



Costas Varotsos

The energy of a space

This Side Up
Friederike Schmid, Lic. oec. HSG
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Costas Varotsos studied Fine Arts and architecture in Italy - he has studios in Greece and Italy today. He has successfully exhibited in galleries around the world for over twenty years. His installations and sculptures are spread all over the continents. 1999 he was appointed professor for Fine Arts at the University for Architecture, Thessaloniki, Greece. Last year he was the official Greek representative on the Biennale of Venice "**Dappertutto**" where he showed in the Greek pavilion a stone bridge bent from one side to the other - and in front of the building a Glass "**Labirinto**".



In the beginning of his career Varotsos worked a lot with transparent synthetic materials, synthetic resin. Also stone as a natural material was used for big sculptures like "**The Poet**" of Cascalenda. Only by chance the artist discovered glass as "his material" in 1983 whilst realizing "**The Poet**" of Nicosia Cyprus. The figure of a poet with attributes like fragility, danger, aggression, sensibility, explosivity inspired

him to use glass. Glass which can express the same attributes like a poet. And so he did his first construction with a steel trestle in the center - like a human skeleton - covered by flat glass layers, clued together from bottom to top. His first trial was dangerous - the "**Skeleton**" was too weak - it collapsed and pieces of the 7 m high figure were falling down. But after several trials they managed and nowadays his technique is so refined that much bigger installations anywhere can be realized.

Glass for Varotsos came out to be the ideal material. He has a very high sensibility for space, for social stratification, for the energy of a place. And he doesn't pretend to change this energy. He wants his sculptures or installations to perfectly fit into a place, as if they were there since ever. Glass fits into any space, it lets the light get through, it reflects it - depending on your position. The energy can flow.

Only because of this high sensibility the artist could realise works like the "**La Morgia**" rock installation in the Abruzzian Appennines at a height of 150 meters. He stayed for several months up in the mountain filling up a hole in the mountain with glass, caused by people after the second world war. So he gave back to the mountain what people took some decenniums ago - his "**justification**" for the work.

Also the "**Figura in Movimento**" in Torino realized in 1999 was such a work. This sculpture is on a big place in Torino (Piazza Benefica) - and the artist integrated all the people living around there into his project. He invited them to discuss his propositions with him, to bring ideas. He even showed the project on Internet of Torino, so that the whole city could vote for it. May be this is the reason, why he is the first artist in Torino to place a contemporary work of art in public space.

His latest work, the "**Greek Theater**" in the archeological parc of Cuma, Naples is a modern steel-glass construction of a height of 15 meters. It represents a perfect symbiosis of antique buildings with modern art. A piece of art which seems to have been there since ever.

A big project for June 2000 is the installation in the **Swiss National Museum "Château Prangins"** for the exhibition NET ART 2000. Here again Varotsos had an absolutely perfect and simple solution. The old castle is near the lake of Geneva - a wall on the opposite side of the lake separates the court from the lower garden. On this wall on a length of nearly 42 meters Varotsos wants to install about 30cm in layers of glass with a slight bow in it: "Horizon". To create with this thin blue line the impression of the horizon of the lake being also in front of the castle. An installation which shouldn't be removed after the end of the exhibition, but which seems so natural that it should stay there forever.

The exhibition NET ART 2000

Swiss National Museum: Château Prangins, Waadtland, Switzerland 29.06. - 10.09.2000

Group exhibition with 8 international painters and sculptors:

- **Gianfredo Comesi**, Tessin/ Switzerland (sculptor)
- **Tom Carr**, Spain/America (sculptor)
- **Jean Fourton**, France (painter)
- **Bernard Garo**, Waadtland/ Switzerland (painter)
- **Pierre Golay**, Waadtland/ Switzerland (sculptor)
- **Richard Texier**, France (painter)
- **Hans Thomann**, St. Gallen/ Switzerland (painter, sculptor)
- **Costas Varotsos**, Greece, Italy (sculptor)

NET ART represents networking not only between different countries, between different techniques, materials, etc. between an ancient place for the exhibition and contemporary art.

As every artist created for this exhibition a tapisserie in one of the worlds most famous places called Aubusson (where tapestries are done since the Middle Age) there is also Networking in the very real sense of knots, strings, etc. Most of the artists, also Costas Varotsos did a tapestry the first time of their life. It is very special to see their thoughts of networking in their own works between the tapestry, the sculptures and the paintings. And we can promise you, that the tapestries created by our artists are very special - many of them represent modern textile works.

The author of the article:

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