

Prompted by Mano Pontikakis

The microcosm presented at the University of Athens Side-way Stoa, is based on theatrical masks in keeping with the tradition of classical Greek tragedy. However, this first impression- consideration could be replaced by another one: that whatever is pictorially stated is nothing more than an interpretation of the artist Mano Pontikakis.

It is, therefore, a libertarian rendering, a series of choices that the creator's imagination describes –and ultimately determines– which mask corresponds to which “person”. It is, in other words, a conventional acceptance, a personified version of the masks, which may employ commonly accepted symbolic elements; yet it may not contain something of that nature.

At any rate, it is interesting that the mythological/theatrical interpretations of the masks, when they relate to heroines, claim a certain gender status, because the superimposed colouring combined with individual secondary features do not allow misinterpretations. The opposite happens with the heroes, who are rendered colourless, in combination with an eclectic type of abstract rendition of their characterological elements.

Perhaps it could be articulated that there is an emergence –insinuatively speaking– of soundless bilateral or even trilateral dialogues between the masks, which are placed in front of a chorus that is located at the background of the exhibition space.

The influential impositions of a classicizing past are always numerous and particularly strong. And yet, prompted by Mano Pontikakis, they acquire a grounded, more humane version, in the sense of possessing a storefront mannequin status. The critical dimension becomes more evident and we perceive the genius coupling between work of art and transubstantiated merchandise, with as many peripeteias as it can bring to the fleeting gaze of a random passerby or a summer traveller.

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