

## Who is Afraid of the Walls ?

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I have always been interested in the language of the image, moved by this work, the presence of which can raise certain questions. More than exhibiting an artwork, I prefer to observe, to act, to intervene in such a way that the result is truly something minimal but of the utmost dynamism; and by utmost dynamism I mean the utmost opportunity for one to be able to be present. You are exhibited opposite him (the viewer) who must discover this place, by giving a sign, working in a space that is truly emphatic. Thus, as one musical note follows another, the eye is directed slowly, slowly there, to where there is a small marvel of a something, which is not seen outwardly and which is to reveal itself.

In addition, the title of the exhibition holds more questions; the restlessness of the artist, of the painter, which have to do also with personal stories; in relation to art itself. I believe that what deserves our attention today more than ever, is the unique; by this I mean a particular human mark, something someone made and left. However, I do not mean for one to come across a masterpiece, a work of art. The Walls, for example, are not a work of art; they are a demarcation, a monumental construction which defined an era, as well as a notion, a historic moment or a moment in history. The Walls are the setting of the limit and of course we can be either inside or outside them. I do something different, something that does not serve, as does the other. I think that mine are but words; something which, like poetry, can exist without utilitarian meaning (in the sense of usefulness) for that which I think may be art itself.

What interests me is another kind of need, even a personal one; also, my questions in relation to each specific exhibition space, which interests me in one sense, whereas in another, it shouldn't interest me at all.

I mean to say that what probably concerns me, is a setting, a *topos*, which does not necessarily have the exhibitory identity beforehand and where, I believe it is possible for us to exhibit (to be) in also another way; that is, to realise an artwork that too is different because the condition of the "exhibition" is different.

When I visit a place I coexist with it, thus a relationship is established. Afterwards while travelling, from a distance (a process that lasts several months) the relationship continues and in time, the idea takes shape. I usually begin work by sketching, noting, so that I am able to contemplate the space and the work to be done. The truth is that I never do something defined, so it changes repeatedly. There are certain ideas that return and then there is time that rolls on by. At some point you have to make a decision and the final decision is always in relation to the (exhibition) space and materializes from within it.

In the beginning there was the personal space, the atelier, where, starting from the given confines of the picture (as in the sense of painting), some significant questions arose through my personal needs and experiences and in relation to art itself; questions which preoccupied me for a long time afterwards.

Somehow, in this way, progressively, by expanding on this thought, this contemplation as to painting, and also through the field of art itself, by observing and questioning the conventional exhibition space, my questioning became increasingly more compound in a sense. Because I began to understand that there was almost always a condition, a way of exhibiting which was in general established and which (to some extent) either prevented us from being otherwise, or which forced us to exhibit in the same way more or less the same thing. At some point I realized that I was beginning to choose the site because of my desire for a work to be more or less born from this relationship: it would then become for me a way of expanding the work, the potential for something else to come about as well, something different; a necessary shot at differentness.

In this sense, I believe that the 'given' exhibition space could be very interesting when viewed critically. After that, it should be necessary to discover other possibilities as well, where something could change ever so slightly, where it may still even be almost impossible to exhibit. The truth is that what I desire is not answers, rather the opposite, namely, to generate questions through presentation. I like to work in a way that is direct, transparent, seemingly simple, almost letting things reveal themselves, that's what interests me most. Furthermore, history concerns me deeply (in relation to its making a statement on current reality), that particular kind of human record, of this (via art)

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## GALLERY

continuum: To make so as to be able to see, that is, to be able to take the risk of beginning something without knowing how it will turn out in its final form.

I perceive painting in the same way as I feel poetry, as something that we should not try to explain, to comprehend with the sense of educating. It is essential to live it, to feel it. And this is the relationship. Personally, I do not care to render an artwork that describes something with the pictorial concept of descriptiveness, that of being educational or illustrational.

It is the language that interests me; that a thing, an action, an intervention, a presence, a situation can become language and indeed why not, a new language. To be able to be read and written, to be, to exist. It is one thing for something to be born on site, as is born a tree; it is another for it to be transferred.

It's like sowing the work. Now, today, I'm beginning to see it in this way; it is not that I do much. I do that which I feel is necessary for me to be able to speak.

Athina Ioannou