

CONFESSIONS

The painter Vangelis Rinas submits a new thematologically artistic proposal through his exhibition "Presences". Clear greek light shed on rocks, which at first sight refer to something timeless, primitive, solid, seemingly motionless and in every sense mystic.

It is a reasonable question to ask why somebody so successful and totally artistic with personal and group exhibitions abroad, who holds an attractive position in the Greek art market, would choose to astound us with such an obvious turn of thematology disregarding all possible consequences at a time of generally admitted crisis, especially in the art market. Creations mainly of large dimensions, such as the ones Rivas presents in "Presences" in some sense limit the "marketability" of his new work. On the other hand, they increase the intensity of the questions arousing from his new proposal.

A visit to his workshop, I believe, offered satisfying answers to the questions posed and the "keys" he uses to unlock his new artistic proposal.

It is beyond any doubt that his ability to represent –"depicting of what is visible"- has bought Rinas before a wide acceptance by the public and consequently a great demand for his work. His clear and bright glance at various topics-faces(the artist himself claims they are places) such as the female figures, the angels, the ships, the shipyards, the bulks of urban and industrial buildings emerging from

metaphysical surroundings create a positive, artistic, liberating and victorious experience. There is perpetual quest in his works which results in finding the miracle-places, not mere landscapes, showing absolutely no time. Places emerging from the creator's imagination and lead to his inner world. Works commencing from the world of perception and transform to totally artistic facts. Both in his previous work and in "Presences", Rinas is in a constant quest for the miracle. The miracle is the place.

Which is Rinas's new place?

Rinas's answer is firm:

«At this time I wouldn't be able to draw anything else but rocks. The way they look, their power, their eternal presence, their resistance to all conditions, their primitiveness are all the reasons why they create for me a feeling of security and serenity»

We are living in a troubled and tragic period and the rocks of Ikaria emerge unconsciously and mystically as a unique spiritual shelter. I did not choose them; they came to me. They emerged from memory-silently, impressively; just as when as a child I would find comfort in their naked warmth.

I have the feeling that man's ultimate possession ,freedom, is at risk. I foresee and feel that the monster of new atrocious totalitarianism is gradually being built using as materials the thoughtless and inconsiderate degradation of everything. I am concerned and this obsessive agony leads me to

search for the forlorn, unaffected place which can give life to our threatened freedom with imagination and hope -for me, the eternal rocks are this place-where I played and found shelter in my early youth»

The key to unlock Rinas's new artistic proposal has been given: «In the arts, we visualize a world born from nothing, from impulses through which the painter not only produces paintings but his creative self as well» says K. Papagiorgis. Painting is a mystic mediation (from the word myo=close my eyes), which brings us back to an experienced truth via imagination and the materials used. The actual birthplace is always our childhood, the primitiveness of our senses and the world of innocence. That is where Vangelis Rinas returns to at a time when everything arrived us is unstable. As every creator, he addresses memory and through memory, the just born security that the primitive, naked and stable rocks provide , by saying: «I sought for a liberating relationship with painting. I feel liberated when the ego shrinks» That is when I feel that I am close to salvation and at the same, total freedom. I am overcome by a feeling of universal love and rejoice. I do not really know if I am salvaged from my corruptible existence, from my fears, my agonies. I am though, led to a divine participation of things, leading to a common mind, where unspeakable reifications take place, where male, female, landscapes, rocks, people entwine. There is an absence of time. Past and present unite.

Rinas, alert as a creator, received the warnings for a

waylaying barbarization and he explained them as a threat against the freedom of man. His new artistic proposal - always within a constant quest for the miracle- led him to an absoluteness of his inner self which he identified not only with his own consciousness but also with that of humanity. The rocks, which at times begin from a universal «angelic black light» - a very strong influence of Chinese ink which he adopted during his time in China - and at other times fly above us like pre-historic creatures or wingless angels, covered with the bright light of the Aegean Sea; their presence is not obvious owing to their bodies, but owing to their creator's ineffable agony and loud, victorious hymn. I choose to present some extracts from previous conversations we shared, which indicate the artist's agony; a feature prevalent in all this work.

«I am not very competent in speaking. I have managed to express myself, to speak through my painting. Painting has become my whole world.» «I am only interested in the painting and not the signature on it. I respect every painting as something independent. Art is personified, you must never cheat on art.»

«Real drawing is a gift-charisma. The Muse offers you talent. If you do not respect it, she takes it back. When my hand and soul "do not obey", I wonder to myself what it is that I have done, whom have I insulted and my gift was taken back.»

«There are works of art by anonymous artists

characterized by unbelievable beauty and artistic value. That is the greatest humiliation. An artist must be characterized by humbleness. Arrogance means not appreciating the gift you are given and that is an insult (hybris). It is amazing to see masterpieces signed "made by hand". The artist is a mediator. I prefer to be a servant of art and not just one of the names. This promotion of ego really infuriates me.»

« Art is evidence of a divine gift. At the same time it is a cross to bear, a wreath of thorns. You need strength to withstand the burden of art. Painting is a place, a planet; when you arrive there and you feel that you belong there, you just cannot leave it.»

«Our time is totally against spiritual development and we are unfortunately heading towards a general massing and manipulation of people...»

« I am at a loss with my country, Greece. There is an intense need to follow an example, which at this time either does not exist or is concealed. »

Rinas felt with that he was suffocating in his country, so he sought for competition for himself and his art

in the big cities of the world. During his personal exhibition in the **National Gallery of Beijing** (NAMOC) and in Shanghai, one of his sculptures-installations was very successful and is now possessed by the **National Centre for the Performing Arts** – the greatest and most modern institution of arts in new China- and is permanently exhibited there.

Indicative of how highly appreciated he is in China, is the commendable statement by one of the most significant representatives of modern Chinese art, the President of the Chinese Art Union LIU Dawei «... with his paintbrush, bright as a torch, Rinas lights firecrackers which last through centuries. He has eyes as clear as the sea, a heart full of love, deep and colorful like the sky, the sea, the white clouds. It is love for life - bold and great as it surpasses place and time ;it is pure and valuable like an angel coming to earth...»

After that, Rinas changes thematology in his two personal exhibitions in New York. The painter and art critic **Mary Hrbacek** wrote in the reputable journal **New York Arts** : "The artist toys with the viewer by deconstructing his motifs with slashes of colorful paint laid on the surfaces of these innovative metaphysical landscapes; this intervention constitutes yet another meaningful stratum of reality. In these personal paintings, he affirms that

everything in existence is subject to alteration and its attendant loss. Rinas seems to question his own role in life's drama, as he asserts the courage to continue his search for meaning through his art."

«The paintings come from far away», Picasso once said. The artist's proposal is also from far away. Rinas is well-known for his ability to depict his images with great accuracy , as also for extracting the essential features of his topics. This extraction is led by a depth , which in the case of this exhibition reflects his agony and his shelter concerning the modern day cruelty threatening man. His consciousness is activated and he reacts, proposing new entities; entities which are indestructible and unalterable, eternal and everlasting, bathed in the pure Greek light.

Vangelis Rinas's new work continues to disclose his deep faith in the art of painting. He does not disform figures within modern and post-modern quests but on the contrary praises the status of all entities.

It is an appraising but also heartbreaking piece of art because it can hear inarticulate words vibrating in the silence of the world.

Zaharias Sokos Author - Journalist