


SEA AND DISSENT

For the summer of 2006, the Basil and Elize Goulandris Foundation organize a retrospective of Greek painter Panagiotis Tetsis' work. Oil and water paintings from private and public collections are included, showcasing the better part of the artist's career. His favorite theme is the sea, bathed in Greek light and colors. And that is precisely the moral hue of the exhibition – the moral hue of the artist. Panagiotis Tetsis was a student of Dimitris Pikionis and Chantzikiriakos Gkikas. He studied the modern concepts of the Munich School (1944). Now, at 81, he says: «My favorite work is a boat, gift to the National Gallery because it has the loneliness. It is a boat viewed from above. The water appears dark from that height, but the boat's reflection can be seen ►

somewhere deeper». The artist frequently confuses the critics. Some consider him an exquisite colorist. Others focus on the way he has portrayed the Greek light. Some of us believe that Panagiotis Tetsis exists in the Aegean. The Greek light is his spell, the platonic geometry draws his shapes. It is there where myths are born. Where solitude comes at peace. The master knows how hard his art is: «Painting is always difficult. At first you have but an image of the synthesis. Then you choose the weights, the antitheses. At this point things appear that completely transform the original synthesis». Panagiotis Tetsis changes destinies with single brushstrokes. The continuation of his work takes you further, as if his seas draws you into them, giving you the sense that you are one with their nature. «I began with a lithography of Hydra's Cavos. Silently, I let myself drift. An emotion long asleep awakened, the relaxation of being left without purpose, aim and goal, things sometimes poisonous. All but impulse functioned. The purposeless bliss, like a child's discovery of color and its erotic joy. After a while, I felt the need to dense the cover, by pressing the pencil to achieve a darker tone, or higher color intensity. I added more colors, one on top of another, to enhance the variation of colors.



In the second draft the landscape changed. It was not the warm golden afternoon of my initial intentions. I could see cold tones mixed with a chilly pink dominate the light volume of a cloud. It was what the memory of my eyes had constructed from an afternoon of the past year. The pink of the cloud reflected on the sea, a puff that almost seemed fake, causing reservations to the painter, like a forbidden fruit. But it found a way. More followed. The colored pencil wasn't enough any more. I needed a denser painting material. I used oily crayons, scratch dry pastels with rough paper. Still not enough. I needed the surface to be soft, fuzzy but raw. Wetting it and using the thickest rough paper provided the best result. Then came aquarelle, with dry or oily pastel. Then tempera. Then Chinese ink, with tissue paper as means of applying. Everything combined. I found how confined I used to be without those means, in tiny surfaces, with themes willing to take me to more exciting adventures».

He is one of our most important artists. He tutored with Parthenis and studied with a scholarship in Paris, from 1953 to 1956. The Italian government offered him an honorary scholarship in 1960 and he was sponsored by the Ford Institute in 1972. A founder of the Vakalo Fine Arts Workshop and a professor at the Supreme Fine Arts School of Athens, he was elected a member of the Athens Academy in 1992. His seas, colored by the light of Greece, embody the spirit of this country.



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