**FOR VENIA DIMITRAKOPOULOU**

In the ancestral and also modern disquiet of her works, Venia Dimitrakopoulou conveys the uninterrupted strand not so much of actually being Greek, but of her constant, critically vivid and honed rethinking, as product of the germination of a culture that goes back to the origins and that was the mother of Greek civilisation itself.

She has rediscovered and revived the ancient signs in herself, felt again their generating power, and before them clarified, to say it with the wonderful words written by Giorgio Seferis, “the faith that they have a spirit”.

Such signs were and are primarily embodied in a raw material *par excellence*, the lava of Aegina, where she has her studio. Dimitrakopoulouhas confronted it in a deferential and resolute grapple, rediscovering Gaia,mother goddess and matrix, along with Pelops, Agamemnon and the entireline of heroes and warriors. Here the material itself is inhabited by thememory of the fire that forged it and also by the intimité de l’énergie dutravailleur” (Bachelard).

Dimitrakopoulou effortlessly distills and implements a plurality of methods, from rough, primary sculpting to the subtle complexity of the installation, from video to the lightness of paper held in the palm of a hand, from the powerful emphasis of the large shape to the sleek minutiae of the γράμμα, of that which René de Solier called the “biologie de l’acte d’écrire peindre dessiner”.

Her position is one of powerful assertion, of reclaiming a non-negotiable primacy of meaning, but erecting between herself and the realm of distracted worldly reception a bulwark that preserves Dimitrakopoulou’s wish to be, along with Nietzsche, “Nur Dichter”, only a poet. And her *Promahones* really are a προμαχεών, a safeguarding barrier, protecting an interior —the whole world of the values in which she believes and identifies with, to which she aspires, the “humani nihil alienum”— defended against the blind, desolate drift of signs offered by the world of ordinary experience.

They are a plexus, more intellectual than physical, that the video installation *Sounds and Shadows* has rendered as impalpable places of shadows and as sounds unleashed by the metal, the ineffable and intangible dimension of the physical presence.

In perfect conceptual homogeneity, Dimitrakopoulou similarly unfurls the poetic density of her γράμματα, writings in the widest and most magnificently ambiguous sense of the term. The assured consistency of Chinese paper (“The smell of the paper. The feel of it and its recollection”, is read in one of her verbal/visual fragments), inhabited by signs of ink, placed as complement/

contrast to the powerful introversion of the stones and the metal shapes of the vast, distinct *Promahones*.

The works on paper are also form in themselves: the shape of *Secret Armour* and *Nessus’ Shirt*, the theoretically unlimited accordion books ofher poetic peaks correspond to the later works, *Insomnia Bed* and *Lines of thinking*, and the soundtrack of sounds by Pablo Ortiz and especially the voice of Dimitrakopoulou herself, enunciating, hypnotically, the writings of *Insomnia Bed*.

Matter, Logos, Sound: the artist’s pathway into artistic knowledge highlights especially the exquisitely ethical role she recognises in her work, that which would once have been called “engagement”. It is very clear at this point that she fosters and restores a research that, skipping the quicksands of the antiquarian approach, identifies in the rhizomes of the ancestral culture through which it roams the nutrients needed not so much to live and proclaim the present, but, in the awareness of the latter, to germinate a possible future: and *Primordial Future* is the overall title she gave to her recent Italian experience.

All of Dimitrakopoulou’s work, in the plurality of the methods she chooses, triggers mechanisms of a distinct and pleasant contradiction, which prefers the murmur to the rally, but always proves to be radically irrepressible. Because Venia is clearly, authentically, non-negotiably *insoumise*, as art should always be.

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