

LEILA HELLER.



Mark Hadjipateras, Untitled, 2022, Oil on canvas, 41 x 60 cm / 16.1 x 23.6 in

Leila Heller Gallery is proud to present the solo exhibition of Greek-American artist Mark Hadjipateras. The show will be on view at 17 East 76th Street, New York City, from December 2nd to December 22nd.

Mark Hadjipateras's recent output reveals his ongoing interest in the art of color. In this series of paintings, all done between 2020 to 2023, the artist references the color palette of abstract modernist paintings. His paintings pay homage to leading exponents of American abstraction, including Stuart Davis, Balcomb Greene, James Brooks and Charles Houghton Howard, as well as leading exponents of European modernism, such as Fernand Léger, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso. Although the modernist element has always been present in Hadjipateras' practice, these graceful organic shapes are particularly informed by a 20th century modernist sensibility. The outcome of extensive research, this series communicates Hadjipateras's sustained engagement with the contribution of color to establishing, sustaining, and helping decipher the modern.

Modernist artists' colors are especially attractive because they have an inherent potential for transformation. The smoothness and fluidity that the colors imbue on the forms, their capacity to evoke space and conjure volumes and multiple planes, and, above all, the symbolic nature of color and its influence on psychology, are the artist's main fields of investigation.

The paintings that comprise this exhibition contain many of the features recognizable in Mark Hadjipateras' practice: biosynthetic creatures, enigmatic objects and symbols, indeterminate topographies – and his characteristic playfulness. Though abstract, Hadjipateras's paintings make ample reference to nature. On closer look, one can see a horizon, the sea, waves, hills, the sky and the skyline. This incorporation helps strike a balance between the geometric and the organic element. Additionally, the artist introduces motifs from his earlier paintings and sculptures- for instance the drop, a symbol of life, an elliptical shape reminiscent of an eye

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or a canoe, which also resembles a vulva, an almond, a seed, alluding to seeing, journeys, fertility, sexuality. In some works there's a breast shaped contour that also looks like a hill or a wave, conjures nature, nourishment and sensuality. A motif that runs under the skin of some 2020 small paintings, eluding immediate detection, is the artist's allusions to music and the production of soundscapes. Specifically, guitars and strings surface from the fusion of organic shapes and geometric figures. Hadjipateras is attracted to the shape of the electric guitar because it possesses the ambivalence and allure that he seeks – it is a beautiful, shell-like, organic shape, closed yet open (to interpretation). All these elements, motifs, and symbols form part of a broader synthesis that serves and augments the artist's personal vocabulary.

In addition to paintings and sculptures, the show includes a set of new works on paper. In 2023, spontaneously and without preplanning, the artist cut shapes out of differently-coloured sheets of paper and pasted them on a surface to create a set of scattered parts. Without references to specific forms, this abstract work, which one could metaphorically call painting in space, combines elements of his recent paintings to create this series of collage works on paper.

Ultimately, the adoption of modernist artists' palettes is coupled and fused with a distinctly personal idiom, increasing aesthetic impact. On the whole, Hadjipateras seeks to produce impactful works that become emblazoned on the viewer's retina. Contrary to the chromophobic impulse largely prevalent in Western thought and culture (as David Batchelor reminds us in his famous book), Mark Hadjipateras's paintings celebrate color by highlighting its positive value. Essentially, these paintings and sculptures convey a sense of joy and fulfill the fundamental need for visual pleasure.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mark Hadjipateras was born and raised in London. He studied at St. Martins School of Art in London, the John Moores University in Liverpool. and the School of Visual Arts in New York. From 1982 to 2002 he lived and worked in New York City. His work includes sculpture, painting, printing and photography. He has done numerous site-specific installations in galleries and public spaces, in Europe and in the U.S. In 2000, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of NYC commissioned Hadjipateras to create a permanent installation comprising 40 mosaics for the 28th Street station of the Broadway line. The station received the Municipal Arts Society Award for Best Public Work in 2003. Other public spaces with his work are the Thessaloniki New Waterfront and the Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos. The artist has had forty solo exhibitions and participated in more than one hundred forty group exhibitions in the U.S., Greece, England, Germany and Japan including: Queens Museum of Art, Cooper Union, Alternative Museum in New York and at the State Museum of Contemporary Art, the Macedonian Contemporary Art Museum and the Benaki Museum, in Greece.

He has had four retrospective exhibitions- at the Museum of Modern Greek Art (Rhodes) in 2007, the Municipal Gallery of Athens in 2008, the Hellenic Foundation of Culture in Berlin in 2011, and the Fougaro Art Gallery, Nafplio, Greece in 2014. Two monographs about his work have been published , in 2003 and 2008. A third monograph will be published in early 2024 with essays by Alexandra Koroxenidi, Barry Schwabsky and Christopher Hudson. The 'dummy' of which will be available for viewing at the exhibition. Hadjipatera's work has been reviewed in Art in America, Art News, Sculpture Magazine, The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Herald Tribune ,Village Voice, NY Observer, NY Magazine, London Observer, and many other art periodicals and newspapers. His works are in important public and private collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Princeton University Art Museum, Zimmerli Art Museum, EMST (Greek Museum of Contemporary Art), the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Zimmerli Art Museum, Athens Municipality, Basil & Elize Goulandris Museum Dakis Joannou collection, Vorres Museum, The Royal Bank of Scotland, Daewood Sculpture Garden, Geoje, South Korea, Ernst & Young Athens, IDS/American Express, Prudential Insurance Corporation, New York and many others.