

We let time pass by without looking at people

Since the 1990s, artists have managed to free themselves of the fear of dealing with the ordinary – telling a story– and commenting on the socio-political aspects of life.

The myth that a work of art must be “a perfect and autonomous object outside the historical process” has eclipsed. Artists began to assert a catalytic role for their work. They see, observe, feel, intuit and reflect in their work their times and their world, reviewing it in their endeavours and criticising it whenever necessary. The vision and the art that goes with it, is converted into a magnifying glass, which brings to the forefront aspects of daily life that would otherwise go unnoticed, because as is often the case, we choose not to upset what was conventionally accepted: the status quo.

With her artefacts presented under the title “Achaean Coast”, Toula Liasi makes an important contribution to the understanding of what we live through; the life story of our country. Toula’s art probably says much more than tens of political texts.

As her principal visual medium, she chooses photography –a successful choice– because photography as a visual means of expression opens new avenues to confront reality from a different perspective. With an eye behind the lens, the artist makes us bear witness to the raw reality, known by the name “the enclaved”; a reality extending to thirty years.

“We let time pass by without looking at people”, said Andrea Serrano, one of the most significant artists of our times, whose anthropocentric work brought to the surface the human condition from which people shy away. Toula dared to look the enclaved in the eye; giving us, through the eighty-five portraits she exhibits, a picture of the tragedy of the daily life of those portrayed. Through their gaze, facing us directly in the eye, they convey their true story. An ephemeral life, a life of anticipation not knowing what comes next, a life of agony, uncertainty and loneliness. On the other hand, the viewer is impressed with their patience, endurance, faith and hopes. These eighty-five individuals keep alive the right of each and every one of us to return. They are the guardians of our age-long history. The guardians of the “Achaean Coast”.

The thirty-year history of the enclaved, their feelings, agonies, and expectations are shown by Toula Liasi in a series of installations with the characteristic and topical titles: *Rusted Evidence*, *The Landrovers*, *Crushed Memories*, *Standing Aid*, *Swinging Aid*, *Missing person–Christodoulos Kaoutzanis*, *Missing Person–Yiannakis Liasi*, *Wreath*, *Stand by*, *Coloured Aid*, and *A Life in a Pile of Boxes*. For the creation of these works, she uses material in daily use by the enclaved, objects that each one has a story to tell. Objects immersed with multi–purpose references, innuendos and symbolisms so much so that they forfeit their true character, gaining added aesthetic value and communicative power.

It is all about an art that says a lot in few words, an achievement entailing the transformation of the ephemeron into an epic.

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