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Opening 16<sup>th</sup> of January  
On view through to 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2024

On Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, from 7 to 10 p.m., a.antonopoulou.art gallery presents the new solo exhibition by **Christos Athanassiadis** entitled 'Apocalypsis'.

In his thorough study of Albrecht Dürer, the eminent art historian Erwin Panofsky notes that relative to his predecessors, Dürer gave a more vivid interpretation of the textual information of the Book of Revelation. He avoided repetition and condensed the events into fourteen compact woodcuts illustrating the chapters of the book, which he edited entirely by himself. According to Panofsky, dramatization was one of the basic principles adopted by Dürer in his rendering of the written text, on which he did not rely entirely. Therefore, because of this dramatic intensity, in looking at the woodcuts of the Revelation we are not simply witnessing an event; we are participating in the visionary experience of the individuals—the Apostle, for example—and sharing the metaphysical space in which the figures are placed. In his new solo exhibition, entitled 'Apocalypsis', Christos Athanassiadis attempts a bold and original reinterpretation of Dürer's iconographic world. Borrowing motifs from his woodcuts, deconstructing the gothic decoration that characterizes them, he seeks forms that will create a new form. The key word here is "reconfiguration": Athanassiadis does not paint over Dürer's drawing but builds—with colour—on it. The work is not a filling in of colours and shapes, but the result of a complex and difficult process in which colour plays a leading role. Made with charcoal and oil on canvas, the paintings in the exhibition are an elaborate reconfiguration of the figures of the Revelation.

In Athanassiadis' works, drawing and painting coexist and interact. The drawing supports the colour by forming its basis and the colour completes the drawing by composing the final image. Avoiding admixtures and mid-tones, the painter applies intense spot colours to evoke medieval stained glass. In this way he ensures a sense of transparency and lightness. His forms are not (meant to) be heavy. You get the impression that they are not standing anywhere, that everything is floating in a colourful sky, in a space without boundaries, in an anarchic time. Moreover, while no two works have the same size or the same base color, they are all organically connected to each other, forming a single, unbroken whole. Dürer's world exists—and does not exist—within these images. It appears inverted, detached from its original context: shooting stars are lifted into the sky, clouds become solid blocks of colour, narrative is abolished, the landscape is folded, forms and bodies merge into a

chaotic mixture of elements and patterns. Here the human (the hands, say) is intertwined with the meta-human and Revelation is translated—or reduced—to Abstraction.

Even those familiar with Dürer's Revelation will find it difficult to discover in these paintings his unrivalled style. And yet, in a strange way, Panofsky's apt observations help you to understand Athanassiadis' pictures as well. Tellingly, the “dematerialized” power of the lines of the creator of the Revelation woodcuts permeates the Greek artist's painting as well. Also, if the viewer of Dürer's innovations is imbued with a “sense of fantastic unreality”, something similar could be claimed for Athanassiadis' eccentric compositions, which disorient your gaze and do not allow you to keep it fixed in one place. And the same applies to the “abstract transparency” of the drawing and how the three-dimensional space is rendered, which while being highlighted is at the same time negated. Like Dürer, Athanassiadis focuses on the essentials, giving us a “complex network of forms whose message must be decoded rather than captured at first glance.” But unlike the strict symmetry and graphic economy of the former's compositions, the latter's lines seem uncontrollable.

On the other hand, one suspects that in this case Dürer is but the occasion.

Athanassiadis' ‘Apocalypse’ refers indirectly to the revelation of painting, to the revelation of its unknown and multiple mechanisms, to its ability to generate new images from forms that belong to its past and its history. To reconfigure an existing image—however masterful it may be—means to revisit its basic components to discover and reveal the essence of painting and its deeper meaning. Athanassiadis is not one of those painters who follow the easy path or the dominant trends. Having studied in the home of the Renaissance, Italy (where Dürer travelled in his youth), his gaze is firmly fixed on the Great Masters—painters and poets, such as Dante—who shaped our gaze and the way we see the world.

Athanassiadis' ‘Apocalypse’ expresses the need to communicate a “divine truth” that is more concerned with the immortal art of painting and its heritage. In front of his paintings, which evoke decorated windows, one imagines the light penetrating the paint and travelling through time. Ultimately, this is the deeper truth hidden in his brilliant works: revelation, here, means first and foremost a fascinating journey to the sources of art.

Christoforos Marinos  
Art historian and curator

**Opening hours: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 14:00 – 20:00 & Saturday 12:00 – 16:00**

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