

**PRESS RELEASE**

September 2023

**Claas Reiss presents Konstantinos Argyroglou at Art Athina 2023**

Claas Reiss is pleased to announce its participation in the MAIN section of Art Athina 2023 at Zappeion Mansion from 14 to 17 September 2023 with a solo presentation of new works by Greek artist Konstantinos Argyroglou.

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'The group of works by Konstantinos Argyroglou presented by Claas Reiss at Art Athina 2023 titled 'A capsule of ambiguous travel' consist of a series of new paintings and drawings that tackle notions of memory and identity through the subjective lens of intimate relationships and the condition of solitude with the use of multi-layered washes and vivid colours that create a dreamy and fluid essence.

Konstantinos Argyroglou paints fleeting and hybrid images that bind lived experiences, fears and future dreams in a whirlpool of non-linear recollection and anamnesis, in view of constructing an idiosyncratic 'safe-world' which has the capacity to firstly allow the artist to re-visit past events and re-articulate their dynamic yet are characterised of tender awkwardness, and secondly to evaluate and challenge the value and significance of these memories in the present moment through juxtaposing the documentation of past experiences, either those are lived by the artist first-hand or experienced through narration by his family members, with present emotional encounters; in a way creating a non-linear diary of recollection which speaks from a present perspective.

In most of his imagery, Argyroglou uses the human figure as a central element in the composition and his wider narrative to create meeting points, for his characters, that take place within an expansive sphere of relationality. These visual settings, such as the bedroom, the backyard, the balcony, the beach, the armchair and the car, play a pivotal role in the work as these places accommodate interaction between characters, with themselves and their environment constructing an almost psychological registry. These characters, made by water colours and oils, are the result of a fluid amalgamation of familiar loving people, such as the artist's mother and his grandparents, of portraits of himself in a younger age - based on photographs and archival materials - and of actual and imagined objects and settings which become personas themselves that reveals an anthropomorphic aspect to them. All these elements, both figurative and abstract, compose hybrid-settings which evoke a feeling of familiar awkwardness, always bearing a nostalgic essence of past summers in Crete, where the artist originally comes from, yet simultaneously creating a fantastical inclusive safe and tender situation of intimacy and care. Through these works Argyroglou strives to envision and depict 'environments of understanding' as a way through which to channel his constant urge to exist as a dyslexic learner while growing up in Athens, his adult life in London and his strong yet peculiar close relationship with his Greek family.

This unrest and complexity are highly apparent in his approach towards portraiture. For example, in most situations Argyroglou's visual domain involves a main figure of a person of unidentifiable gender depicted in a solely almost mundane situation of either eating a melon in a stripped chez-long, comfortably sitting on a large armchair, lying on their back or their front near a pool, or sitting in car with a belt fastened and traveling towards an unknown destination. In 'Memory of being driven', the car becomes a capsule of ambiguous travel; it becomes a transportable home, a home caught in movement, a vessel that takes one home or maybe a place where one is positioned as a passenger driven from one place to another while being passively seat-belted; a situation which is designed to ensure safety yet does not always feel safe itself - "at times I feel vulnerable and during others not, as if I am taken care of yet are not caring enough, isn't this a bit paradoxical?".

It is within this paradox that Argyroglou's painting practice develops; a fluid dialogue which is in the midst of memory, thought, insecurity and tenderness.

Following this line of thought and accompanying these encounters of solitude, there are other compositions which celebrate family moments that share elements with a more documentary-like approach, examples of which involve his grandparents traveling by plane, his mother posing in her childhood bunk-bed shared with her brother and a snow fight which is slightly visible due to the frozen and icy atmosphere created within the painting. Perhaps this painting 'Winter memory beyond myself' works as a break, or a rabbit hole, in the sequence of the summery narrative creating an extra flashback that offers another level to the work, maybe that of a postcard or a sticker which is found stuck at the bed headboard since childhood; an image of something that makes one wonder and get lost in the memory of a memory which perhaps never actually took place. This approach towards the wider notion of anamnesis becomes an experimental and potent field of various possibilities, a journey that Argyroglou embarks in order to understand himself as a son, a grandson, a partner, a painter; a person in transit.'

(Konstantinos Argyroglou, September 2023)

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Konstantinos Argyroglou (born 1998 in Athens, Greece) graduated with BA (Hons) Fine Art Mixed Media from University of Westminster in 2020 and MA Painting from Royal College of Art in London in 2022. In January 2023 Argyroglou had his first solo exhibition at Claas Reiss' Projektraum London titled 'Retouching Memory', followed by 'The Shape Of Time' (group show) at Lindon & Co in London curated by Alice Amati. Art Athina is the inaugural presentation of the artist's work at an art fair and the first solo presentation in his native Athens. Argyroglou lives and works in London.

Claas Reiss is a contemporary art gallery established in November 2020 with the aim of developing a high quality programme dedicated to 'new voices' in international contemporary painting. For further information please visit [www.claasreiss.com](http://www.claasreiss.com), email [info@claasreiss.com](mailto:info@claasreiss.com) or call +44 7769 566 922.