

Mina Papatheodorou- Valyraki

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Poros

Mina Papatheodorou's dynamic, pulsating and energised painting is utterly personal in expression and a source of inexhaustible surprise.

Her painting, the inspiration of which, as well as its rhythms and lines, is so personal, convinces the viewer – whatever the particular stimulus in an individual painting – that she has absorbed some essential part of the rhythm and the pulse of the cosmogony.

Chromatic explosions of energy, shapes whose rhythms and radiance are meteor-like are incentives for the viewer not only to imagine, but also to experience much more than we can see directly at first glance. The tension and pulsating quality of the colour lend her compositions an exceptional mobility and evoke the feeling of a living “being”. This feeling transfuses us directly and overtly with the very primal source of the artist's initial stimulus.

Papatheodorou-Valyraki's work, no matter what the subject matter – whether it be still lifes, racing cars, athletes and sports, ships, cranes and shipyards, erotic groups and nudes, landscapes washed by the Greek light, or scenes from big cities in frenetic rhythms – cannot be looked at superficially or in an affected manner. Within us, her subjects are transmuted from an optical impression to a

personal experience: a process that constitutes a rare achievement for an artist.

Indeed, Mina paints in precisely the same manner that she breathes, feels and moves, in a constant creative tension, without ever repeating herself or resorting to facile solutions that aim only to impress her viewers. What is more important is that her work never lacks quality or integrity of execution. The artist's vivid style is justified on every square millimetre of her paintings and in them nothing is fragmented or remains aloof from the rhythm and pulse of the entirety.

This rhythm is inherent in the painter and her merest, yet always unerring brushstroke pulses. In all of her paintings, regardless of the thickness of her medium, whether the pigment is applied so as to create heightened or smoother relief surfaces, she reinforces the dynamic quality of the work so as to project the space all around, not simply as a presence but as an organism that is developing and changing constantly.

Impassioned with her art, Papatheodorou-Valyraki paints instinctively and this is precisely the reason why she can convey to us in the most direct and effective manner the quintessence of her inspiration, as well as her spontaneous reaction to it. By conveying the very essence of her subject in an exceptionally penetrating manner the artist manages to transmute it both by association and artistically into a starting point for alternative impressions and a stream of meanings and references.

All of her still lifes come alive through her palette in such a way so as to highlight a timely spark to kindle messages that feel metaphysical.

Her landscapes, whether they depict untrodden nature or, in the cacophonous frenzy of a big contemporary metropolis, constitute a psychograph of human destiny. Crafted and energised with true vigour, athletes in her works convey to the viewer their edginess to utmost degree. Their bodies and movements constitute a field of action for the pulsation and rhythm of colours that record an athlete's every effort.

Rendered with a similar energy, the racing cars reveal yet again the artist's strength while they are also singular and very eloquent landscapes of contemporary technology. The artist has also

captured the pulse of eroticism in all her nudes to such an extent that her paintings imprint on the viewer senses beyond those that are directly visible.

In the paintings of ships and cranes that the viewer can enjoy in this exhibition which Mina paints almost instinctively, she touches upon the zenith of her expressiveness, as each ship and crane constitute a living being, full of life, that becomes an individual thanks to the pulsation of colour and the strength of her brushstrokes. Whether one perceives them as substitutes for human figures and/or industrial landscapes, the art in these works glamorise ugliness and turn it into an aesthetic presence.

The artist's dynamic gestures can be seen in the hulls and the cranes, witnesses to the human fate, as they convince us that they have truly absorbed the essence of daily stress, the struggle to earn a living, the vagaries of life. At the same time they also express our taste for creation, for progress, as well as our faith in the possibility of a better life or, at least, afterlife ...

Depicted during almost throughout a day – at dawn, midday or at sunset – the hulls stand out in a light whose texture and clarity is different, in an individual manner and mainly through gradations of semirepresentationalism that go as far as total abstraction. Indeed, what is depicted, or better yet, suggested in Mina's work almost always constitute a charismatic pretext for a successively abstract composition, the mainplayers of which are colour and never-endingly mobile brushstrokes. These qualities endow her work with the ability to stimulate our imagination no matter how many times we look on them. Papatheodorou-Valyraki has an incredible ability to suggest, not impose, her subjects as this would substantively defeat the effort to communicate with the viewer. Viewers of Mina's work absorb the multiplicity of stimuli she offers in her and feel free to garner those impressions that best suit them and their personal vision: this is, after all, the true purpose of art. What is even more important is that viewers feel that they are actively participating in creating the composition because of the strong stimuli found therein. These stimuli continue to create an impression even when one is not directly viewing it.

Mina's colours, whose hues and formation are dynamic, with their strong contrasts and the milder gradations express both her passion for art and her total abandonment to it, her identification with the

quintessence of her subject matter. Her sensitivity to colour is such that even when black and white predominate, one imagines that one can see many more colours. This quality demonstrates that she has realised a psychograph that is not evident only to the artist, but also one which we react to both visually and in terms of our emotions.

The colours this artist uses become transponders and receivers of spiritual situations and dispositions that transform all of her works into an exceptionally sensitised litmus paper that records emotions and reactions. This quality reinforces the organic nature of the work and this is something rare, but a quintessential part of aesthetics.

But the main thing is that in Mina Papatheodorou-Valyraki's works one can look into the very dynamic creation of art and see a microcosm in the image and the likeness of the macrocosm. Or better yet, a microcosm that, because it contains the very meaning of the energy that rules the universe, is in accordance with the Platonic definition of authentic art: Authentic in terms of inspiration, execution and the power of expression, Mina's painting fills us as creatively – that is, poetically – with the very sense of the cosmogony.

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