

Press release

Opening: Thursday 04/05, 7–10 PM.

Through 23/06/2023

Curator: Christoforos Marinos

The exhibition "Erosions" is the third solo exhibition of Valerios Caloutsis organized by a.antonopoulou.art gallery in the last two years. It was preceded by the exhibitions "Communication 1972-73" (2022) and "Reconstitution" (2021). The main subject of "Erosions" is matter and its natural or artificial decay and erosion. Caloutsis commented on modern man's indifference to nature and its destructive intrusiveness. "Erosions" is a protest against the destruction of the environment.

Valerios Caloutsis worked on "Erosions" from 1987 to 2010. From the imaginary landscapes he created in the first half of the '80s, where he combines photography with collage and drawing, he has moved on to works that have volume and depth. These works refer to detached rocks, landslides, ravines and burnt landscapes. This three-dimensional painting – the press of the time characterized it as "mineral" or "constructive" – showed a nature that is being destroyed.

On "Erosions" photography is still there but more as a background, as a reference. After all, many of these works are based on photographs taken by the artist during his hikes in the mountains and gorges of Crete. Caloutsis was fascinated by the natural deterioration of the natural landscape (from volcanic eruptions and floods) and its ability to recreate itself. **"I start from the natural erosion," said the artist. "A mountain slowly changes form after many thousands of years. This is a primary issue. I am in awe of how nature works on its own. It destroys and recreates. From its destruction something else emerges and that is evolution. That's where I start. It is the stones that fall from the mountain and the ravine is formed. Nature lives... The ravine becomes a plain, etc. At this point I put the artificial, synthetic material; the chemical substances invented by man".**

Caloutsis used materials related to nature. They are all earth materials – sand, stones and pebbles which are assembled with various glues, plaster, even cement. In some works, the artist intervened with synthetic materials such as Styrofoam, which act as agents of corrosion and decay. *"These materials are destroying the environment and this is shocking,"* he observed.

On "Erosions" he treated colour in its purely natural composition and sometimes omits it to let white and black express as purely as possible the natural value of the material. Also, by making his works three-dimensional, giving them depth, he tried to emphasize even more the quality of substance, while maintaining the illusion of space, which is one of the primary features of painting.

With the series "Erosions", Caloutsis not only commented on the deterioration of nature, but also on the moral decay of man, his destructive rage, manifested by nuclear weapons, the pollution of the atmosphere and the extermination of wild animals. All these negatives, as he said, came out in his protest. Man intervenes in the cycle of nature and interrupts it, as a result of which he destroys nature and at the same time destroys himself. "Erosions" reveal a sensitized artist, one of the first Greeks to deal with issues that today are at the centre of visual and artistic creation.

In an interview in 1991 with Sofia Falierou for Neorion magazine, Caloutsis explained the concept behind "Erosions" while expressing his ecological sensitivity: *"I wonder why we have to destroy nature. We are the only ones alive that do this. Neither the birds nor the animals nor the plants. Everything lives in harmony with nature except us. We humans entered all these functions like parasites. Man was always missing from my work, because he ceased to coexist with nature. Nature can live without man, but the opposite cannot happen. We have changed the climate and there are endless examples of the disasters we have caused. The terrible thing is that as the years go by the situation is getting worse. I don't want to make any pretentious ecological sermons here, but this situation bothers me and I bring it out in my painting. If I were a writer, I would write it. Man, simply is absent [from my work] because I consider him inferior to a great mountain, a great tree or a river, a vast sea. Man is minimal. But I'm not interested from the moment he discovered atomic energy and turned it into a disaster, from the moment he started burning the forests. I contrast the creation and destructiveness of nature with the creation and destructiveness of man. The two forces collide and this is mainly a phenomenon of the last 100 years. Since the industrial revolution began".*

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

Communication sponsor:

