"Traces and Textures"

The manifest and the obscure in a game of (de)construction on the other side of matter Maria Kompatsiari's recent series of works, presented at the Italian Culture Institute of Athens in connection and conversation with the series The Idiolects, which is being exhibited concurrently at the Epigraphical Museum, mark out a new field of investigation and experimentation for the artist. The fragile, semi-transparent paper meshes, constructions and installations,—also in paper—abstract black-and-white drawings, peculiar book-boxes, paintings, and digitally processed and printed fragmented images illustrate the new direction her work has taken. These works comprise an exceptionally personal universe of shapes and symbols, charting new paths and capturing a painstaking articulation of feelings and concerns within a consistent and ongoing narrative. At the same time they define a coherent visual statement, a complex, intriguing and highly original environment in which the predominance of script coexists with a forcefulness and roughness of gesture, the rhythm of expansive movement and the refinement of craftsmanship, while the materials and their textures claim a primary role. In her compositions of reiterative instinctual glyphs, but also in the series of mesh-like surfaces of woven, thin white paper ribbons, the artist co-identifies the simple and the complex, the manifest and the obscure. These are works that do not seek merely to record a process but are intended by the artist to become an integral part of the process itself. At the same time one discerns an effort of self-analysis; the compositions work out her position in and relation to her environment, conveying her stance, feelings and psychic disposition in the face of a fragmented world that has lost its bearings and points of reference. They give shape to her fears and concerns and reaction to the tragic realities of our world today. They confess an ethics of impasse, the wounds and consequences of the crisis in each facet of human life. The expressionist energy and palette of vivid or dark colors in her drawings and paintings communicate an intensity and emotional perspicuity, while a calmer, more lyrical atmosphere is conveyed in her digital images, which call to mind the aesthetics of collage and further develop themes explored in earlier series of works. All the elements are subject to research and study. They are converted into a continuous game—a visual game, a game of construction and deconstruction, antithesis and reversal, re-formation and transformation that constitutes a different approach to her world and experiences.

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