquelle sont plongés ses personnages avec des coups de brosse assez grossiers et schématiques, un peu rugueux, plus proches de la caricature que de la grande peinture romantique - ces rescapés ne jouent pas dans le même registre que ceux du *Radeau de la Méduse*.

Dans leur sauve-qui-peut comique et haletant (la bouteille de rouge, le livre et les pompes d'abord), ils font gaffe à ne pas se vautrer, à ne pas être engloutis, à ne pas disparaître de la surface de la terre et de la toile. On parie que leurs efforts figurent en fait ceux qu'Apostolos Georgiou fournit pour que son tableau tienne la marée picturale. Car, en cours d'exécution - tous les peintres le reconnaissent - une toile peut soudain partir à vau-l'eau, très loin de ce que son auteur avait prévu d'en faire. Une touche de travers ou un peu trop de matière et c'est la cata. Là, ça passe. Largement.

Wall Street International

Apostolos Georgiou
Wall Street International
March, 13th 2015
By Pantelis Arapinis

Lost Dreams

1 Apr–23 May 2015 at AD Gallery, Athens



Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2015, 17,5 x 24 cm

AD gallery opens the show entitled “Lost Dreams” on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 20:00.

We have all experienced the incidents that we come across in Apostolos Georgiou themes many times without however paying much attention to them as they do not involve a heroic, tragic or happy event with the relevant expected “weight”.

Someone talks to himself in order to escape from his loneliness.

His figures have almost no special features, although they convince us that it is not always the same man that reoccurs.

A man withdraws from the company to meet someone else who is sitting alone.

The painter narrates events of minor importance involving insignificant people, palpating with compassion their relationships or their absence, their personal anxieties and deadlocks. In this sense his painting is a mapping of the personal and the whispers of confiding. It is a painting that although it has concerned Georgiou for the past forty years, it becomes more than ever relevant nowadays with the collapse of middle classes.

Someone tries to persuade a girl who is about to abandon him.

Here we won't come across thematic affinities with *Le Radeau de la Méduse* (The Raft of the Medusa) by Théodore Géricault, even though Georgiou's work is distinguished by deep humanism. In addition, one would not find thematic correlations with *La Mort de Marat* (The Death of Marat) by Jacques-Louis David, even though the artist's work is absolutely political. It is a story orally constituted far from the archives and heroes of official history.

A figure relieves himself at the WC having around one to hold the paper roll for him, another to read to him and another to flush the toilet.

Rejecting the “High” for the sake of the humble, the artist's language withdraws from the aestheticized image taught in Fine Arts schools. His painting is effortlessly laconic approaching the clarity of popular illustration and comics. In his painting Georgiou makes us remember the “failed” and entrapped anti-hero of Jean-Marc Reiser: *Gros Dégueulasse*.

In his painting Dimitris Mourikis is characterized by an unpretentious simplicity, both in form and in content and technique. He paints home interiors, but also popular themes, female figures discussing at the doorstep, peasants returning from the fields, laborers and beggars.

How this show came of

Discussing with Apostolos Georgiou about the presentation of his drawings at the gallery, he suggested to include some works by doctor Dimitris Mourikis. I asked him for which reason to do this and he replied that Mourikis is a friend and interlocutor of his. Even though Mourikis is not listed as an artist, I found Apostolos' request to have the same content as the total of his work: the respect to the “wholly” personality of another human being, so I accepted it.

Pantelis Arapinis

AD Gallery

AD Gallery was established in 1986 in Athens, Greece. It exhibits avant-guard Greek and international art. The philosophy of the gallery is to showcase contemporary art through different media, from painting to performance and video installation. The exhibited works generally share a local or global, socio-political awareness. Every exhibition is organized according to its own criteria and with no reference to any previous shows.

[Gallery profile](#)

Location
Athens, Greece

Founded in
1986

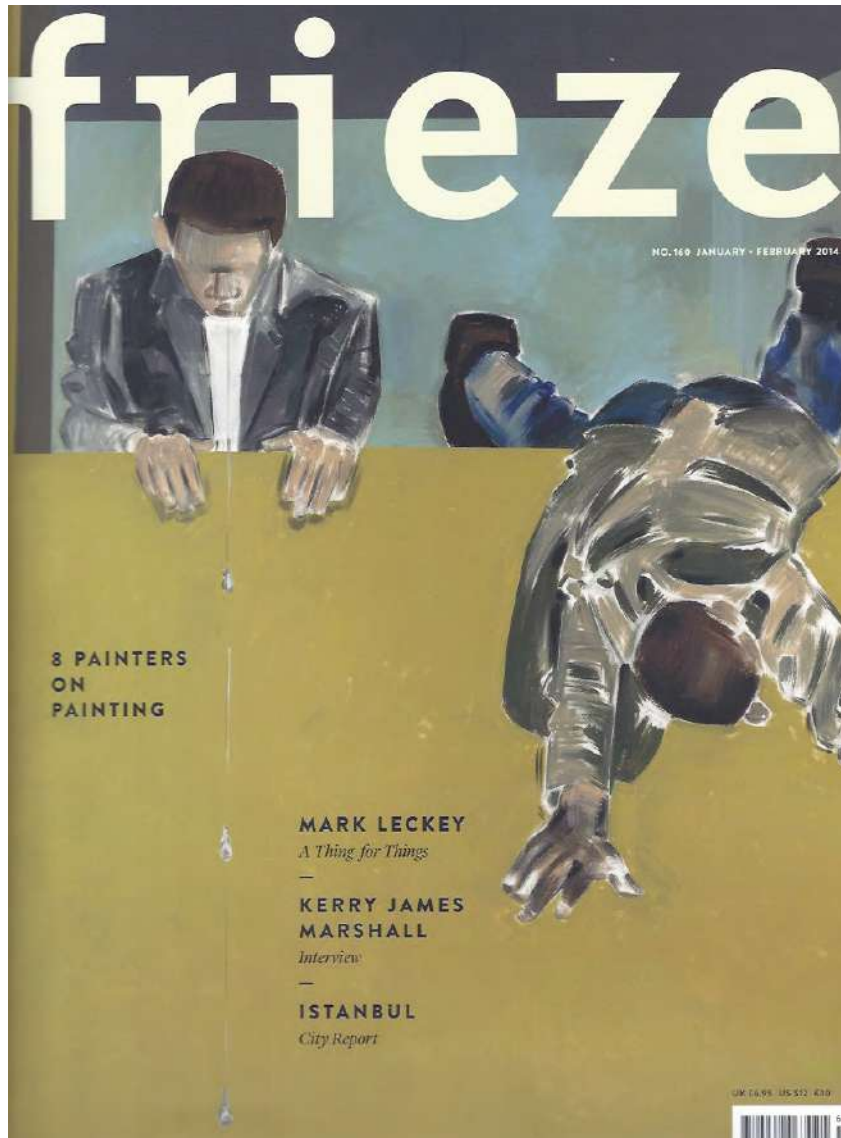


1. Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2015, 18 x 14 cm
2. Dimitris Mourikis, Untitled, 2015, 27.5 x 37.5 cm
3. Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2015, 21.5 x 12.5 cm

4. Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2015, 30.5 x 13 cm
5. Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2015, 16.5 x 13.5 cm
6. Apostolos Georgiou, Untitled, 2015, 22.5 x 12.5 cm

FRIEZE

Apostolos Georgiou
Frieze
January 11th, 2013
by Jennifer Higbie



8

PAINTERS ON PAINTING

ELLEN ALTFEST — APOSTOLOS GEORGIU
IMRAN QURESHI — HELEN JOHNSON
HENRY TAYLOR — MARK SADLER — ROSE WYLIE
LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE

Apostolos Georgiou, *Untitled*,
2012, acrylic on canvas,
2.2 x 2.2 m

At a time of revolution in digital technologies, when making extraordinary images has never been technically easier, painting persists. *Jennifer Higgle* asked eight artists to share their thoughts on the whys and wherefores of figurative painting



2

APOSTOLOS GEORGIOU

Why did I become a painter? In a family where my father is a pianist, my stepfather loves and plays music, and others are involved professionally in the arts, it was almost impossible to escape! Of course, it could have been another form of art: music is actually my favourite, but that would have meant going to the conservative, boring music school. All other forms of art were more complicated, especially in a town like Thessaloniki in the 1960s where the possibilities were limited. Painting is also something very simple to start: a piece of paper, a pencil, a few colours and let's go!

When I was 17, I decided that I was a painter. Everything I saw was transformed in my brain into a painted surface. I don't think there has ever been another period in my life when the image concerned me so much; it was only in my sleep that I thought of other things. I observed paintings in the flesh and in books, trying to understand and digest their good and bad qualities.

The way we read art makes it political or not. Isn't it the same in life, generally? Many of us need to overcome, or at least distinguish, injustice and inequality, whether we are the victims or the abusers. In my family, among our friends and in the world generally, things function in the same way: only the scale changes. Either we see this or we pretend that it doesn't exist.

A vase of flowers can convey the same kind of drama – a box of emotions ready to explode at any moment – as a face. A painting must have the tension to provoke us to look at it; to wake us up from a state of indifference. Then the rest will come.

The term figurative painter annoys me. Of course, it's a way to distinguish one type of painting from another, but I think it's badly used. Perhaps because when I started to paint, a figurative painter was considered the *only* real painter because he could paint things to make them look the way they are. I wanted to react to this closed environment, and it was hard to accept, and to be accepted, for that. In fact, I wanted to be an abstract painter – a Jackson Pollock, a Mark Rothko, a Brice Marden or a Christopher Wool – to go directly to the substance of the real thing,

HYPERALLERGIC

Apostolos Georgiou
Hyperallergic
 April, 10th 2014
 By Rob Colvin

Artists Pick Artists: Apostolos Georgiou

by [Rob Colvin](#) on April 10, 2014



Apostolos Georgiou's shoe

Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a [series of interviews with artists](#) that will continue indefinitely, without direction, and outside any one person's control. The artists are asked seven questions about their art and their ideas about art. The questions are blunt, but open-ended enough to be answered in any way the artist chooses. The final question is a request for the artist to select the next artist to be interviewed — anyone they wish, well-known or unknown, working in any medium, anywhere; any artist whose work they think highly of, an artist deserving the same public interrogation.

The paintings of [Apostolos Georgiou](#) make a break with contemporary painting by possessing

a self-styled humor that slips right past how we think about humor itself. When expectations are defied, a situation can draw laughter. But what in this artist's perpetually untitled work sets up an anticipated outcome? There is never a sequence of events. Taunts and jabs can also be amusing, making someone the butt of a joke. But what have Georgiou's figures done to invite ridicule? We find pleasure in seeing boundaries crossed, so long as no one's threatened. Have these characters violated conventions?



Apostolos Georgiou, "Untitled" (2005), acrylic on canvas, 240 x 210 cm

Whatever is happening in these works, it's happening reliably well, and it never happens in the same way twice. These absurd scenarios have a remarkable specificity, especially for works so reliant on drab colors and anonymous people. Each work, too, contains some salient disappearance, something gone wrong. We must work backwards to find out what's incongruous, even as we acknowledge that we'll never fully know what it is. It's not our expectations that have been defied; instead, we're robbed of an ability to know what we should have expected in the first place.

Georgiou's people, often alone (and even when together, still alone), are composed with a controlled flurry of deft marks and wide brush swipes. Yet, even when eyeless and without identities, these stand-ins for ourselves embody a vitality that requires reckoning with, eliciting our sympathy as we see their failure to see themselves. Artist [Carol Szymanski](#) recommended Georgiou for this interview series by saying, "I love the straightforward intelligence and grand finesse, and humor in his paintings — that is very rare."

* * *

Rob Colvin: *Why did you become an artist?*

Apostolos Georgiou: I think that in the environment I grew up in, it was nearly impossible to escape from being an artist. Nearly all the members of my family were involved with the arts. I also grew up with the impression that I cannot face practical issues, take practical initiatives, or undertake responsibilities. Of course, later I discovered that the responsibilities of being an artist were even bigger ...



Apostolos Georgiou, "Untitled" (2009), acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm (all images courtesy the artist)

RC: *How would you describe your development and what you're doing now?*

AG: The first years, I was asking myself if I was a good painter. In the second stage, I started believing that I might be a good painter, considering that I was better than others who were considered good. In the third stage, I started believing that I was a good painter without comparing myself with anyone else, and in the last stage I concluded that I am an artist no matter if I am a good or a bad painter.

RC: *Have you been influenced by anyone or anything in particular?*

AG: Talking about my character, I would say that the most important factor was my family, the melancholic and heavy city I grew up in, my friends, my physique, the pain and the happiness I experienced, and the way I learned to face and handle my environment in order to survive.

Talking about artistic influences, besides the great masters of the past, whose paintings I saw in our house library and illustrations of old encyclopedias, where there were more illustrated drawings than photos, I was also influenced by some local artists that I used to admire at the time. But they are completely indifferent to me today.



Apostolos Georgiou, "Untitled" (1999), acrylic on canvas, 210 x 380 cm



Apostolos Georgiou, "Untitled" (2005), acrylic on canvas, 230 x 210 cm

RC: *What challenges are unique to your process?*

AG: Considering that I wanted to become a dancer or a jazz musician, an actor, an artist with more immediate contact with the public, the fact that I ended up as a painter, keeping viewers at a distance, provoked the desire to include some of the characteristics of the above arts into painting in order to make it more interesting. Not to exclude the dancer, the narrator, the actor, the clown from my art. To use painting as a medium and not as a message.

RC: *If you could own any work of art, what would it be?*

AG: Scenario no. 1: Mona Lisa. It is a symbol; it is a brand. There are even chocolate packages with its picture. It is an interesting procedure to disconnect it from all the uses it has been subjected to and manage to understand its real value.

Scenario no. 2: A huge painting by Jackson Pollock, maybe the one I saw in Düsseldorf. I was affected by its double character: simultaneously a great abstract piece of art and an epic renaissance painting of a great master. I could not distinguish which of the two it was.

Scenario no. 3: A great painting of a great unknown artist (I am sure that there are plenty of them), to have the joy to discover its value and at the same time to prove my objectivity by looking and understanding the image.

Scenario no. 4: A small Mondrian painting hung on the most discrete wall of my house, to tell me how much beauty simplicity carries sometimes.



Apostolos Georgiou, "Untitled" (2006), acrylic on canvas, 270 x 230 cm

RC: *So what is art anyway?*

AG: I would describe art graphically by two lines joining two points, A and B. One line is life. The second line, art, crosses the first line in many points and is much, much longer.

ARTFORUM

Apostolos Georgiou
Artforum
December, 1994
By Catherine Cafopoulous

ATHENS

APOSTOLOS GEORGIU

ATHENS GALLERY

The principal feature of Apostolos Georgiou's recent paintings is that everything seems to be compressed in a central cluster of images. By means of this singular compositional device, it appears as though the artist has deliberately let go of the rest of the surface so that the ground, in terms of content and form, is essentially not part of the painting. This engenders a paradoxical whole composed of tension-packed themes and an apparently nonchalant style. The background takes on a mercurial quality since the paint seems to have been only summarily applied to the bland surface. Indeterminate and essentially unbounded, the background appears to slide off the edges of the canvas into the surrounding space. The confines of the painting may appear to be restricted to only the image-cluster or, conversely, to extend beyond the canvas' rectangular parameters so that the dual role of the canvas-as-support and the canvas-as-background is rendered virtually defunct.

Georgiou's palette is somber and his themes solemn. The colors emphasize the personal, quotidian drama in which the figures that appear in his paintings are engaged. As a whole, the work has a touch of the theatrical. The figures are like paper dolls on a stage set that seems ready to implode—a theatrical/pictorial space that is qualitatively different from the explicit artificiality of the flat, flush background. This reading is enhanced by the artist's vernacular which is replete with unusual and forceful images that are also deceptively naive and artless. It also becomes perceptible that formal issues and painting techniques have been placed at the service of thematic content and that the painting process is only of secondary importance.

These paintings can also be viewed as portraits of the audience. Georgiou's Everyman, at once enigmatic and nondescript, depicted in familiar stressful situations, encourages the viewer to engage in self-examination. Moreover, the outlandish situations depicted in almost all the artist's paintings, though cryptic and absurd, are also somehow realistic because they concede that the intuitive, illogical, and irrational are intrinsic to life.

Ultimately, when Georgiou exceeds the limits of the conventional rectangular canvas surface by introducing the compacted theme coupled with a "slipping" ground, it seems like the most elegant way out of an existential cul-de-sac for an artist who has stated publicly: "I don't like being a painter and I would like to escape from painting altogether."

—Catherine Cafopoulous

ATHENS GALLERY

The principal feature of Apostolos Georgiou's recent paintings is that everything seems to be compressed in a central cluster of images. By means of this singular compositional device, it appears as though the artist has deliberately let go of the rest of the surface so that the ground, in terms of content and form, is essentially not part of the painting. This engenders a paradoxical whole composed of tension-packed themes and an apparently nonchalant style. The background takes on a mercurial quality since the paint seems to have been only summarily applied to the bland surface. Indeterminate and essentially unbounded, the background appears to slide off the edges of the canvas into the surrounding space. The confines of the painting may appear to be restricted to only the image-cluster or, conversely, to extend beyond the canvas' rectangular parameters so that the dual role of the canvas-as-support and the canvas-as-background is rendered virtually defunct.

Georgiou's palette is somber and his themes solemn. The colors emphasize the personal, quotidian drama in which the figures that appear in his paintings are engaged. As a whole, the work has a touch of the theatrical. The figures are like paper dolls on a stage set that seems ready to implode—a theatrical/pictorial space that is qualitatively different from the explicit artificiality of the flat, flush background. This reading is enhanced by the artist's vernacular which is replete with unusual and forceful images that are also deceptively naive and artless. It also becomes perceptible that formal issues and painting techniques have been placed at the service of thematic content and that the painting process is only of secondary importance.

These paintings can also be viewed as portraits of the audience. Georgiou's Everyman, at once enigmatic and nondescript, depicted in familiar stressful situations, encourages the viewer to engage in self-examination. Moreover, the outlandish situations depicted in almost all the artist's paintings, though cryptic and absurd, are also somehow realistic because they concede that the intuitive, illogical, and irrational are intrinsic to life.

Ultimately, when Georgiou exceeds the limits of the conventional rectangular canvas surface by introducing the compacted theme coupled with a "slipping" ground, it seems like the most elegant way out of an existential cul-de-sac for an artist who has stated publicly: "I don't like being a painter and I would like to escape from painting altogether."

COPYRIGHT 1994 Artforum International Magazine, Inc.

No portion of this article can be reproduced without the express written permission from the copyright holder.

Copyright 1994, Gale Group. All rights reserved. Gale Group is a Thomson Corporation Company.

TEXTS TEXTES

Apostolos Georgiou: Situations

Barry Schwabsky

For the first exhibition in Asia of the Greek painter Apostolos Georgiou, we have chosen the title "Situations." The word comes into the English language by way of Middle French from the Latin *situs*, referring to a place or site. But it does not normally refer to a neutral background, such as a stage upon which various characters and props may be assembled; rather, it evokes the positioning of people and things with relation to each other and their surroundings—their physical positioning but also their social or psychological relationships. Thus it is not unusual to hear someone say, "It was a tense situation," "It was an awkward situation," and so on. As in those two examples, the word "situation" is often used to describe sets of circumstances that are difficult. It was when the situation impinges on me, puts pressure on me, that I am most likely to notice it as such.

Georgiou paints situations in just this sense. One could almost call them diagrams of situations. Consider the large diptych from 2005—*Untitled*, as all his works are—in which we see two gray-suited male figures whose faces are only vaguely adumbrated, each leaning tightly against a white wall. Each is withdrawing from or approaching—it is

hard to be sure which—a corner from which he either hopes to espy the other and from which he fears the other might espy him. Each is an anonymous being, the doppelganger of the other. Their situation is their mirroring relationship of fear and suspicion but also their positioning in the four-cornered space in which they find themselves, which is what allows them to avoid the confrontation they both desire and fear, through which they would discover whether their feelings toward each other are justified or not.

Although the situation described in the painting would appear to be symmetrical, the painting itself is not. The more obvious way to have placed the scene on the diptych's two canvases would have been to have placed the angle of the two central putty-colored walls at the meeting point of the two canvases that make up the painting. Instead, Georgiou has displaced the composition so that it is off-center. The blue wall to the right of the right-hand figure has no counterpart on the left. I think this suggests that the situation that seems, to the people caught up in it, closed off in its own symmetry, its "balance of power," actually offers a path of escape, if only one were to notice it.

The painting shows two figures in a situation, but it is also part of a bigger situation. In fact, there is a third protagonist involved—an even more anonymous and abstract one than the pair we see: the onlooker, the viewer. Georgiou's painting is, more than anything else, about our capacity to see our situations as if from the outside, in what might in grammatical terms be called the third person. From this externalized vantage point, where we can picture our own situations as though they were someone else's, we gain an understanding of our own absurdity. Suddenly, an awkward situation is illuminated with humor.

The colors Georgiou uses are typically drab, recessive, melancholy—lots of grays and earth tones. It's almost as if regret itself could be a color on his palette. And yet the paintings are not heavy. There's air, there's a sense of lightness. Partly, that's due to the concision with which he sets up his diagrams of the situations he's observed. It's also thanks to the breezy gusto with which he depicts them. Look at how he's painted the dull gray suits of the two men in the diptych I've been talking about. Somehow he never seems to have noticed that there's anything dull about a gray suit! He brushes in the folds and creases of the trouser legs and sleeves with a kind of careless bravura, the throwaway lyricism of a master. The strange abstractions we read as faces have a touch of cartoonishness about them (without any of the obviousness) but also a certain painterly magic. Even the big zones of simple color representing walls and the floor possess a specifically pictorial rightness: They are just variegated enough, with just enough transparency, just enough opacity to feel present and vital, not simply dead backdrops to the human action or nonaction they frame—they remind us that walls and floors and everything else that is part of our situations have been created with intention by people who were likewise part of situations though we may never know what those were.

01 —
Curatorial Statement

The situations mapped out in Georgiou's painting are situations that involve just a few individuals, or sometimes a larger group, or sometimes just a single person who imagines himself unseen, although we see him. At the same time, they are situations of society as a whole—possibly that of Greece in particular, as a nation that has lived through a great many difficult situations in recent years (although it should not be forgotten that Georgiou was painting such situations for a long time before the debt crisis that overtook Greece in the wake of the global financial meltdown of 2007-2008) but probably that of almost any society populated by humans rather than by the “rational agents” of modern myth. They are always also inflections of the situation of painting, a notoriously absurd and irrational undertaking (these days more than ever) yet perhaps, as Georgiou suggests, just irrational enough to comprehend the actions of its protagonists, who are none other than him and ourselves. The two men in the 2005 diptych are, in the end, separated by nothing but a color, which I have described as. Maybe they have no problem with each other, and are just trying to sneak up on that color, one as a painter and the other as the viewer of a painting? I'm not sure. Georgiou has a story to tell about each of his works, the situation he had in mind while painting it, but by insisting on making each of them Untitled he has given up the possibility of insisting on his story and has handed over to each viewer the possibility of finding his or her own situation in it.

Situations

分离的凝望

巴里·史瓦伯斯基

遇到原创性的艺术家——我说的并不是那些创作出史无前例作品的人（因为这样的情况下我们也许根本就无从识别），而是那种有着独立精神进行孤独探索的艺术家——是一种幸运，也让人感动。但是这样的遭遇有时也会让人不安。它甚至会让你辗转难眠，因为这意味着你接受到了某种你还未做好应对准备的信息。因为人既是社会动物、也是孤独的，而往往前者占据了多数。即便在我们所想象的内心生活——这种精神活动对我们显得是如此重要的环境之下——我们也总是跟随主流。这样我们感到更加安全、温暖。

所以至少在一段时间里，当人们从那些出乎计划之外的地点给你发来探索报告的时候，你总会滞

疑一下。无疑，我们会为此感到敬仰，甚至欢呼雀跃，但是也有点不安。归根结底，究竟哪条路才是正确的？也许走入泥潭的恰恰是我们这些人。

2005年我在巴黎意外的初次看见阿波斯托洛斯·乔治亚的绘画作品时感受到的正是这种狂喜和质疑。你所见到的是一位用真诚来创作的画家——我写这些的时候正是“只有极少数人看起来会很轻松的获得明确方向”的年代——但是他想表现的却是无助、贫瘠、以及失败的境遇。也许是在巴黎的影响下，我觉得塞缪尔·贝克特可能会很欣赏这些画：贝克特的戏剧作品当中的人物，总是会像拉辛式的女英雄一样无畏，或是莎士比亚式的小丑一样漫不经心面对他们的废墟。

学术研究
02



《无题》
2017
布面丙烯
110 x 130 厘米

Untitled
2017
Acrylic on canvas
110 x 130 cm

这并非是说乔治亚的作品是贝克特所想象的、曾经在布列·凡·威尔得的作品里发现过的那样。就像他对乔治·达特休所说的：“艺术，并不怨恨自己无法逾越的贫瘠，但是对于给予和接受的荒诞游戏却不屑一顾。”不，这样的艺术从未存在过，至少在威尔得的作品里没有，此外，比起大多数人，乔治亚的作品有更多的怨恨，也有更多的荒诞。就像贝克特自己的作品一样。这位伟大的爱尔兰作家从未想要脱离那种他简单的认为是“困境”的情况——至少在他死之前——乔治亚也是一样，他总是认为自己作为人、以及一位艺术家所处的状况，只不过是他的存在、以及他的艺术的原料。他描绘自己的困境——或者我应该说他的绘画就是他的困境。英语里有一种说法：“画得把你自己逼到角落里，”究其根本，意思就是你要创造出自己的困境。乔治亚描绘的就是将自己逼到里面的角落。当然，要这样做，他必须要想象自己被困在自己角落、自己的困境的样子——从外部来观看。同时，他还必须想象自己从这种困境之外观看自己的样子（就好像看其他人一样）。这种情况很有戏剧感——荒诞，就像我说过——这位艺术家既是演员，也是观众。

我不禁想起沃尔特·惠特曼的一句诗：“我能以别人的眼光来欣赏钉在自己身上的十字架和戴在自己头上的血的王冠。”（《自己之歌》第38段）真是如此的话，我就可以将自己的困境升华，变成一个置身事外的旁观者。即便知道，归根结底我才是将自己带入困境的那个人，即便这是一场最为残酷的折磨，难道我不能将其仅仅看作是一场荒诞剧吗？我又将自己带入了一个烂摊子……（我想我不得不用很残酷的方式来表达，就好像痛苦是不存在的东西一样，而事实并非如此。但是，读者们，请这样想象，我说这些话是满怀诚意的，就像乔治亚绘画一样的投入，即便他是以荒诞的方式在创作。）

也许你会觉得我与最了解乔治亚的人有着什么不同意见——当然我说的是丹尼斯·扎卡罗普洛斯——他很好的在提醒我们：“故事是关于绘画、而不是艺术家本人的。”不，我意不在此，即便如此，我也没有兴趣再解读（这样做就是在编造）乔治亚的画作想要讲述的那些故事。重要的是，绘画与艺术家之间的关系是映射式的。意思是，谈论画作的唯一途径就是谈论它们所不是的东西，也就是艺术家。谈论艺术家的唯一方式就是谈论他所不是的内容，也就是绘画。

虽然并不那么精确对照，但是扎卡罗普洛斯的忠告让人想起戴维·赫伯特·劳伦斯的名言：“不要相信艺术家，相信传奇。”因为劳伦斯本人就是位艺术家，而且是以艺术家的身份在发言，我们面对的就是著名的克里特岛人——说谎者悖论——不过，乔治亚曾经和我说：“我希望自己可以成为抽象画家，波洛克那样的。”这是真的么？或者这仅仅是艺术家们的日程骗人伎俩？当然，两者皆是。大家都知道，艺术家为了阐明真相而撒谎，但是很少考虑到他们讲述事实是为了说谎的情况。乔治亚已经是抽象画家了；他的画作里有着各种图像的行为，但是它们并不起到什么再现的作用。和所有优秀抽象画家一样，他所有的画都没有名字。但是他是一个画作并不抽象的抽象画家——你也许会说，他的画在叙事。或者，更好的表述方式是，他的话在呈现故事，只不过没人知道这些故事而已。



《无题》
2016年
布面丙烯
230 x 230 厘米

Untitled
2016
Acrylic on canvas
230 x 230 cm

A SEPARATE LOOK

in *Apóstolos Georgíou*.
Painting, EMST, 2011

by Barry Schwabsky

To encounter an artistic original – by which I mean, not necessarily the creator of something entirely unprecedented (since if it were to happen we would probably fail to recognize it) but rather, simply, an artist who has followed a truly independent and solitary path – is a privilege as rare as it is heartening. But this encounter can also be disturbing. It might even give you some sleepless nights, for it means receiving information your mind may not be prepared to process. For man is an animal at once social and solitary – but more social than solitary. Even in what we imagine to be our inner life, in that purely mental activity that is so urgent within us, we like to travel in packs. We feel safer that way, warmer.

So when someone, at least for a while, starts sending back reports from an excursion down some pathway that leads off at some tangent to where we and our pack have been going, it is bound to give us pause. It excites our admiration, certainly, and even jubilation, but also some disquiet. Which path is the tangential one anyway, after all? Perhaps it is the rest of us who are walking into a bog.

I felt something of this kind of euphoria and doubt the first time I encountered some paintings by Apostolos Georgiou, quite by accident, in Paris in 2005. Here suddenly was someone painting with true authority – I wrote at the time of a “seemingly effortless concision and clarity attained by only a few colleagues” – yet in order to articulate a condition of powerlessness, insufficiency, failure. Samuel Beckett, it occurred to me – perhaps this was the influence of Paris – would have appreciated these paintings: Beckett, the personae of whose theater are as rigorous in approaching their ruin as Racinian heroines and as jauntily nonchalant in the face of it as Shakespearian clowns.

Not that Georgiou’s would quite be the art Beckett dreamed of, and which he imagined he had found in the work of Bram van Velde, “an art,” as he told Georges Duthuit, “unresentful of its insuperable indigence and too proud for the farce of giving and receiving.” No, that art never existed, certainly not in van Velde, and besides, Georgiou’s art is more resentful than most and more

farcical too. As was Beckett’s own. The great Irish writer never really managed to exit what he would have liked to have dismissed as merely a “predicament” – at least not until his death – and neither has Georgiou, who in any case recognizes in his predicament as a man and as an artist the matter that is fuel for his existence and his art. He paints his predicament – or should I say painting is his predicament? In English we have an expression, “to paint yourself into a corner,” meaning, essentially, to create your own predicament. Georgiou paints the corner he’s painted himself into. To do so, of course, he must imagine himself stuck in his corner, his predicament – see it from the outside. And at the same time he must imagine himself viewing himself (as if viewing someone else) from outside the predicament. The situation is theatrical – farcical, as I’ve said – and the artist is both the actor and the audience at once.

I can’t help remembering a line from a poem by Walt Whitman: “That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and bloody crowning.” If only, that is, I could transcend my predicament to become the detached spectator to it. Even knowing that after all I brought my predicament upon myself, couldn’t I see it, even was it the greatest torment of all, as merely a farce? Another fine mess I’ve got myself into... (I’m afraid I have expressed this too crudely, as if suffering were somehow unreal, which it’s not, but please, reader, imagine to yourself that I said this as delicately as I should have, as delicately as Georgiou paints it even as he paints it farcically.)

It might sound as if I am implicitly taking issue with Georgiou’s deepest interpreter – of course I mean Denys Zacharopoulos – who has taken good care to remind us, “The story is that of the painting and not of the artist.” Not at all, I don’t mean to do so, even though I also have no interest in recounting (which could only mean inventing) the stories suggested by Georgiou’s paintings.

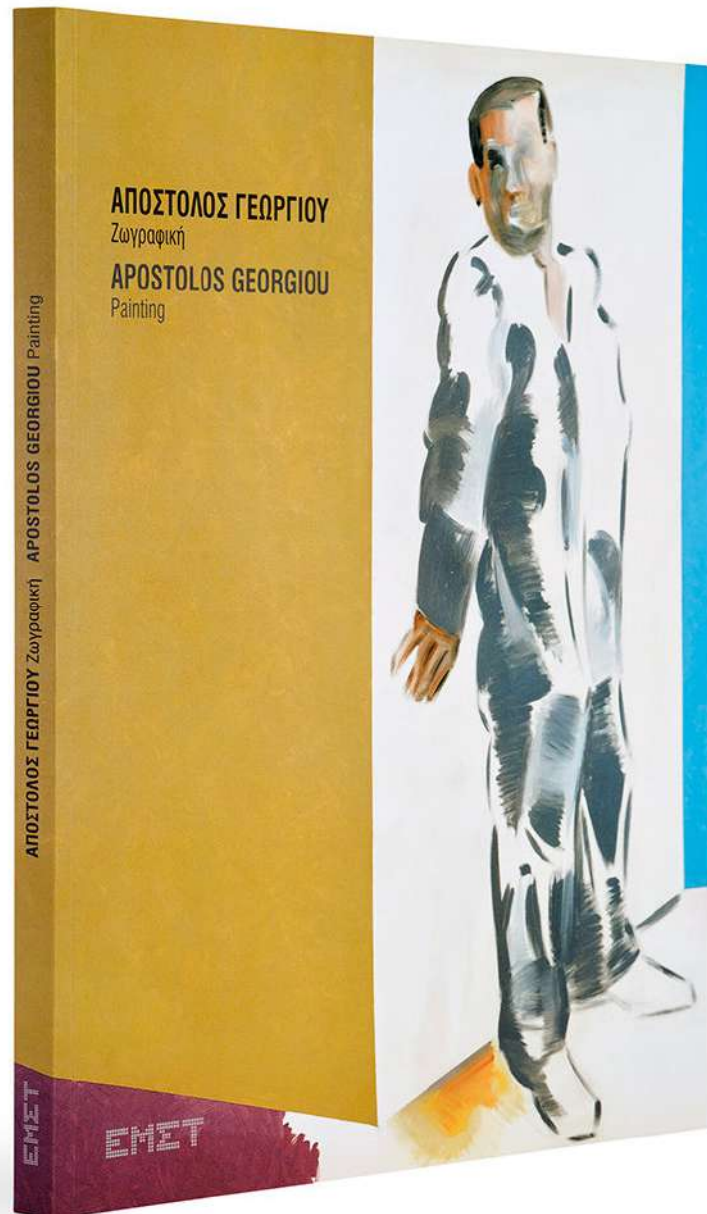
What’s important is that the relation between painting and artist is allegorical. That is, the only way to talk about the painting is to talk about what it is not, namely the artist. And the only way to talk about the artist is to talk about what he is not, namely the painting.

That admonition from Zacharopoulos echoes, though not exactly, the famous words of D.H. Lawrence: "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale." As Lawrence himself was an artist and was speaking as an artist, we are left with the famous paradox of the Cretan Liar – but still: Georgiou once told me, "I wish I could be an abstract painter, a Pollock." Is it true? Or was that just another example of the ordinary deceptiveness of artists? Both, of course. It is well known that artists lie in order to tell the truth but less often considered that they tell the truth in order to lie. Georgiou already is an abstract painter; that is, his paintings are predominantly produced by means of pictorial acts that have no particular representational function. And as with every good abstract painter, his paintings are all untitled. But he is an abstract painter whose paintings are not abstract – whose paintings, you might say, tell stories. Or perhaps it would be better to say, his paintings illustrate stories, only they are stories that no one knows.

What we glean from these paintings is the sense of a story, its mood, I am almost tempted to say its aroma. It exists in an atmosphere pervaded by irony: the irony of existence, the irony of relationship, the irony of any attempt to do something (and this "doing," in the paintings, must always be a metaphor for the doing with which Georgiou himself is most concerned, namely painting). Doing, loving, being all somehow turn out otherwise than one thought, and this "otherwise" is the story and also the peculiar absence of story. Still there is that sense or scent of a story, and that is what Georgiou is unwilling to give up. Georgiou saying he'd like to be an abstract painter is like me saying I'd like to be rich – he's no more willing to give up his (absent) stories in order to be an abstractionist than I am to undertake real remunerative work instead of writing art criticism. He suspects that without the tale there would be only the untrustworthy artist left. As an abstractionist, he told me, "I'd probably play the genius. I'd be too serious. The figures give the work an equilibrium because they allow me to play the clown also." Saint Apostolos, magician and clown. Closer in spirit to Buster Keaton than to Charlie Chaplin. "Georgiou's palette is somber and his themes solemn," as the critic Catherine Cafopoulos once wrote.

He knows how to keep a straight face. Which means I'm out on a limb in claiming that his paintings are comic rather than tragic. But notice how all subjective pathos is drained from the image; if want to see any there you'll have to supply your own. There are people in the paintings, yes, always, which means we are always tempted to identify with them, but they make no contact with our world. They are sealed off in their own world, a geometrical and artificial realm whose severe limits are the four sides of the rectangular canvas and its imaginary black plane. And isn't it funny that the imaginary boundary is just as impregnable as the real ones? As in Buñuel's great film *El ángel exterminador*, in which a group of people at a dinner party are inexplicably trapped in the music room to which they have retired for their postprandial entertainment, Georgiou's characters inhabit a realm where the idea of "outside" has no meaning. Throughout the history of art, figures in paintings have exchanged significant glances with the viewers who gaze at them from outside; but Georgiou's never look out at us, never engage in any exchange with the world beyond the canvas. For that matter their eyes are often absent, or else reduced to a line or dot, incommunicado. They know nothing of us, their audience. We observe them, and we imagine therefore that we know something of them, but do we really? Only enough to know that they remain utterly mysterious. Like ourselves, but in a way we've never seen before.

PUBLICATION PUBLICATION



Apostolos Georgiou. Painting, 2011

ed. ΕΜΣΤ

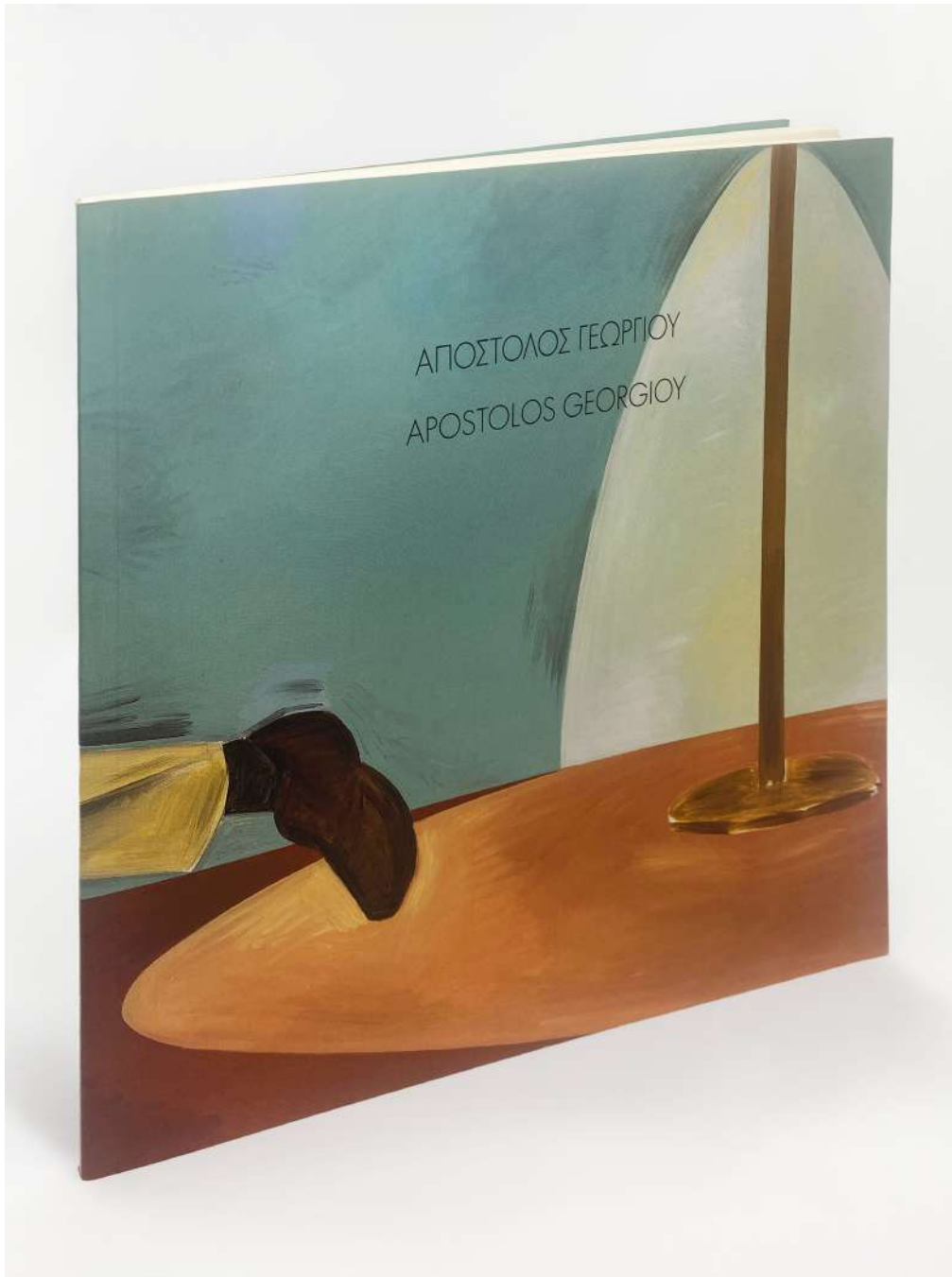
texts by Barry Schwabsky, Daphne Vitali, Denys Zacharopoulos

159 pages

30 x 24 cm

Greek, English

ISBN : 978-960-8349-56-8



Apostolos Georgiou, 2003

ed. Galerie Zina Athanasiadou

texts by Konstantinos Papageorgiou and Denys Zacharopoulos

93 pages

25 x 23 cm

Greek, English

BIOGRAPHY BIOGRAPHIE



Born in 1952 in Thessaloniki, Greece.
Lives and works in Athens and Skópelos.

Apóstolos Georgíoy is first and foremost part of the painting tradition. His paintings, often large-scale, depict men and women sketched with broad brushstrokes. These human figures break down the pictorial surface and the opposition between abstraction and figuration. Georgiou highlights profound feelings of alienation, solitude, and humor. While human beings are the main subject of the work, they are portrayed as anonymous figures without any individual characteristics.

Georgíoy's geometrical compositions organize the picture plane with architectural rigour and design. The installed stage set describes spaces of the soul, which are part of imaginings stemming from our relationship with the Other as well as with our own self. These are spaces of abstraction and color games.

Georgíoy sees painting through observation. He observes the world, reality and people. In this way, he captures what comes to us, either deliberately or accidentally, what is addressed to us, either directly or fortuitously. Seen collectively, his work is about human relationships, about situations left unspoken for years, about seconds that can change one's life.

Apóstolos Georgíoy's work has been exhibited at Documenta 14 (Athens and Cassel) ; 10th Gwangju Biennale ; Passerelle Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brest ; Frank F. Yang Art & Education Foundation, Shenzhen ; Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki ; EMST National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens ; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco ; Centre Pompidou, Paris ; Gagosian Gallery, Athens ; Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain, Sète ; 4th Thessaloniki Biennale ; DESTE Foundation, Athens; and more recently at Aranya Art Center, Qinhuangdao (China) and Mostyn, Wales.

His work is part of prestigious collections as Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, Paris; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris ; Fondation Prat, Paris ; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; EMST National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens ; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne ; Nouveau Musée National, Monaco ; Frank F. Yang Art and Education Foundation, Shenzhen ; European Investment Bank, Luxembourg; Tia Collection, Santa Fe ; AMMA Fundacion, Mexico.

Né en 1952 à Thessalonique, en Grèce.
Vit et travaille à Athènes et à Skópelos.

Apóstolos Georgíoy s'inscrit avant tout dans la tradition de la peinture. Ses tableaux, souvent de grande taille, représentent des hommes et des femmes esquissés à grands coups de pinceau. Ces figures humaines brisent la surface picturale et l'opposition entre abstraction et figuration. Georgiou met en évidence des sentiments profonds d'aliénation, de solitude et d'humour. Bien que les êtres humains soient le sujet principal de l'œuvre, ils sont représentés comme des figures anonymes sans aucune caractéristique individuelle.

Les compositions géométriques de Georgíoy organisent le plan de l'image avec une rigueur et une conception architecturales. Le dispositif scénique installé décrit des espaces de l'âme, qui font partie de l'imaginaire issu de notre relation à l'autre et à nous-mêmes. Ce sont des espaces d'abstraction et de jeux de couleurs.

Georgíoy envisage la peinture par l'observation. Il observe le monde, la réalité et les gens. Il capte ainsi ce qui vient à nous, délibérément ou accidentellement, ce qui nous est adressé, directement ou fortuitement. Considéré collectivement, son travail traite des relations humaines, des situations qui restent inexprimées pendant des années, des secondes qui peuvent changer la vie d'une personne.

Les œuvres d'Apóstolos Georgíoy ont été exposées à la Documenta 14 (Athènes et Cassel) ; à la 10e Biennale de Gwangju ; à la Passerelle Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brest ; à la Frank F. Yang Art & Education Foundation, Shenzhen ; Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki ; EMST National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athènes ; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco ; Centre Pompidou, Paris ; Gagosian Gallery, Athènes ; Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain, Sète ; 4ème Biennale de Thessalonique ; DESTE Foundation, Athènes ; et plus récemment au Aranya Art Center, Qinhuangdao (Chine) et à Mostyn, Pays de Galles.

Ses œuvres font partie de collections prestigieuses telles que le Centre Pompidou, Paris ; le Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris ; la Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris ; la Fondation Prat, Paris ; la Fondation d'art Kadist, Paris ; le Musée national d'art contemporain EMST, Athènes ; la National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne ; le Nouveau Musée National, Monaco ; la Frank F. Yang Art and Education Foundation, Shenzhen ; la Banque européenne d'investissement, Luxembourg ; la Tia Collection, Santa Fe ; l'AMMA Fundacion, Mexique.



MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS

MICHEL REIN Paris
42 rue de Turenne
75003 Paris
France

Phone +33 1 42 72 68 13
galerie@michelrein.com

Opening hours
Tuesday > Saturday 11am - 7pm

MICHEL REIN Brussels
Washington rue/straat 51A
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Phone +32 2 640 26 40
contact.brussels@michelrein.com

Opening hours
Thursday > Saturday 10am - 6pm