Yannis Adamakos

The Space Between Us

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Poros

There is the story of the Chinese artist who was condemned to death by the emperor, because he lied when he said that there was a world whose beauty surpassed reality. But the artist managed to survive by painting a boat, and sailing off in it.

It seems to me to be right to begin a text about the work of Yiannis Adamakos by telling this story as a sort of allegory about the attitude of a contemporary artist, who is a painter. It seems that art uses every medium to express its inspiration, and then its only way out is the painted image. Adamakos has been working for 30 years, and his work has been presented dozens of times. His time as a painter has corrected many weaknesses of material that in art are smoothed over only by experience.

His painting continues as an investigation that begins from an instinctual level, without being embedded in a particular attitude. In order to convey this situation, the artist recreates archetypal affinities between us and the natural environment. These affinities bring back to the human figure and to landscapes a kind of abstractness which is fundamental in emotions.

Thus, from landscapes, Adamakos' works became topographies. A landscape is a rendering of an image of a place. The place is initially the memory of someone who we know either through our imagination or through our intellect: he is a construction of our mind. The image of the painting and memory place this person in a known landscape, and an animistic awe is reborn in us that closely connects the individual with the place he lives in.

If one has no knowledge if someone's consciousness, dreams cannot be interpreted with any certainty. Experience, however,

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comes and saves the situation - experience refers to a type of emotion or thought and not to particular ideas or intellectual baggage. And this is a wonderful and characteristic image.

The paradoxical images shimmer.

If one is honest, one must admit that abstract images in painting are difficult to love. Images from the conscious level of inspiration and their imaginary substitute. At times, a human figure that changes and becomes part of the landscape or its elements, thrusting forth to become one with the place.

The description of some strange beings in between the image of the sea, the sky and sunshine reach their apogee in the painting and see like presences among the trees. Even when graphite and lead replaced the variety of colours, his works became stronger from the clarity of the drawing. His works always present views and ideas from places where art plays a secret role.

What is interesting about Adamakos' work these days is not the narration as such, the manner in which he responds to the external world and to human nature, from which all particular forms of work arise.

Naturally, one does not look for neo-expressionist elements in his work, but any expressionist painting elicits an almost physical reaction in the viewer. His works express emotional experiences which are rendered in non-realistic colours, with yellows and reds taken from fierce human passion. When one actually feels the physical reaction, this theory is confirmed.

Despite all the subtle alterations in the style of his painting, the images in Adamakos' works are capable of forcing memory to broaden the field of meaning, without obviously distorting the normal shape of the natural landscape. And this is artistic mastery.

The perception of place has a psychological dimension as it is closely tied to every viewer's changing moods and that is why it is not a specific, objective technique.

The artist adopts traditional forms and tries to use these to convey an objective expression of an inner affair and in this way to give it true existence.

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One feels that he does this more for himself than for his viewers. He transforms image into an everyday scene, using his viewers' memories.

He imposes a psychological process which the expressionist style allows, but raises it beyond its superficial qualities to a level of emotion that is far above them.

Adamakos studied this mechanism in the past. This somewhat simplistic analysis is necessary to prove how broad expressionistic motifs can be even today.

A metaphorical image, a simile, is a representation of an internal experience. It thus acquires independence and becomes ever more differentiated from the object, but also brings it to mind. It is enough for one to understand the existence of experiences that led to an image – it is not necessary to recognise the experiences if one understands their significance.

This attitude combines the movement to abstraction, to vivid colour, and is a far cry from mimicking. In any case, how could the artist mimic someone else's experience? It is a very warm support of expression and creation, regardless of official rules.

His painting retains the substance and this seems to transform his images to more common ones that the purely personal or individual would be. His preference is always in the mystical element of ecstasy and sometimes, despair - for the weight of all we can remember if we want.

It is a mistake for one to believe that expressionism came to an end suddenly. The end of the person who insists on externalising himself will come only when humanity becomes something different from what we know today.

Thus, the words required to describe the diverse aesthetic experiences which this text addresses the viewers are inexhaustible. The gap between us, is the breathing space that every living being needs to live. Every year, if not every day, we are forced to bet our salvaton on an image, based on incomplete knowledge.

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