

Ἀσέληνον ὄρος - The moonless mountain

11 November – 30 December 2022

calli
rrhoë

Kallirrois 122 & Veikou 95

Athina 117 41

Thu-Sat 4-8 pm and
upon request

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Valinia Svoronou



Curated by
Olympia Tzortzi

Recalling the definition of memory as the definition of remembrance - the state of bearing in mind, the act of recalling to mind, the period over which ones memory extends - we are being confronted with the commemorative culture as the interaction of the individual - body - or the society - collective - with their past and the given history.

If we shred the definitions of memory, oral history, light and movement, we can find ourselves in a state of mind, in which everything is interconnected. Memory as the process of reproducing or recalling what has been learned and retained, oral history as the act of collecting information about a historical event or a period of time through someone who experienced it, light as a type of electromagnetic wave that allows the human eye to see or makes objects visible, movement as the act of changing locations and positions and time as the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole are working as tools for constantly moving around, for revealing a present world and revisiting an older.

The solo show of Valinia Svoronou titled „ Ἀσέληνον ὄρος - The moonless mountain“ at Callirrhoë is an endeavor to explore and to give a form to the notion of memory and to the transmission of oral history. Through gazing the works an experience of place and movement in an emotional landscape of the past is being created, conjured by stories and referring to architectural fragments. The exhibition is an attempt to deepen the relationship between memory and oral history, nature and loss, migration and immigration, purring out of the frame of a historical moment. As movement is unthinkable without time and time is constantly passing, memory is a continuous happening as well. Could we find ourselves trying to grasp a glimpse of an older light? How can a series of „ memories“ be tangible?

Once the viewer has entered the main space he/she/they is immediately facing architectural fragments that have been scattered across the room. Ceramics on plinths that could be seen as cardboards, objects on the walls that could look familiar and drawings out of ceramic or in resin compose a very first indentation. Valinia Svoronou inspired among others from the Akilas Milas* books - who was an old historian of this particular milieu,

Pera and his books consisted out of sketches of the every day life, postcards and pamphlets - is creating her own drawings based on the stories and the memories of her family.

Trying to resemble the idea of the quick sketch that captures the habits of these old neighborhoods, Svoronou creates a series of drawings based on the narration of her grandfather during their interview. The Carsi market, the old Pera neighborhood, her grandfather walking through, and the symbol of the Pera club are easily recognized in the second space. The big resin drawing installation in the main space is a depiction of the Zappeion School for Girls' ceiling and two pamphlets-postcards from the 1930-1950s are echoed in the ceramics as well. One is a postcard from Principo - an island in the Sea of Marmara, where many Greek minority people would spend their summers and vacations - and a pamphlet announcing a ball taking place in the same region. All the pieces resembling straps are depictions of a handmade lace, handed down to her grandmother from her side of the family. She calls the pattern "rose" because the nodes lead to a woven rose.

Visually abstract on the first blink of the eye and in terms of content heavily charged, the exhibition justifies its title „t he moonless mountain“. In an ancient greek myth, the moon meets her lover and their encounter was causing the absolute lack of light, as they were hiding in the outskirts of a mountain named Ἄσέληνον ὄρος (moonless mountain). When the „light“ is missing, the presence becomes one with memory.

* The artist researches purely the archival material of the books and the corresponding sources of the time, and not the beliefs of the author.