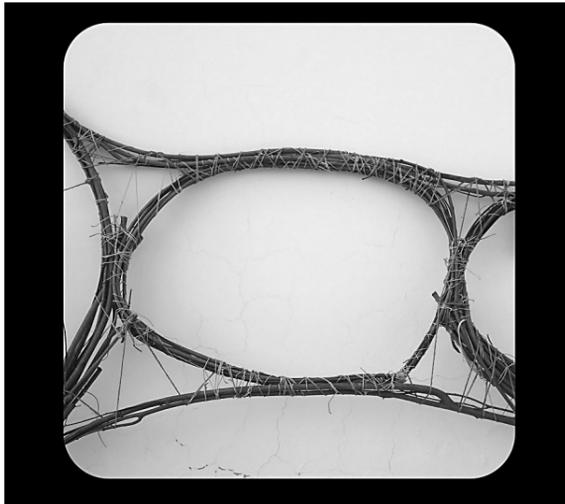


40 ART SCENE

By Melissa Hekkers



Charis Paspallis



George Petrou



Marianna Constanti

Embracing re-birth

Using the Ottoman Baths in the heart of Paphos as a backdrop, seven artists unite to celebrate December 21; a date widely communicated through mythology and in literature of fantasy and science fiction as the 'the end of the world'

As widespread as it is unfounded, the idea of re-birth following the end of the world has taken an international appeal for a wide spectrum of artists who have come together and shared their work in an attempt to envisage what the world has progressed towards, and as a result reached an inevitable collapse.

Michelangelo Pistoletto, Italian painter, action and object artist, and art theorist is a great advocate of this theory in which he talks about The Third Paradise, a phase society is to enter on the date in question, in a process that will bring it back towards nature/earth and a new-found common ground shared on the basis of common principles and ethical behaviour.

Impelled by Pistoletto's international invitation to participate in a great common artwork on the first worldwide day of re-birth, the beginning of The Third Paradise, each artist, individually, yet collectively, interprets his or her personal concerns in relation to ideas in re-establishing a world which needs re-thinking, re-phrasing, re-evaluation and a purer re-start in an exhibition entitled Catharsis - Re-birth.

As two of the participating artists, Sylvia Nicolaidis and Nicolas Iordanou reveal, "working under the same concept and creating work for a specific space that we chose, we find that there has been a creative dialogue between us. Also, there is a sense of community between us, since we have worked with each other in previous exhibitions." Yet these seven individuals are also linked to all participations around the world who are exhibiting for this purpose: raising the idea towards a collective and united experience.

Considering that the concept of the exhibition is something that affects us all, the works created for this show also have elements that we can, in one way or another, relate to. Birth or re-birth, social consciousness and perhaps the fact that we are entering a new year implies that we are all in the process of re-thinking, re-evaluating and preparing for a 'new beginning'. Talking to the participating artists and getting an idea about what is to be portrayed in the show, it's apparent that all will have something to relate to.

Miriam McConnon Papageorgiou takes a more direct approach. With a large painting, she examines the return of society to the grass roots of simple domestic life and the security and sense of belonging that return (to nature) gives us. As she puts it: "My work looks at nostalgia in our lives and the control it has over us."

Imprinting the eternal cycle of life in comparison with that of our environment, Yiannis Sakellis presents a metallic installation which reflects the surrounding space along with the viewer, in lines and fragments. As he describes "the spiral pushes the image of the observer higher, absorbing it in its internal space, captivating him and making him part of this eternal spiral process, of birth, death, re-birth. This reflecting spiral standing as if it were a contemporary monument, reminds us of the eternal circle of life and our environments' unavoidable evolution."



Miriam McConnon



Sylvia Nicolaidis

Another installation composed of various mirrors collected from different sites of the world and produced in different periods of time by Constanti Marianna compiles a synthesis where the viewer frames himself/herself in different contexts related to the past, the present and the future possibility. Marianna explains that "each item is a remnant of personal moments, an object of desire and vanity; a fetish of narcissistic and materialistic behaviours which reflects directly to the myth of narcissus and the memento of a floral plantation."

George Petrou challenges the idea of the image as a language and the way it is produced, understood and communicated. Petrou maintains that his video installation "highlights our intrinsic relational formation of selfhood, both socially and culturally, centred in a deep human desire for continuation with our own sense of self and with those around us."

Viewing things from a paradoxical point of view, Nicolaidis and Iordanou join forces in a video installation that consists of two projections that face and interact with each other.

The duo explains that they "are using elements that are contradictory, conflicting and opposite, but they co-exist, light/darkness, life/death, man/woman, destruction/creation; one's beginning can mean the other's end, however one cannot exist with the other."

Charis Paspallis is concerned with the way society drives its people and how "the evolution of facts of a repetitive society which unconsciously captures each one of us in certain beliefs and ideas of the modern era." In a mixed media piece made from wood and cloth, he attempts to depict "the transformation of facts that re-create the hope of a new beginning," which in his eyes "promises our release from the stereotypes that we carry since the day we were born."

These works have come together to form a dialogue which takes place in a monument of reference and histo-



Nicolas Iordanou

ry; the Ottoman Baths of Paphos. Presenting work in an unconventional space brings about unique challenges. As a collective, the artists seem to have acknowledged this, while Sakellis rightly puts it "when you take the right to be part of the history of such a place, you have to be careful not to offend it, it always makes you try and naturally merge the art work with its environment, find a balance between the environment and the contemporary art installation."

A documentation of the exhibition (short film) will be presented at the Louvre Museum in Paris during the exhibition "Année un - le paradis sur terre" of Italian artist and creator of the "The Third Paradise" and "Re-birth day" concepts, Michelangelo Pistoletto in April 2013.

The opening of the exhibition takes place tonight at the Ottoman Baths (Hamam), Nicodemou Mylona, Paphos at 7pm and will remain on display until December 30 (excluding 24-26) from 9am-4pm. More information on 99478162.