Dimitris Anastasiou

Biography

Born in Athens in 1979. Lives and works in Athens.

A distinctive feature of Dimitris Anastasiou's work is his figurative, representational paintings, which engage the viewer’s observational gaze and encourage a deeper exploration of the image while simultaneously subverting objective reality and the function of "realistic" and narrative painting. His works examine the visual, symbolic, narrative, and conceptual role of the image.

Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, the quality of drawing, and the rendering of light, Anastasiou’s works are characterized by a clarity that blends photorealism and illusion with sharpness and transparency, reminiscent of the works of Johannes Vermeer, Jan van Eyck, or Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, from whom he often draws inspiration. This is evident in his drawing series *Flemish Dream* (2011) and the painting series *Narrated Images* (2012).

The artist is particularly concerned with the methods of representation, narration, and interpretation of an artwork—in other words, the very language and potential of painting itself. In his series *Paintings That Depict Paintings* (2009), Anastasiou recreates optical illusion techniques from art history. He paints images that depict, among other things, blackboards, bulletin boards, the reverse side of a painting, or paintings by other artists. This creates a play between representation as an illusion of reality and representation as a painted artwork (for example, an image of a blackboard that appears to be an actual blackboard but is, in fact, a painting). In doing so, he triggers a shift in the viewer's perception.

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Many of his paintings (*A=-A* series, 2018, or the five-panel oil painting *The Dollhouse* from the *TANGRAM* exhibition, 2022) and drawing series (*Narratives*, *TANGRAM* exhibition, 2022) incorporate elements of comic book structure. They construct dense, suggestive, and imaginative stories woven through sophisticated visual and conceptual enigmas.

The stories emerge from the image itself, with form constructing "content" rather than painting serving as a representation of an external subject. This approach is evident in *Narrated Images* (2012), a series of works following the logic of a graphic novel, composed of sequential, self-contained episodes—open-ended narratives of indeterminate situations.

Anastasiou also creates a series of paradoxical portraits, frequently incorporating his own image in various roles (*Self-Portrait* series, 2006–ongoing). Gazes that do not meet, unexpected or irrational encounters (e.g., the *E(K)SOTERIKA*series, 2012–2015), and multiple narrative focal points contribute to enigmatic, suspended states between the empirical and the unconscious, exterior and interior spaces, absence and presence, the human figure and its reflection, the imaginary and the real, stillness and unfolding action.

In these images, simultaneous temporalities and different spatial perspectives, viewpoints, and scales coexist. This results in the sense of a timeless condition—a random, frozen moment that nevertheless contains a sense of continuity. A distinct atmosphere of doubt and existential inquiry is also evident.

A=-A, a complete narrative that draws from the sequentiality of comics, further develops the practice introduced in *Narrated Images*. This work was exhibited as a painting installation comprising 162 individual pieces that elliptically tell a story. With the addition of text (as in comics), it was also published as a graphic novel (*A=-A*), released in Greek (*Kaleidoscope Editions*, 2018) and in English (*Jonathan Cape*, 2021). In a similar vein, Anastasiou is currently developing the graphic novel *The Adventures of Gerasimos Kelkanidis* (2023–ongoing).

In the *TANGRAM* series (2022), the artist constructs narratives through polyptychs or compositions containing different "frames." The open structure of these works allows for multiple interpretations, depending on how each viewer mentally assembles the "frames." In this body of work, the conceptual space and the fleeting pause

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between motifs or between one image and the next gain intensity, becoming an integral part of the overall experience.

Anastasiou also explores the function of the image as a polyptych, as well as the concepts of inversion and deconstruction—the disruption of a "linear" meaning—in his painting series *The Mystery of Patersville* (2023–ongoing).

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Education

1998–2006 Studied painting at the Athens School of Fine Arts.

Solo Exhibitions

2022 *TANGRAM*, curated by Tatiana Spinari-Pollali, CITRONNE Gallery, Athens.

2018 *A=-A*, curated by Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, ena Art Gallery, Athens.

2012 *Narrated Images*, curated by Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

2009 *Paintings Depicting Paintings*, curated by Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

Group Exhibitions [selected]

2024 *Towards the Land of the Hesperides*, curated by Athina Schina, P. & M. Kydoniefs Foundation, Andros.

2023 *Theorems 3*, curated for participation by D. Anastasios: Athina Schina, “ERGOSTASIO” space, Athens School of Fine Arts.

2022 *Anaparastasi: Reconstruction, Reenactment, Reconstitution*, curated by Orestis Andreadakis, MOMus – Experimental Center for the Arts, Thessaloniki (part of the 63rd Thessaloniki Film Festival).

2021 *Dante, The Imagination of Images*, curated by Konstantinos Mousas, Italian Cultural Institute, Athen*In Black and White*, Marginalia Gallery, Strovolos, Cyprus.

2019 *Oresteia Reversed*, curated by Kalliopi Liadi, Michael Cacoyannis Foundation, Athens.

Anthropometries, Marginalia Gallery, Strovolos, Cyprus.

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2017 *Positions Berlin Art Fair 2017*, curated by Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, Berlin, Germany (Kaplanon Galleries).

2016 *ART MADRID 2016*, curated by Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, Madrid, Spain (Kaplanon Galleries).

Contemporary Art Fair Zurich 2016, curated by Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, Zurich, Switzerland (Kaplanon Galleries).

2015 *SWAB 2015*, Barcelona, Spain (Kaplanon Galleries) .

Words and Color, curated by Ira Papapostolou, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

2014 *In His Subterranean Island*, curated by Achilleas Rasis, Zoumboulakis Gallery, Athens.

A Tribute to Domenikos Theotokopoulos, ena Art Gallery, Athens.

Dialogues of Visual and Tactile Perception, Koroni Festival, Koroni, Peloponnese.

Images of a Fluid World, curated by Sofia Peloponnisiou-Vassilakou and Niki Vlassioti-Papadaki, exhibition of Antonis Smyrnios and Dimitris Anastasios, Angelos and Leto Katakouzenos Museum, Athens.

The Last Supper, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

Magic and Disenchantment, curated by Ira Papapostolou, Hellenic American Union, Athens.

2013 *Days of 2013 – A Tribute to C.P. Cavafy*, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

Messolonghi and Lord Byron, Moschandreou Gallery, *Messolonghi.*

2011 *Common Denominator: The Teacher Chronis Botsoglou*, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

2010 *Human Measures*, curated by Iris Kritikou, Cultural Center of the City of Athens “Melina Mercouri,” Athens.

2009 *Parallel Worlds*, Greek–Russian Art Forum, Rachmaninoff Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia.

2008 *Summer of Young Artists – Identities/Otherness*, Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, Athens.

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2006 *Young Painters*, Technohoros “To Milo,” Athens.

2005 *Chronis Botsoglou and His Students*, curated by Anny Malama and Ilia Lakidou, Spyros Vassiliou Atelier, Athens.

Bibliography

Anastasiou, Dimitris. TANGRAM. Exhibition catalogue. Athens: CITRONNE Gallery, 2022.

Anastasiou, Dimitris. Paintings Depicting Paintings (introductory text and epilogue by the artist, signed under two fictional authors). Exhibition catalogue. Athens: Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, 2009.

Alekos Kyrarinis, “Kenology” (text by the artist).

Schina, Athena. “The Education of the Gaze.” In: Dimitris Anastasiou, Narrated Images. Exhibition catalogue. Athens: Kaplanon 5 Art Gallery, 2012.

Tatiana Spinari-Pollali, “TANGRAM”.

Milionis, Nikos Al. “Dimitris Anastasiou: The Perichoresis of Images or Reality as a Riddle.” In: Portraits – Mirrors and Reflections of Creators. Athens: Armos Publications, 2023.

viction:ary (ed.). Graphite. Hong Kong: viction:ary, 2022 [Featuring Dimitris Anastasiou among 28 international artists].

Publications

A=-*A*, Jonathan Cape, United Kingdom, 2021.

A=-*A*, Kaleidoscope Editions, Athens, 2018.

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