

Art as Poetry “In the Stillness Between Two Waves of the Sea”

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There's both poetry and passion in the exhibition now at Durden and Ray through June 29th.

Alison Woods and Dimitra Skandali have assembled a beautiful collection of exhibiting artists: Natasa Biza, Kio Griffith, Nancy Ivanhoe, Dimitris Katsoudas, Despina Nissiriou, Aliko Pappa, Ty Pownall, Nikos Sepetzoglou, Fran Siegel, Dimitra Skandali, Valerie Wilcox, and Alison Woods.

You'll want to visit this show here – it flows as beautifully as waves against the shoreline – before it travels abroad.

As curator Woods reports, “Thanks to the generosity of The Aegean Center for the Fine Arts, and John and Jane Pack, Works from *In the Stillness Between Two Waves of the Sea* will travel to the Aegean Center for the Arts in Paros, Greece, giving artists an opportunity to participate in the creation of site-specific works in both countries while offering a glimpse of the concerns that inspire them in locales thousands miles from each other.”

The exhibition had its roots in a graduate school meeting between Woods and Skandali at the San Francisco Art Institute, and continued to grow each time the artists have met since.

“Last year Dimitra contacted me for a letter of recommendation and possible contract for a future show at my residency to renew her O1 visa. I immediately thought of Durden and Ray, where I am a member, and asked if she would be interested in doing an exchange show between Greece and Los Angeles.”



From such prosaic needs has arisen a show that is both delicate and deep. “The title for the show comes from TS Eliot’s poem *Little Gidding*,” Woods relates. “The project creates a dialogue between two different cultures, showing a common place, a willingness to connect and communicate above distances and differences.”

Some of the works have a political slant such as Natasia Biza’s installation and video “For all Party Occasions: Object Lessons” which documents the items sent to Greece after WWII as a part of the Marshall plan; Kio Griffith’s “Coral Sea (heavy fog)” which he describes as “an impossible ship made from both US and Japanese parts;” Dimitris Katsoudas “*ex ils : The Meditteranean (series)*” botanical drawings of fish found in the Mediterranean with the parts of humans lost at sea while seeking political asylum; and Despina Nissiriou’s video “*Vocal*”.

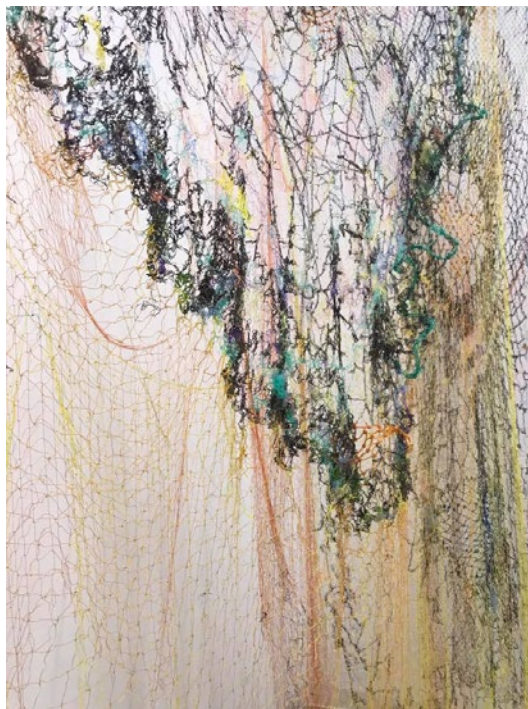


“Nikos Sepetzoglou’s works inject a sense of humor into what could easily become a somber political dialog with ‘Message is the Bottle,’ ‘Gazing at the Black Bubble,’ and ‘If a Beaver had a Nail,’” Woods states.

Other pieces share a nautical theme or aesthetic. These include Fran Siegel’s *Navigation*, a vertical history of the port of Genoa inspired by Italo Calvino’s “Invisible Cities.” The work is an elaborate multidimensional collage drawing completed while on a residency fellowship in Italy.



Dimitra Skandali's installation of found and given fishing nets from around the world are pieced together with crocheted seagrass; while Nancy Ivanhoe's "Currents" and "Tide Pool" are deconstructed screens referencing the sea. Aliko Pappa "E La Nave Va" an installation of 38 drawings of shipwrecks, offers haunting images from films and memories.



"The remaining works share an aesthetic of quiet contemplation," Woods reveals. Woods says these include Ty Pownall's sand sculpture "Into the Mystic", Valerie Wilcox's constructs "Redeemed" and "The Interlude" and Alison Woods' painting "Palimpsest" derived from the Ancient Greek παλίμψηστος (*palimpsestos*, "again scraped"), a compound word that literally means "scraped clean and ready to be used again".



The exhibition has a beautiful flow of color that reminds one of tides and scattered shells on woven along sinuous shorelines. Woods says this sensation was the outgrowth of careful thought.



“In thinking about the peaceful moments of co-creation and the title “the stillness between two waves of the sea”, it made sense to us to keep the tones down, without intense contrasts and focus how the pieces complement each other. Los Angeles and Greece are both influenced by the sea.”

As curators, the pair used this to guide the image selection and the aesthetic of the show, Woods notes. “The palette is subdued, but includes shades of blues punctuated by small bursts of its complimentary color of orange. We were interested in creating a strong dialogue between the individual artworks. Seeing the whole show as one piece was a big priority for both of us. We were also dealing with a very high ceiling and used that to our advantage by placing artworks above eye level.”



Working together with Skandali, Woods says both shared a commitment to excellent and a trust in each other's choices.

“I think we both intuitively grasped what the overall objective of this show was. Once we began to install the show, things went very smoothly, with only a few bumps. I enjoy the Greek warmth, emotional energy and food. You could call it *My Big Fat Greek Show* experience. I am looking forward to the project in Paros where I will get to meet the rest of the Greek artists who were financially unable to travel to Los Angeles for this show and have promised lots of hugs and kisses.”

We only wish we could come along.

Visit Durden and Ray at 1923 S Santa Fe Avenue, Los Angeles, through the 29th to sail into this blissful sea of art.

• **Genie Davis; photos: Genie Davis**