

GPSG Working Paper #03

*The Military Dictatorship of April 1967 in Greece
and its repercussion on the Greek visual arts scene*

*Eleni Ganiti
PhD Candidate in Art History,
School of History and Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy,
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*



*This paper was originally presented at the 4th PhD Symposium
of the Hellenic Observatory, London School of Economics, June 2009.
It was awarded a GPSG Prize at the Group's 2009 Travel Grants Competition.*

Introduction

The 21st of April, 1967 has been a portentous date in the history of modern Greece, as a group of right – wing army officers seized power, imposing a regime of military dictatorship, also known as the Regime of the Colonels or the Junta. The dictatorship came after a period of political instability in the country, intercepting the normal course of things at the political, social and economical sector.

Obviously this kind of disorder could not leave the cultural life of the country unaffected. The imposing of the dictatorship had a strong impact on the evolution of the visual arts in Greece, mainly because it came at a time when Greek art, for the first time in the modern years, was finding its pace. The desire for synchronization with the international art was being finally fulfilled and for the first time Greek artists were part of the international avant guard. The visual arts scene was flourishing, the audience's interest was growing and the future seemed promising and optimistic. Then the Junta came to interrupt this upswing.

In this presentation we will attempt to explore:

- i) the effects of the dictatorship on the Greek visual arts scene and the artistic production of the period
- ii) the reaction of the art world

mainly through exhibitions and works of Greek artists that were created and exhibited in the country during the seven years of the Military Regime.

A review of Greek art until 1967

Foundation of the Greek State – 1940

As far as art is concerned, ever since the foundation of the Greek State, Greece was living in the periphery of the major European art centres of the time, influenced mainly by Munich (second half of the 19th century) and then by Paris. The artists and intellectuals were proud of the masterpieces of classical antiquity but completely indifferent for the Byzantine tradition and the folk art, which was still alive at places.

European modernism of the early 20th century could not easily reach Greece, which was going through an eventful period. The victorious Balkan wars (1912-13) were succeeded by the catastrophe in Asia Minor (1922) and the National Division that followed. The prevalent ideology regarding the lost dream of Great Greece and the disappointment that was caused by the national humiliation, contributed to the emergence of the concept of Greekness, which had a great impact on art. In the spirit of the Greek identity quest, the so called Generation of 1930, figured prominently during the mid - war period trying to combine the pursuits of the international art with the Greek tradition. Suddenly Greek folk art, naïf painters (Theofilos, Makrygiannis painter) and the Byzantine tradition were discovered. Modernism and tradition were the two main elements of the idiomorphic Greek modernism and constituted a dilemma that dominated Greek art for many years. The dictatorship of Metaxas (1936-40), following the examples of German Nazism or Italian fascism that used art in order to create ideologies and influence the masses, conveniently took advantage of the idea of Greekness that had already been established in Greek art.

The Forties

The 40s was an extremely difficult decade for Greece. The country had to face the 2nd World War, the Foreign Occupation and a harmful Civil War. The primary concern of the Greek people who suffered war damages, hunger and diseases, was the survival and the Resistance against the conquerors. Many artists were involved in the Resistance, some of them joining the various Resistance Groups and others helping through their art (engravings, posters and other printed material for the causes of the Resistance). Engaged art, serving the goals of the Resistance, and art inspired by the Greek epopee in the battlefields during the War and by the sufferings of the Greek people during the Occupation, constituted a big part of the artistic creation during this period.

In Greece, artists deliberately abstained from cultural activity¹, the country was lacking institutions relevant to the visual arts² and art events were extremely limited. The dialogue between Greek artists was problematic but most importantly all contacts with the international art scene, and especially Paris, the art center of the time, were paused. Under those circumstances no consistent artistic activity could take place.

The term “introspection” has been used to describe the state of Greek art during this period. Tonis Spiteris characteristically mentions “... the personal creation matures in the silence of the ateliers. The fruits of those explorations will come to light only after 1948”³.

Indeed the artistic activity started going out of the recession after the Liberation (1944), but still even then the social and political circumstances were not normal as the country was living the Civil War. Political persecutions of the time compelled a significant part of the Greek artists and intellectuals to exile themselves⁴, fact that has its own particular importance for the evolution of Greek art.

¹ With the exception of the Professional Artistic Exhibitions (Επαγγελματικές Καλλιτεχνικές Εκθέσεις) (1942, 1943), which were organised by the Greek State on an idea of the Italian Occupation Authorities and that is why they were initially sabotaged especially by the artists which were connected with EAM - National Liberation Front (EAM – Εθνικό Απελευθερωτικό Μέτωπο).

² The Artists' Union (Ένωση Καλλιτεχνών), precursor of the Chamber of Fine Arts of Greece (EETE – Επιμελητήριο Εικαστικών τεχνών Ελλάδας) was founded in September 1944.

³ Τώνης Σπητέρης, *Η τέχνη στην Ελλάδα μετά το 1945*, Οδυσσεύς, Αθήνα, 1983, p. 16 (the quote has been translated into English by Eleni Ganiti).

⁴ Around 150 scholars of the French Institute in Athens (IFA) left Athens for Paris with the historical ship “Mataroa” after the initiative of Octave Merlier and Roger Millieux of the French Institute in Athens, in order to avoid persecutions. Most of them were leftists, members of EAM or EPON – Revolutionary Youth Organization of Greece (ΕΠΟΝ – Ενιαία Πανελλαδική Οργάνωση Νέων).

After the Liberation, the need of the artists, especially the younger ones, to restore contacts with international art was intense. Greek post war art was on a turning point. The artistic acquisitions of mid – war period, the Generation of 1930 and their descendants, were exhausted and it was only natural for the art world to look forward to Europe asking for new experimentations and exchange of ideas. This need was better met by the end of the Civil War, a period of reconstitution for Greece, when the art world finally was able to come out of the isolation and restore contacts with the international art centers.

The Fifties

The major breakthrough in the Greek post war art is considered to be the movement of Abstraction. It appeared in Greece with an important delay in comparison to Europe⁵ and it could be connected mainly to the new abstract art tendencies which appeared the same period in Europe and in the USA (art informel, abstract expressionism etc)⁶. Abstraction had already run its course in Europe but in Greece it was considered as avant-guard and it was identified with the most vigorous and revolutionary elements of the art world. The reception of abstraction was not without reactions, mainly by the most conservative art cycles and by the leftists who considered it as a formal expression strange and different to the Greek idiosyncrasy and the Greek way of life.

The first abstract attempts appeared in public in 1950-55, however 1960, the year that Spyropoulos won the UNESCO price in the Venice Biennale, is considered to be the milestone for the acceptance of abstraction by the Greek art world and audience.

Undoubtedly the 50's was a transitional period for Greece. The society was trying to cure the traumas caused during the difficult years of the Occupation and the Civil War. Most importantly it was trying to find its orientation, turning eyes to Europe. The political situation was not stable yet but the economy was improving allowing a wider audience to show interest in arts. The visual arts scene noted a remarkable progress. Many artists and art critics traveled abroad to study under state scholarships, international exhibitions took place in Greece while Greek artists started exhibiting abroad. New exhibition venues opened, art specializing magazines started being published [1955: Zygus (Ζυγός), Art Review (Επιθεώρηση Τέχνης)] and the already existing art columns in newspapers and magazines increased.

The Sixties

The 60s have found the abstract ideas established in the minds of artists and audience, helping them to acknowledge and accept easier the new art experimentations that were being formed in Europe and in the USA. New ideas and trends were transferred to Greece without delay and for the first time Greek artists were a part of the international avant guard. These were mainly artists who were living abroad, especially in Paris.

Art scene was flourishing. The number of art galleries in Athens increased and some of them started cooperating with international galleries. Exhibitions were organised outside Athens, (in Thessaloniki, Patras, Volos in the Greek islands as Hydra and Mykonos and elsewhere). Most importantly Greek artists living outside the country increased contacts with their homeland and many of them even started returning permanently, bringing a refreshing air to the Greek art and introducing the latest art tendencies.

⁵ Abstraction emerged in Europe around 1910. W. Kandinsky is considered to be the “Father” of non figurative art.

⁶ Μαρίνα Λαμπράκη – Πλάκα, «Αφαίρεση», *Τέσσερις αιώνες ελληνικής ζωγραφικής*, Εθνική Πινακοθήκη – Μουσείο Αλεξάνδρου Σούτζου, Αθήνα, 2000, p. 206

The growth of the tourism also favored art in many ways. Foreign collectors who were visiting the country during the summer period discovered and started buying Greek art. Greek contemporary artworks decorated the cruise ships and the Xenia hotels that were being built or renovated during this decade by the Greek National Tourism Organisation. The art market expansion along with the construction industry development created a need for art works and this also resulted to the founding of Art Schools and Institutes for applied arts⁷. A wider art audience obtained at this time easier access to the art object (art venues, exhibitions etc) and a better buying ability (financial prosperity, cheaper multiple art works) growing art consciousness and aesthetic criterion.

This bloom was abruptly interrupted by the imposing of the Dictatorship in 1967.

1967: The first reaction

The imposing of the dictatorship on the 21st of April, 1967 numbed the entire Greek society. The first reaction was the silence, as artists consciously decided to abstain from any public activity, believing that they could fight the Regime by boycotting it.

The “silent” period lasted two years, until 1969. Obviously there were voices that disagreed with the absence from the cultural life, arguing that artists and intellectuals, the most sensitive elements of the society, should speak up and take place showing their protest. Furthermore there were the younger artists, at the beginning of their careers, who felt restrained being unable to express publicly, to be part of the art scene and form their own artistic idiom. We should not forget that all artists needed to work in order to survive, not only financially but also artistically. Isolation was not the solution. It would only have led to the devitalizing of Greek art.

There have been discussions concerning a collective appearance of the artists with exhibitions that would take a character of protest and resistance against the Military Regime. R. Kennedy’s assassination was considered as the right occasion and timing for such reappearance but this finally never happened⁸.

Break the silence: The exhibition of Vlassis Caniaris

The exhibition that signaled the exit from the artists’ silence came in May of 1969 by Vlassis Caniaris (b. 1928). This historical and much - discussed exhibition took place in New Gallery, Athens and had an intense political and in a way activist character, as it aimed not only to protest against the Regime but mainly to activate the Greek people.

The works displayed included human members and objects in plaster, barbed wire, red carnations, all of them –especially plaster and carnations- with a deep symbolic meaning. The plaster, which morphologically belonged to Caniaris’ work (he had already used plaster from 1963-64), was a direct reference to Papadopoulos’ famous phrase “*Greece is sick. We had put her in plaster. She shall remain in plaster until she recovers*”. (Η Ελλάδα ασθενεί. Την έχομε θέσει εις τον γύψον. Θα παραμείνη εις τον γύψον μέχρις ότου ιαθεί.).

There was no exhibition catalogue as Caniaris himself had censored the texts that were going to be published in order to avoid the exhibition from being “targeted” by the Junta. The artist says “*My aim was to keep the exhibition from being targeted because then others*

⁷ Αίθουσες τέχνης στην Ελλάδα: Αθήνα – Θεσσαλονίκη 1920 – 1988, Αποψη, 1988, p. 43.

⁸ Πέγκυ Κουνενάκη, *Νέοι Έλληνες Ρεαλιστές*, Εξάντας, Αθήνα, 1988, p. 24

would have lost their courage, those who were working in the context of the resistance”⁹. Instead of catalogue each visitor was offered a red carnation growing in a small plaster cube, also symbolic of the idea that the carnation is growing despite the plaster.

A few days before the exhibition Caniaris had sent abroad three packages containing the small plaster cubes with the carnation, photographs of the works and a biography so that they could be used in case of the exhibition being “targeted” by the dictatorship as he was afraid.

The exhibition was a great success -Caniaris had to make another 1000 plaster cubes with carnations for the people visiting the exhibition during the 21 days that it lasted- fulfilling its aim. Even the international press published the story. After the exhibition, the artist had to leave the country for Paris because he was in danger of being arrested by the Regime.

I. Exhibitions

Exhibitions with meaning

After Caniaris’ exhibition, art activity begun again, especially from 1970 and onwards. The majority of the artists refused to participate in state events (Biennales, Panhellenic exhibitions, etc) so most of the exhibitions were taking place in galleries, private venues or foreign institutes. Some of those exhibitions took the form of anti - dictatorial expressions, indented or not, as the works presented, indicative of the new art tendencies most of the times, were with multiple meanings and could be translated according to the sociopolitical context. In any way those events contributed to the creation of a climate of solidarity and united artists and audience against the dictatorial regime.

Maria Karavela – A voice of protest

In November 1970 Maria Karavela (b. 1938) had an exhibition in Astor Gallery, Athens, which is considered to be the first environment presented in Greece (the artist herself called it “exhibition in space/space exhibition”). The gallery walls were painted grey while red and white tied sacks, reminding of humans, were positioned in various places throughout the gallery. In the middle of the gallery space there was a cage with a white real size human figure in it. The symbolism of Karavela’s environment against the suppression of the Regime and the references to freedom, death and isolation were obvious.

In May 1971 Karavela created a second environment at the Athens – Hilton Gallery, with even stronger content. A square cell was installed inside the gallery space, with inscriptions in red paint –e.g. the words freedom and help- written on the external walls. Human figures in real size were lying on the gallery floor. The artist managed to create a claustrophobic, tragic environment with simple, easily understood elements so that the viewers, whose participation was necessary for the whole work to “function”, could perceive her message according to their experience, their sensitivity, their personality¹⁰. This exhibition was censored and violently shut down by the Military Regime a few days after the opening. The artist left for Paris loosing also her teaching position at the National Technical University of Athens.

⁹ Lina Tsikouta, “Chronology”, *Vlassis Caniaris. A Retrospective*, National Gallery and Alexandros Soutzos Museum, Athens, 1999, p. 397

¹⁰ Αρετή Αδαμοπούλου, *Ελληνική μεταπολεμική τέχνη. Εικαστικές παρεμβάσεις στο χώρο*, University Studio Press, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2000, p. 68.

Karavela is one of the few cases of artists who expressed clearly and very early her anger and opposition towards the Junta and those two exhibitions had a clear anti-dictatorial meaning.

Elias Dekoulakos – The exhibition that never happened

Elias Dekoulakos (b. 1929) produced a series of paintings in 1968-73, adopting a kind of photographic realism with a critical content in order to declare the violence of the dictatorship and express his contempt towards the Regime. He produced a series of paintings, using the airbrush, that were supposed to be displayed in Athens – Hilton Gallery in 1973 but a few hours before the exhibition opening the police -after the accusation of a school teacher- demanded that some of the exhibits should be withdrawn because their content was provocative for the public shame.

It is funny how the authorities censored the exhibition for the wrong reasons, failing to see the true meaning of the works (similar incidents were not uncommon). The artist refused to withdraw the paintings and the exhibition was cancelled. It was also decided by the Gallery, which was housed inside the Hilton Hotel, and the Hilton director to stop exhibitions for a while, though this meant the final closure of the Gallery¹¹. The Dekoulakos' exhibition however was held later, slightly modified, at the Nees Morfes Gallery, Athens.

Theodoros Sculptor (Papadimitriou) - Sculpture for public participation – Participation prohibited

In 1970 Theodoros (b. 1931) introduced a new series at his work, presenting in Goethe Institute, Athens the exhibition *Sculpture for public participation – Participation prohibited*, accompanied by a manifesto. It was an environment consisted of metallic, solid cubes and balls, metallic helmets, hearts made of various materials, cage and the new element of his work the “matraque – phallus”. It's worth saying that the word “matraque” in French means the bludgeon of the French policemen which was widely used during the events of May of 68. These objects, the manifesto and even the exhibition title, caused eloquent references to the dictatorship.

Dimitris Alithinos - The encased people

In 1972 Dimitris Alithinos (b. 1945) had his first solo exhibition at Studio 47 (organized by the Desmos Gallery), Athens, where he trapped real people in constructions, leaving just their legs and arms out¹². The concept of trap and restriction reflected the restrictions of the Junta.

In 1973 in Ora Cultural Center he presented a performance juxtaposing a bourgeois dining room with people encased in white boxes with their limbs standing out under the title *Happening*, making a statement about the social contrasts under the Colonels¹³. The white boxes could be considered as a direct reference to the cells and again to the concept of restriction.

New Greek Realists – criticizing through painting

¹¹ Αίθουσες τέχνης στην Ελλάδα: Αθήνα – Θεσσαλονίκη 1920 – 1988, Άποψη, 1988, p. 73.

¹² Αρετή Αδαμοπούλου, *Ελληνική μεταπολεμική τέχνη. Εικαστικές παρεμβάσεις στο χώρο*, University Studio Press, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2000, p. 73.

¹³ *The Years of Defiance. The Art of the 70's in Greece*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, 2005, p. 34.

The art group *New Greek Realists* (1971-73) consisted of 5 young artists, Jannis Psychopedis (b. 1945), Kleopatra Digka (b. 1945), Chronis Botsoglou (b. 1941), Kyriakos Katzourakis (b. 1944), Yannis Valavanidis (b. 1939). The group represented in Greece the art trend of critical realism, which was then emerging internationally. In March 1972 they organized an exhibition in Goethe Institute, Athens, presenting paintings with critical references to the actual events of the period, including works which commented the Dictatorial Regime. A second exhibition of similar content took place in Kohlias Gallery, Thessaloniki.

II Artworks

Symbols and meanings: Anti – dictatorial Art Works

As we have already seen, Greek artists were influenced by the dictatorship. Works with critical content were created and exhibited during the seven years; however these were not the majority of the art production. As Alexandros Xydis mentions, in the beginning of the 70's the number of Greek artists dealing with the painful Greek affair have been reduced. Instead, many of them were occupied with the considerations of the international art at that time (the society of consumption, the technology, the isolation of the individual, the suffocation that life in the big cities can cause, the search for new art mediums that could express all those concerns), expressing their reaction with symbols or references to more general situations¹⁴.

With the exception of a number of artists who politically belonged to the Left Wing, (some of them had an active anti-dictatorial action) and produced works of political, anti-dictatorial content, those who created such works were mainly socially - minded, in a wider sense, artists (such as V. Caniaris or M. Karavela that have been mentioned above). Most of these artists continued to express their social and political concerns in various ways throughout their careers. Of course there is the case of artists who created just a couple of such works, returning afterwards to their own artistic expressions. Art works with critical references to the dictatorship were even produced and exhibited in the first years of the political change – over, but these won't occupy this presentation.

Painting the “black years”: The case of Dimosthenis Kokkinidis.

Dimosthenis Kokkinidis is one of the most representative cases of artists that produced anti-dictatorial works during the dictatorship. He could be characterized as a social minded artist, creating work –mainly until the 80's- of critical content and eloquent references to the social and political history.

In May of 1967, stimulated by the recent events, he started painting a series of works under the title *Memory of evil times* (1967-68), depicting distorted images of the dictators and their people (priests, judges etc.), drawn sometimes almost like caricatures, in an expressionistic style and other times abstractly. These paintings are full of symbolisms. The presence of the American flag suggests the American interference while the Greek flag appears repeatedly changing forms and symbolisms: red is blood, stripes are prison bars. The judges, “faceless individuals, victims and victimizers simultaneously”¹⁵, are painted

¹⁴ Αλέξανδρος Ξύδης, «Το σημερινό πρόσωπο της Ελληνικής τέχνης. Πορεία ως το 1974», *Προτάσεις για την Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Τέχνης*, Α. Διαμόρφωση – Εξέλιξη, Ολκός, Αθήνα, 1976, p. 262 (the quote has been translated into English by Eleni Ganiti) .

¹⁵ Andreas Ioannidis, “The painting of D. Kokkinidis”, *Dimosthenis Kokkinidis*, metropolitan Hospital, Adam Editions, Pergamos S.A., Athens, 2002, p. 24.

sometimes faceless and other times like human puppets or even mechanical constructions, stressing this way their obedient attitude throughout the seven years of the Junta. As the artist himself says, he stopped painting these works in December, with the exception of some less provocative paintings which he created in spring of 1968, when he realised the danger and he understood that they could not be exhibited.

Memory of evil times was the starting point for his second entity of paintings on the dictatorship, entitled *Identities* (1968 – 74), which were exhibited in 1971 in Zouboulakis Galleries, Athens. *Identities* depicted the victims of the Regime, friends of the artist, well known personalities or complete strangers (often taken from the photographs found in the newspapers), who have been arrested, brought to trials, imprisoned or tortured. The same symbolisms and meanings appear here: the color stripes which refer to the person's confinement, the radio, the only way for the Greek people to learn from foreign radio stations the real situation of the country, the black, turned-out kerosene lamp becomes an expression of the absence of light¹⁶, which could mean the absence of freedom or democracy, the person drawn without a mouth implies his inability to talk freely etc.

At the same time with *Identities*, Kokkinidis created the entity *Motherhood* (1968 – 74), inspired by the birth of his daughter. In *Motherhood* he deals with the relationship of mother and child, the fear for the future, especially the future of young people, and the absence of the mail figure, the father, who often during those years was in prison or in exile. Symbolisms are evident in this entity as well; the stripes –on the clothes, on the cage, on the child's bed- are again declaratory of the confinement and the inability to act. This is also shown by the drawing of the little boy without an arm. The absence of the father is stressed by the existence of his photographs on the walls.

Painting the “black years”: Some examples

Giannis Gaitis (1923 – 1984)

During the first years of the dictatorship Gaitis created a series of paintings renouncing the Regime¹⁷. We should also note that the characteristic Gaitis' “little men” that first appeared around 1967 and took their final form in the years of the Dictatorship, may not be irrelevant to the prevalent sociopolitical situation as they were an expression of protest.

George Touyas (1922 – 1994)

In the exhibitions “Hellas 1969” in Athens and in 1970 and 1971 in Thessaloniki and Nicosia he showed figurative paintings in the spirit of critical realism which were critical of the dictatorial regime.

Alexis Akrihakis (1939 – 1994)

During the period of dictatorship he created a body of political works¹⁸, always with his idiomorphic artistic expression full of humor and irony.

Dimitris Mytaras (b. 1934)

During the years of the dictatorship he created a series of works of social criticism with references to the Junta.

¹⁶ Andreas Ioannidis, “The painting of D. kokkinidis”, *Dimosthenis Kokkinidis*, metropolitan Hospital, Adam Editions, Pergamos S.A., Athens, 2002, p. 26.

¹⁷ Λορέττα Γαϊτή – Charrat, «Βιογραφία», *Γιάννης Γαϊτής. Κριτικός κατάλογος*, Ίδρυμα Ιωάννου Φ. Κωστοπούλου, Αθήνα, 2003, p. 48.

¹⁸ Thanassis Moutsopoulos, “Utopia 3: The rift with Power”, *Great unrest. 5 utopias in the 70s, a bit before – a bit after*, Patras European Capital of Culture 2006, p. 337.

Sotiris Sorogkas (b. 1936)

In his exhibition in Athens – Hilton Gallery he presented black and white compositions where a red carnation was standing out implying the opposition against the Regime (also reminding of Belogiannis case).

Lefteris Kanakakis (1934-1985)

Until the early 70s Kanakakis' paintings depicted still lifes and interiors but during the years of the Dictatorship he created a series of works of political - critical content.

The artists mentioned above are some of the most representative cases. Of course there have been other artists that produced works of anti-dictatorial content but the limited time of this presentation does not allow a more detailed reference.

Art in the years of the dictatorship: Some conclusions

As mentioned above, the dictatorship came at a time when the visual arts scene in Greece was flourishing, causing a serious regression mainly because it interrupted the contacts with international art, putting the country into isolation, especially during the first years. The return of Greek artists, who had studied and lived abroad and were bearers of new and refreshing ideas, stopped. A number of artists inside Greece had to leave the country for obvious political reasons, while the rest decided, as we have seen, to abstain from art activity as a reaction to the dictatorship. During this “silent” period the art dialogue between artists themselves as well as between them and the audience was paused. Furthermore the censorship that was imposed as well as the doubtful aesthetic standards of the dictators and their people responsible for the art and cultural policy, did not contribute at all to the progress of the Greek art.

After the first two years, artists decided to break the silence and started exhibiting again. Obviously many of them were influenced to some extent by the overthrow of democracy and the tragic events that followed fact that was depicted in their works. Art works and exhibitions with political and anti - dictatorial meaning appeared. Sometimes the meaning was clear, more often the message was implied through symbolisms because of the censorship. The audience learned to decode messages, sometimes even to receive and translate the multiple meanings of an artwork according to the prevailing sociopolitical context. *“(...) this interesting form of anti – dictatorial solidarity, favored, among others, the reception of art tendencies, which some years ago would have been considered radical. Both artists and viewers were readier than ever to exceed the traditional conservatism of the average Greek of the time. Radical forms, like radical ideologies, had a bigger impact, maybe because the dictatorship did whatever possible to fight everything that was radical (...)”*¹⁹.

Indeed it is noteworthy that during the period of the dictatorship, elements such as the use of unconventional material, the intervention of space and time into the art work, the concept of the ephemeron (environments, installations, happenings, performances) were introduced into Greek art. The social and political conditions also favored the new, various forms of photorealistic art with critical content in the spirit of Pop Art and –what is considered to be its French version- Nouveaux Realism. Constructivist - geometrical tendencies can also be traced in the works of a number of artists (e.g. P. Xagoraris, Opi Zouni etc.) who were working in their ateliers and starting from their own experimentations converged to a common field of research.

¹⁹ Μάρθα Χριστοφύλου, «Η Καταλυτική επίδραση της δικτατορίας», αφιέρωμα *Τέχνη και Πολιτική, Επτά Ημέρες – Καθημερινή*, 9 Ιανουαρίου 2005.

All these tendencies and experimentations will lead Greek art to the pluralistic decade of the seventies and the post dictatorial era.

Bibliography

Αλέξανδρος Ξύδης, *Προτάσεις για την Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Τέχνης, Α. Διαμόρφωση – Εξέλιξη*, Ολκός, Αθήνα, 1976

Θόδωρος – Γλυπτική – Καταστάσεις – Χειρισμοί, (exhibition catalogue), Αίθουσα Τέχνης Δεσμός, Αθήνα, 1977

Ελένη Βακαλό, *Η φυσιογνωμία της μεταπολεμικής τέχνης στην Ελλάδα*, πρώτος τόμος: *Αφαίρεση*, Κέδρος, Αθήνα, 1981

Τώνης Σπητέρης, *Η τέχνη στην Ελλάδα μετά το 1945*, Οδυσσέας, Αθήνα, 1983

Αίθουσες τέχνης στην Ελλάδα: Αθήνα – Θεσσαλονίκη 1920 – 1988, Άποψη, 1988

Πέγκυ Κουνενάκη, *Νέοι Έλληνες Ρεαλιστές*, Εξάντας, Αθήνα, 1988

Δ. Κοκκινίδης, (exhibition catalogue), Δήμος Θεσσαλονίκης – Δημήτρια ΚΔ', Μακεδονικό Κέντρο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1989

Αντώνης Κωτίδης, *Μοντερνισμός και «Παράδοση» στην ελληνική τέχνη του μεσοπολέμου*, University Studio Press, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1993

Μιλτιάδης Παπανικολάου, *Ιστορία της τέχνης στην Ελλάδα. Ζωγραφική και γλυπτική του 20^{ου} αιώνα*, Εκδόσεις Αδάμ, Αθήνα, 1999

Vlassis Caniaris. A Retrospective, (exhibition catalogue), National Gallery and Alexandros Soutzos Museum, Athens, 1999

Τέσσερις αιώνες ελληνικής ζωγραφικής, Εθνική Πινακοθήκη – Μουσείο Αλεξάνδρου Σούτζου, Αθήνα, 2000

Αρετή Αδαμοπούλου, *Ελληνική μεταπολεμική τέχνη. Εικαστικές παρεμβάσεις στο χώρο*, University Studio Press, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2000

Dimosthenis Kokkinidis, (exhibition catalogue), Metropolitan Hospital, Adam Editions, Pergamos S.A., Athens, 2002

Αληθινός. Έργα 1971-1979 (exhibition catalogue), Diaspro Art Center, 2003

Γιάννης Γαΐτης. Κριτικός κατάλογος, (exhibition catalogue), Ίδρυμα Ιωάννου Φ. Κωστοπούλου, Αθήνα, 2003

Πέγκυ Κουνενάκη (υπεύθυνη αφιερώματος), αφιέρωμα *Τέχνη και Πολιτική, Επτά Ημέρες – Καθημερινή*, 9 Ιανουαρίου 2005

The Years of Defiance. The Art of the 70's in Greece, (exhibition catalogue), National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, 2005

Great unrest. 5 utopias in the 70s, a bit before – a bit after, (exhibition catalogue), Patras European Capital of Culture 2006

Μαρία Αρώνη, Βλάσης Κανιάρης. *Σύγχρονοι Έλληνες Εικαστικοί, Τα Νέα*, Αθήνα, 2009

Ντένης Ζαχαρόπουλος, Γιάννης Γαϊτής. *Σύγχρονοι Έλληνες Εικαστικοί, Τα Νέα*, Αθήνα, 2009

Μάρθα – Έλλη Χριστοφόγλου, Ηλίας Δεκουλάκος. *Σύγχρονοι Έλληνες Εικαστικοί, Τα Νέα*, Αθήνα, 2009

Note: Greek bibliography is written in Greek language whereas bilingual editions (i.e. both in Greek and English) are written in English. The bibliography is in chronological order.

Email: eganiti@hotmail.com

© Eleni Ganiti 2009