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Culture

Land mementos and Gefso Papadaki's vast *patridognosia**

By Nikos Vatopoulos

Gefso Papadaki, bringing together a palimpsest of memories, historical events and personal journeys, explores the signs of a dense, dotted horizon.

In her new solo exhibition 'Land Mementos II' (Astra Gallery), while unfolding her personal mythology, composed of architectural fragments and urban symbols, she puts together her own immense country.

Although the patterns of the buildings are quite predominant (remnants, visions, utopias and architectural fantasies) it is difficult to place these works within the category of a travel study.

Gefso Papadaki, feeling confident with her brushes, re-organises a map where history, exposed to the need of designing new borders, retreats. Drawing on deep personal reserves, she brings to the surface family narrations (like whispers) from Minor Asia weaving them again around the powerful centripetal pole of Constantinople, her birthplace, womb and nurse. What you see in the exhibition is a work where the outline of Aghia Sophia dissolves in the horizon, overshadowed by the predominant shape of the Bosphorus suspension bridge.

Still, it would be unfair to say that the exhibition is a tribute to primeval roots or an emotional outpour.

A reference to Athens as well.

The show 'Land Mementos II' looks like a kaleidoscopic epitome of her own idea of the 'land' as an umbilical cord. Gefso Papadaki, coming from Minor Asia and Constantinople, passionately embraces Athens and creates some of the most powerful Athenian works of the last years. Gefso Papadaki's Athens, revealing on its layers its different historical periods, is both a fluid and a solid city, containing overlapping lives, mysterious and bright, nearly timeless, inside the convergence of the centuries.

There is a need to "comprehend" any human remnant and so time is abolished, stopped, becoming as such the strong element of the exhibition.

A strength that counteracts the conventional reading of space and specifically that of the towns and historical spaces. Following the principle of unique eclecticism, Gefso Papadaki, through an exclusive compilation, presents us with a hybrid map of her own *patridognosia* containing all the signs, the codes and peaks of a geographical journey inside subconscious landscapes. These half lit open spaces become painting flares that often astonish us.

**patridognosia* (knowledge of one's homeland)