

# George Lappas

## Figures and Rucksack with Ears

May 19 – July 11, 2017

### Poros

George Lappas' posthumous one-man show presents thirty four works, sculptures, studies, and drawings covering the period 1977-2016. These works comprise a unity that focusses first and foremost on the human figure, the principal theme of his creation as a whole. The unity is disrupted or even elaborated by seemingly exogenous elements, which however signal a functional peculiarity of the artist: George Lappas' starting point and idiosyncrasy are those of a traveller, a voyager. His trajectory has no boundaries, geographic, cultural or national; in similar fashion his resulting artistic creations transcend sensory reality. The trademark of this search to the ends of the known or conceivable world is the emblematic 'rucksack with ears', an indispensable accessory that enables the traveller to hear the merest sound in the human universe.

Large and small-size figures of bronze, aluminium, fabric, plastic, neon lights, make up the sculptural world of George Lappas. They are framed by the exhibition space, which serves as part of a traditional local house. There the 'Artist with his Thoughts' converses with shamans, tightrope walkers, jugglers, magicians, divinities. These figures are 'in motion' or stationary at the edges of reality, oblivious of the laws of physics and equilibrium. The natural body is abolished; thought, memory, and narration work according to an inner logic, without perceptible consequences. Unexpected materials create a sense of paradox, of the uncanny, recalling unconscious dream connections, undecipherable associations. The dialogue between the Egyptianised Solon relaxing on the banks of the Nile and the figures of his fellow travellers is unpredictable for the viewer, and is based on thematic references that go back to the multiple recognisable starting points of the artist.

East and West operate artistically with distinct traits, though in an original, archetypal composition. The sculptures fetch to mind Egypt and hieroglyphics, India and Brahman temples; they bring out the paradoxical and hint at magic—indications perhaps of nostalgia for the ‘metaphysical’ past at work in the countries of the East. The West, on the contrary, imposes a rationalist tyranny that causes the artist ‘grief of space’. The only antidote for this is the work of Art, the only way to bridge antitheses, to appropriate the unfamiliar—that is, to bring to completion the ‘foreign world’. Not only the shamans and conjurers, the tightrope walkers and acrobats, but also the one-legged men and the hanging gardeners narrate through performance the perpetual desire of man to surpass each time his frontiers, whether of the physical world surrounding him or of finite intelligence and knowledge. Under the same transcendental attitude a seat or a star may balance over the head of a figure, extending the borders and the resilience of the body and freely reinterpreting the visible symbiosis of human being and object.

This exhibition attempts to give the most complete picture possible of the complex personality of George Lappas and his long and painful search. He was an artist who ‘saw many cities of men and learned their way of thinking’ (Odyssey 1.3). He gained this experience and conveyed it with mastery and insight throughout his entire artistic journey.