

A strange dinner at the table of Nikolaou

Group exhibition on **Aegina**

Opening: Saturday 28 September 2024, 14.00

Duration: 28 September – 28 October 2024

Apostolis Artinos curates the exhibition "**A strange dinner – at the table of Nikolaou**", organised by Zoumboulakis Galleries and Nikolaou Residence on **Aegina**. The exhibition is presented in the house of Nikos Nikolaou (1909 - 1986).

"The plate is the most familiar of objects, exposed to its utilitarian purpose and its emotional context. It is about food, of course, but also the emotion of food, the emotion of the family table, its crockery; these are its memories, ultimately. Man's entire time fits into the emotional schooling of these tables, whose recollection affirms and exhausts us. This object would often shed its utility cycle to assume a prominent position within the home. A custom had it that one plate from the household's best set was taken out of service and displayed on the wall. Mostly of European origin, with depictions from the realm of plants and animals or with historical references, such plates filled entire walls even in this country—witness the famous plate walls of Rhodes, Skyros or Karpathos. The decorative plate became a canvas, with life narratives unfolding within its concave area. The painted plates from the Kourtzis workshop of Lesbos or Nikolaou on Skyros are well established as emblematic works of our folk art and have become precious collector's items, while the factory products of Ikaros on Rhodes and Kerameikos in Athens, whose painted plates went into every Greek home, were to travel throughout the world via the routes of tourism. The practice of painted plates would soon find its way into artists' studios, as typified by the projects of Nikos Nikolaou, Alekos Fassianos and Yannis Moralis.

Thus a stash of undecorated plates found in the Aegina studio of Nikolaou were what triggered this exhibition. Twenty contemporary visual artists were given each one ceramic plate on which to imprint their own emotive script. Patterns, colours and reliefs attest to the idiomatic approaches to a surface at once familiar and unfamiliar. For it is the artist's script that opens up our surrounding objects to the horizon of another stage. It is no longer the reality of their utilitarian nature but their elevation to the place and time of another kind of pleasure. Even when this script manifests itself as a simple decoration on the object, the gaze still regains its lost horizon, its expanded as well as twisted visibility. The things then are no longer objects for a practical purpose but consolatory trophies and imaginary escapes.

The plates of the exhibition are set on the table where Nikolaou served the legendary meals to his friends. Nikolaou's friends and neighbours—Moralis, Kapralos, Maria Pop—were among the most frequent guests to those long-drawn dinners. Now his table hosts different plates, as part of a different encounter. This note may have its own significance, I think... or maybe not!"

The artists invited to dinner:

Myrsini Alexandridi, Vanessa Anastasopoulou, Ileana Arnaoutou, Katerina Giannaca, Vasilis Zografos, Andreas Theodorou, Konstantinos Ladianos, Thanos Makris, Natalia Manta, Melina Mosland, Dimitris Neveskiotis, Aliko Palaska, Yorgos Papafingos, Sofia Rozaki, Christina Sgouromiti, Zoe Sklepa, Giorgos Tserionis, Ioanna Hatzipanigyri, George Hadoulis, Dionisis Christofilogiannis.

Nikos Nikolaou and his wife Angela settled in Aegina in 1964 and built their home, which became a cherished gathering place for art enthusiasts and intellectuals from Greece and abroad.

In 2019, a meticulous renovation project commenced, breathing new life into the house and grounds, resulting in the creation of six exquisite guesthouses.

The renovation was conducted with utmost reverence for the painter and his wife, preserving the warm hospitality that made their home legendary. Beginning with the front room, originally Nikolaou's first studio and later his sitting room, the restoration aimed to return various objects and artworks to their original places, recreating the ambiance in which Nikolaou lived and created.

The art collection belongs to the family of Angela Nikolaou, including Theodore, Christina, Daphne, and Philippos Zoumboulakis.

Supervised by the architectural firm "Zoumboulakis Architects" (www.zoumboulakisarchitects.gr), the project was meticulously executed to honor the legacy of the renowned artist.

Surrounded by lush greenery, the tranquil setting contributes to the serene atmosphere that envelops visitors from the moment they arrive.

For visitor information please follow the link:

<https://nikolaouresidence.gr/our-story/?lang=en>

Duration of the exhibition: 28 September – 28 October 2024

Nikolaou Residence: 39 Nikou Kazantzaki St., Aegina 18010



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