

MARY ZYGOURI

democratic valuation: buying, selling, trading

performance: thursday 11 november 2010 at 7.30 pm

opening: thursday 11 november 2010 at 6.30 pm

closing: saturday 27 november 2010

open from tuesday to saturday from 4 to 8 pm

STUDIO STEFANIA MISCETTI
via delle Mantellate, 14 - 00165 Roma
tel/fax: + 39 06 6880 588 email: mistef@iol.it
www.studiostefaniamiccetti.com

STUDIO STEFANIA MISCETTI presents *democratic valuation: selling, buying, trading* by **Mary Zygouri** (born in Athens, where she lives and works), which is a performance specially realized for *Señales Rojas*, project organized by the *Italian Latin American Institute* of Rome and *Volume!* Foundation, curated by Patricia Rivadeneira.

Mary Zygouri deals with issues related to individual and social identity crisis in the contemporary world. In her works, she invents and impersonates fictional characters and inserts them in real and everyday contexts. She creates false identities and presents them in public actions and video-performances, consequentially producing surreal and paradoxical atmospheres. Zygouri realizes situations that deal with the definition of self-identity in relation to power, censorship and surveillance systems. She often takes as starting point historical events and their many interpretations, narrations and literary myths, and revises them by transferring and re-actualizing all to an imaginary present.

The artist takes as reference the myth of Sisyphus, metaphor of the impossibility of achieving the 'purpose', of identifying the 'sense' although endless attempts, to realize a strong emotional performance that will start from Studio Stefania Miscetti at 7.30 pm, will cross the river and Via dei Pettinari, ending at ILLA, in via dei Catinari n.3.

This piece represents the evolution of a work-performance that the artist acted in Thessaloniki in 2009 (during the 1st Festival of Performance, Thessaloniki Biennale, which she dedicated to Maria Karavela, who was the first Greek woman performer that had been exiled because of the strong political aspects of her work) and then in Naples in 2010 (within the project *ΠΩΛΕΙΤΑΙ Vendesi*, Palazzo delle Sperimentazioni, Fondazione Morra).

For her new performance, Zygouri drags and carries bulky white bags, sort of painful body prosthesis, aiming to link history with present reality by interacting with social urban context difficulties. This is a metaphor of democracy seen as an uncertain and difficult long route, which requires everybody's commitment and participation to be realized in its profoundest meaning.

On display at Studio Stefania Miscetti will also be a series of photographic works and the trilogy *ZOOPETICS ZOOPOLITICS*, which includes three video-performances *Symbiosis* (2007), *Decadence* (2008) and *Long Live the King* (2010).

In the video *Symbiosis*, already presented at Studio Stefania Miscetti within *SHE DEVIL 2* (2007), Zygouri refers to the life of Jorge Louis Borges, who, as opponent of the authoritarian politics of Peron, had been removed by his office as librarian and appointed

Inspector of hencoops, position that he obviously refused. The atmosphere is surreal: Valentine, a fictional secretary whose name refers to the famous Olivetti typewriter model, is typing words inside a huge chaotic herd of hens.

Decadence, shot in Salento (Puglia), shows a mysterious female figure traveling along a sunny desert country in a time suspended between past and future. An indefinable vehicle, which recalls the shape of a spaceship, seems to be about to shatter. The contrast between the ramshackle vehicle and the glorious female figure creates a decadent and grotesque atmosphere. The artist takes as reference Thomas Mann, who in a passage of his book *Royal Highness* (1909) describes the decadent greeting of an old army general, who is seeking for recognition.

In *Long Live the King*, the artist confronts herself with the grandeur of an elephant.

The starting point for this work is the story of Loisel contained in *Historie des menageries de l'Antiquite a nos jours* (1912). This novel tells about the custom in the Versailles Palace to bring and show to the Sun King unusual and surprising animal species. Specifically, the treated passage is concerned with the admiration felt by Louis XIV in seeing a living elephant. His emotion was so strong to make him decide to let famous artists paint the animal. In the video, the authority represented by Louis XIV and the Versailles Palace is transferred on the animal, with which the artist humbly and desperately duels in an ironic and at the same time cynically seductive scene.

Mary Zygouri studied at the School of Fine Arts in Athens (1994-2000) and continued her postgraduate studies in Fine Arts (2001-2003) at the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (GB).

Selected exhibitions: 2009 - 2nd Biennial Thessaloniki *Drasis* (EL); Performance Festival of Thessaloniki (EL); *Et in Arcadia ego*, Omada Filopapou, 2nd Athens Biennial, *Heaven*, Athens (EL). 2008 - *Fresco Bosco*, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, Padula (IT); *Women Only*, Beltsios Collection (EL). 2007 - *Oct. 4th Tashkent International Contemporary Art Biennial / New: Illusion or Reality*, 4th International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Tashkent, Uzbekistan; *SHE DEVIL 2*, Studio Stefania Miscetti, Rome (IT). 2005 - *Hacking Reality*, Theatre Square, Athens (EL). 2001 - *10η Biennale of Young Artists*, Sarajevo, Bosnia Hercegovina.