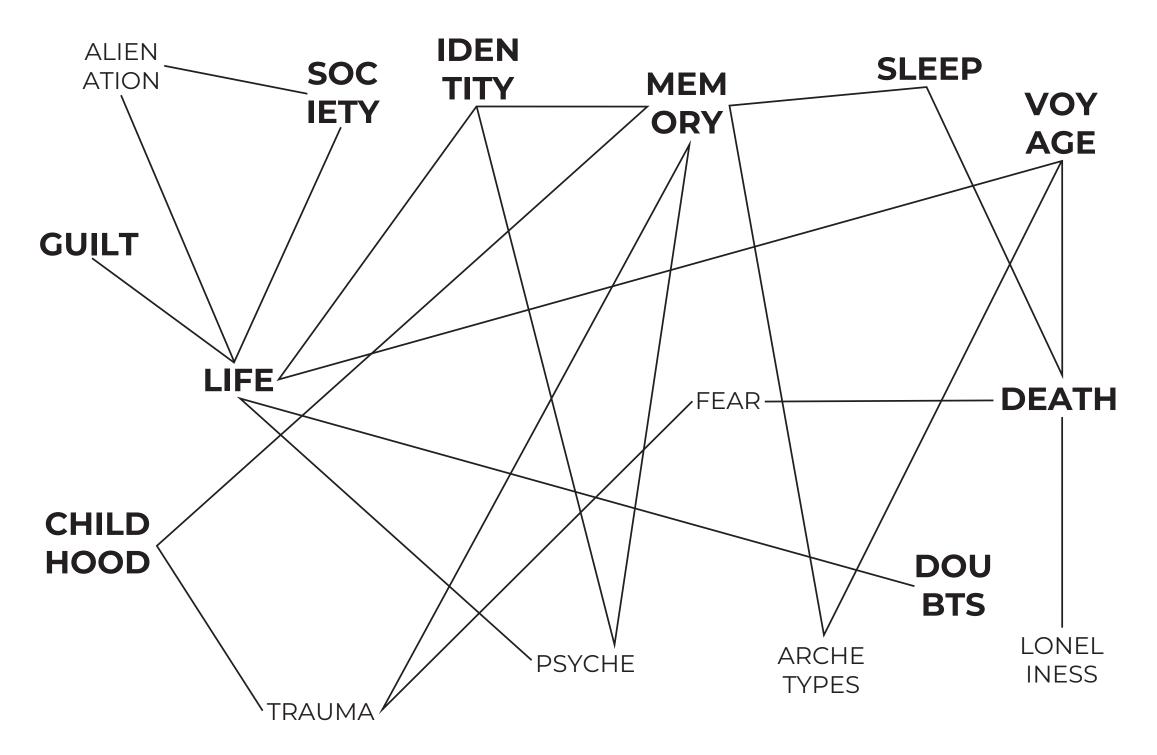
CON FES SION

YORGOS KYPRIS





Confession: a word that is open to several interpretations.

In my view the right interpretation, for Yorgos Kypris concerns a deposition; the profound one of a thinking artist with a spirit both restless and well-aimed, of cosmopolitan nature, a labourer of art. All this makes up the artistic persona of Kypris who, already since his years in Faenza, Italy, sought the truth in man and the world while researching matter.

In the early years with his crafting of clay, manual processing was the dominant trait in his work.

Forms, at once, sculpted the dynamic creation of art objects and environments. Later on, new materials are to come into his arsenal — bronze, iron, aluminum, glass.

Since the mid '70s, Kypris has been experiencing an ongoing creative adventure, presenting viewers with his own visual testimony.

His rejection of things in an established order- a key ingredient of his persona, kept him away from what we call "the art system", yet not from the urge for his own truth with art, always, as his vehicle.

Nowadays, in his maturity, still creating through constant intellectual quests, he has given us works that are both accomplished and pointed which constitute a world; that of his own, equivalently solemn and humorous.

And the adventure goes on...

MARIA PANAYIDES ARCHITECT

FORMAL CULTURAL COUNSELOR CYPRUS EMBASSY, ATHENS

The work of Yorgos Kypris, like most art, cannot be understood linearly. The artist has been working on parallel collections for decades, each informing and interacting with the other, blurring the lines between them. In this book, we present the artist's work in the context of his **life**, using his own classifications as our guide.

CHILD HOOD



IMAGE 1: Yorgos Kypris (middle) with his brothers in Cyprus

Yorgos Kypris was born in British occupied Cyprus and experienced the Cypriot War of Independence in his formative years.

Stories of British soldiers, fearful nights, torture, and war crimes often surface as influential concepts for his work. He readily admits that his **memory** and imagination are intertwined in a way that makes the distintion between **childhood** memory and imagination difficult.

Shortly after the end of the occupation, his family left their hometown and embarked on a journey by boat to Greece, a passage that occpies a central theme in much of Kypris' later work.

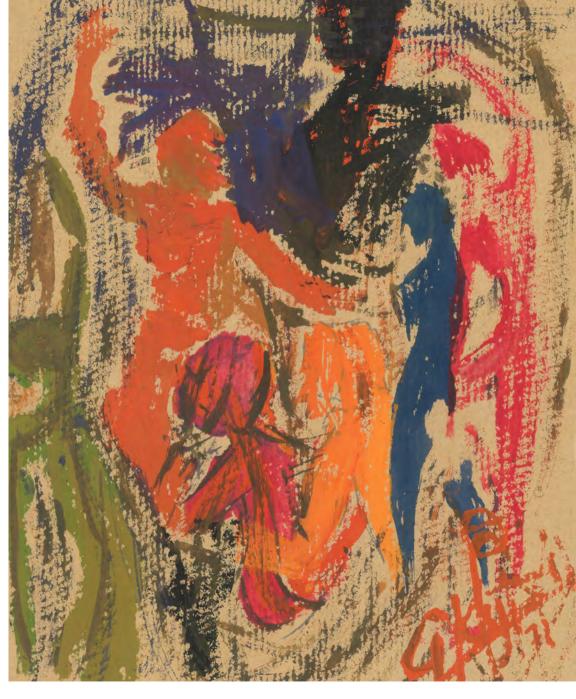


IMAGE 2: Childhood Drawing, 1972

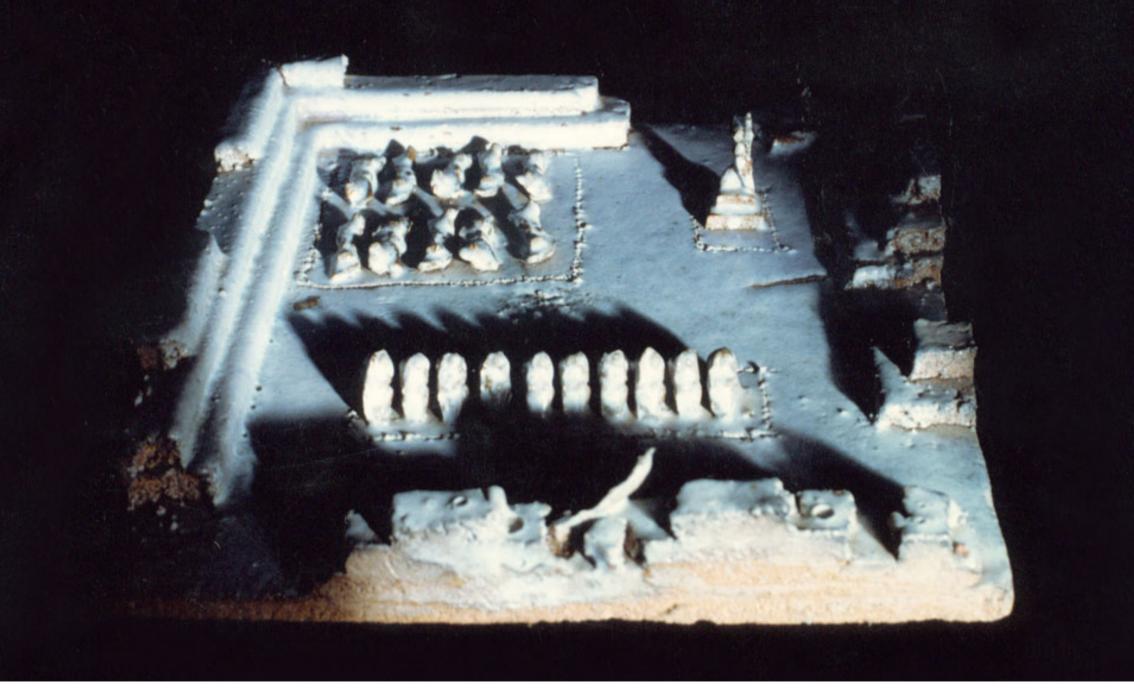


IMAGE 3: **Solemn Ceremony, 1977**

His command of scultural form is owed in large part to his experience with the fundamental sculptural medium; clay. His early works emanate **Ioneliness**. Figures resembling statues are placed in vast, dramatic spaces such as amphitheaters or squares, emphasizing their stillness and solitude. These works can be seen as precursors to his *About Cages* and *Flights* or *Ceremonial Boats* that were to follow a decade later.

"Maybe it makes sense. Maybe it doesn't. It makes a feeling though."

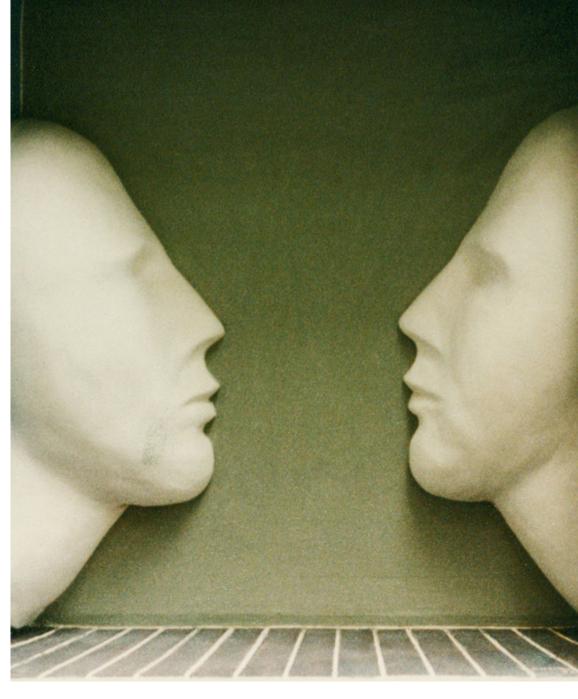


IMAGE 4: Theater, 1984

Yorgos Kypris studied ceramics in Italy, where he focused on working with clay before exploring different media for his *States of Fish* collections. Particularly in his early works, the artist made use of symbols and **archetypal** forms of Mediterranean cultures, especially his homeland, Cyprus.

Themes and narratives that would later become focal topics in his work are already present in his first clay creations.

It is always a delight to discover how truly introspective and intimate Yorgos Kypris' work is.





IMAGE 6: The Mirror, 1984

Early in his career, Kypris transitioned away from ceramics and towards metal and glass, which allowed him to create larger-scale volumes that are more durable. Although both materials are naturally occuring, the contrast between clay's earthy softness and metal's cold firmness couldn't be more striking.

The qualities inherent to glass and metals require meticulous planning, which eradicates any opportunity for spontaneity in the artistic process. Symbols, forms, and themes are recurrent throughout multiple collections. One work informs the other in a complex, on-going conversation.





IMAGE 8: Shipwreck, 1997

GUILT



Fish Conditions was ultimately born out of admiration and **guilt**. The artist recounts a strong **childhood** memory that shaped his outlook on the lives of fish.

"I was sat on a rock at the sea while my uncle was speargun fishing. At some point, my uncle surfaced holding a big beautiful fish at the end of his spear. The fish was writhing and looking in agony. My soul was hurting. Simultaneously, I was admiring my uncle's feat. This was ingrained in my memory. And I think that this urged me to try speargunning later on, be in the ocean, fish, and then regret it and become a protector of fish against mass extinction."

This experience and its resulting conflicting emotions have translated into his art practice. It led him to using fish as a device for questioning the ethics guiding the treatment of non-human life-forms.

There was a profound paradox; on one hand, respecting and admiring the lives of fish, on the other hand, killing them when speargun fishing and enjoying them as meals. This inconsistency is responsible for the artist's near-obsessive production of fish forms.

It seems that this process is somehow cathartic for the artist, an attempt at absolution. Although the act may have punitive qualities, it is certainly also a way to process and overcome a penance through self-punishment.

Why is it so common for dead fish to be hung, displayed on platters, dismembered and consumed?

[&]quot;It is my personal confession for my crimes."

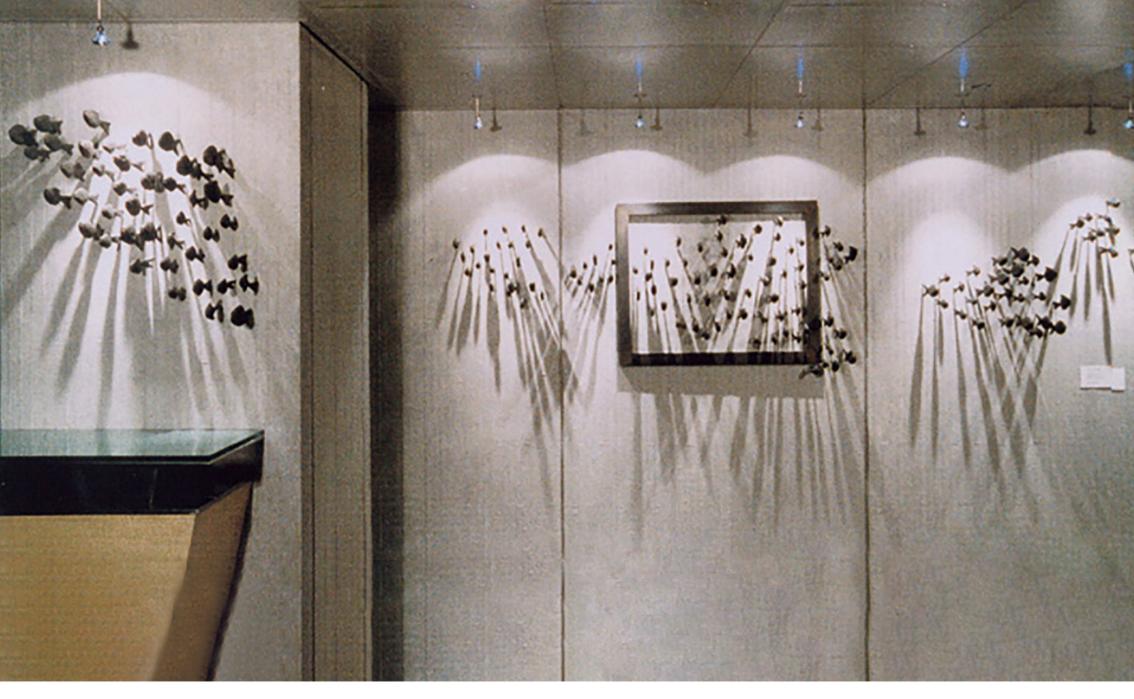
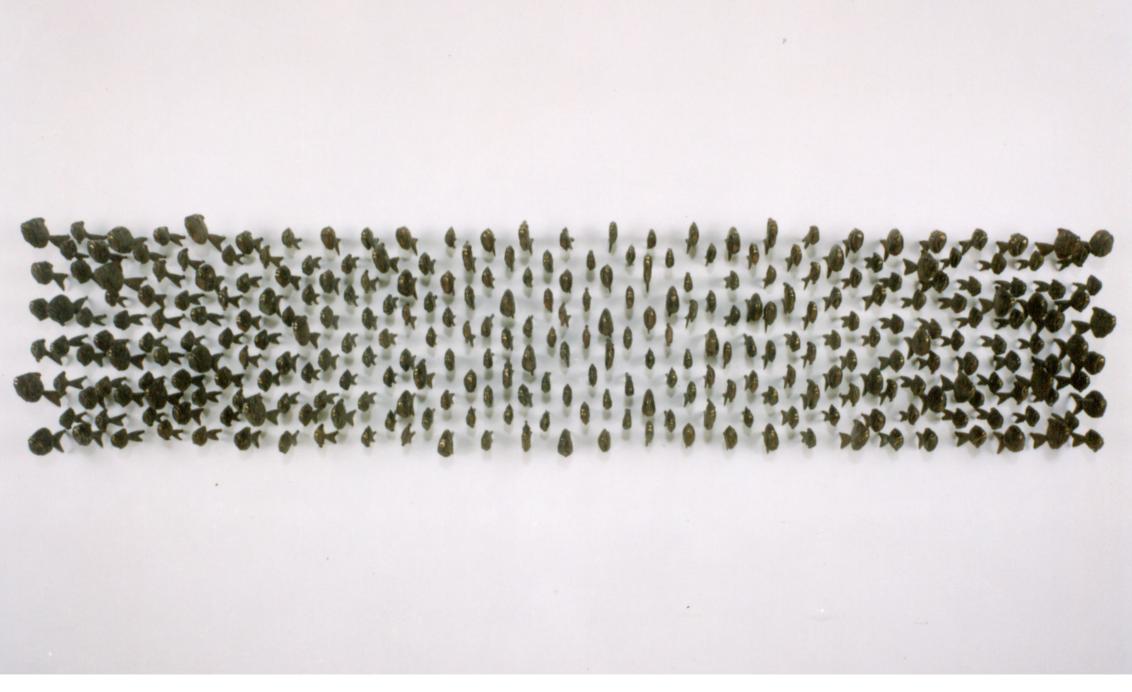


IMAGE 2: Entrapped Fish, 1997







In this provocative piece, the arist reognizes the importance of the fish as a symbol for Christianity.

In Ecce Agnus Dei, Kypris candidly references this affiliation by placing one of his fish heads within a religious icon in one of the first instances where the found object is utilized in his works.

Although the artist is an atheist, he is concerned with religion on a sociological level. Critiquing and challenging spirituality and belief in the divine is a theme he would explore more thoroughly yearslater, in his *Iconoclastic Exercises*.

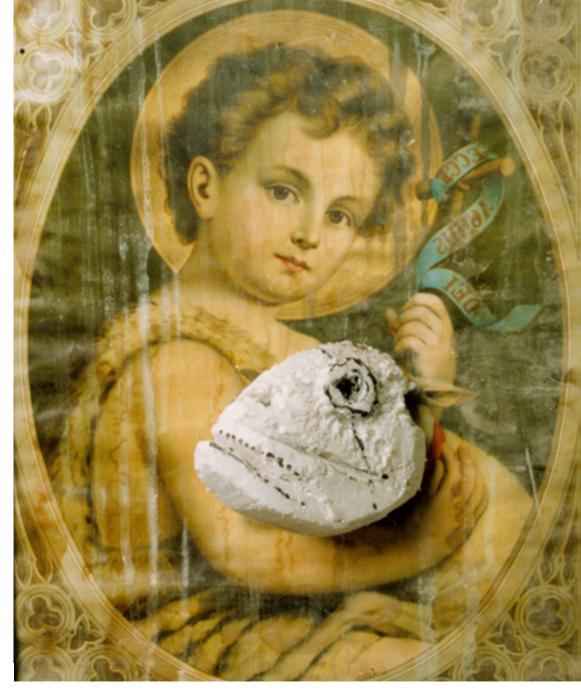


IMAGE 5: Ecce Agnus Dei, 1994



IMAGE 6: Silence, 2007

SLEEP



IMAGE 1: Broken Heart II, 1997

Loneliness, and the related parallel notions of **sleep, death**, and abandonment are central to this eerie collection.

The artist explores the concept of the end, and what comes before and after it, through the creation of large-scale installations made of steel and found x-rays.



IMAGE 2: Analytic, 1998

In perhaps one of his most introspective series of works, the artists has let himself free to explore his psyche, and process concepts that create inner conflict.



IMAGE 3: Broken Heart, 1997



IMAGE 4: Broken Heart III, 1997

The installations are organized in strict, minimal lines - clear and absolute. The use of a bed suggests the existence of a human figure, conspicuous through its absence.

A bed is one of our most sacred and private spaces, an intimate environment for rest and personal exploration. This structure follows our entire life's trajectory from birth to **death**. For some, it is a safe space. For others, it is a place filled with turmoil and anxieties.



IMAGE 5: Identification Card II, 1999

The use of steel to represent the typically soft and malleable mattress creates a striking contrast and subverts our expectations. The bed becomes hostile, cold, and uncomfortable. This contrast is further emphasized by the use of found pillows against the rigid metal, creating yet another paradoxical relationship between comfort and discomfort through the use of dissonant materials.

The placement of multiple beds in a space accompanied by X-rays, evoke strong clinical imagery, spaces where **sleep** and **death** become coalescent.

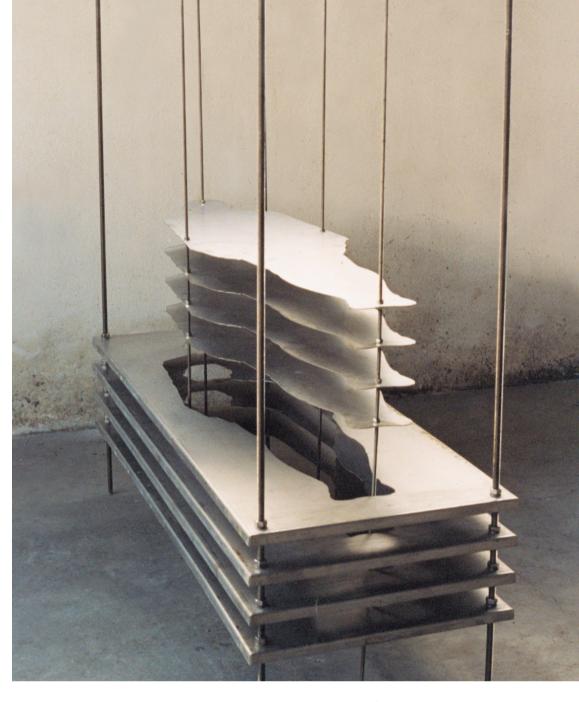


IMAGE 6: White Sarcophagus 1997



IMAGE 7: **Ice Box, 1995**



The artist routinely uses glass to represent water that has filled a shipwreck and the flesh of fish.

These works were conceived in the early 90s and their newer iterations exhibit Kypris' ever-shifting artistry.

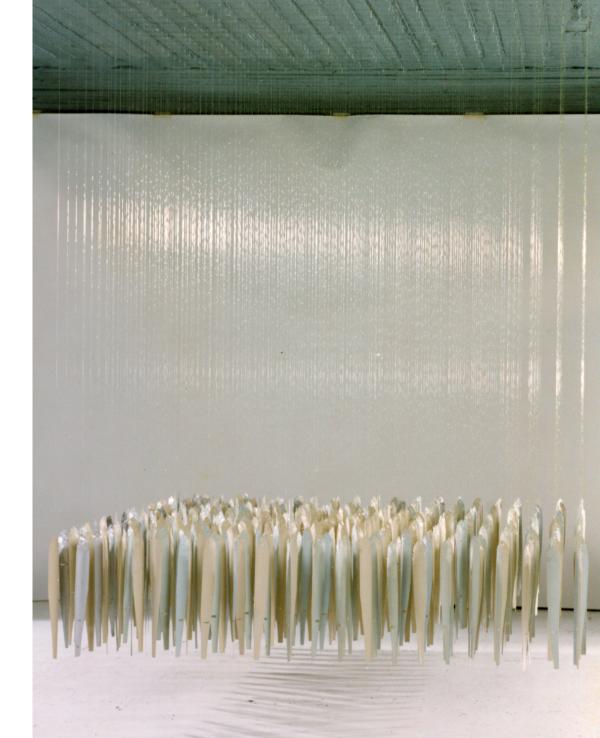
When compared to the rough texture of the fish seen in *Ice Box*, his recent *Frozen Fish* are refined and perfected. Kypris utilizes glass by stacking hand-cut pieces inside bronze frames to create the volume of the fish and the boats.

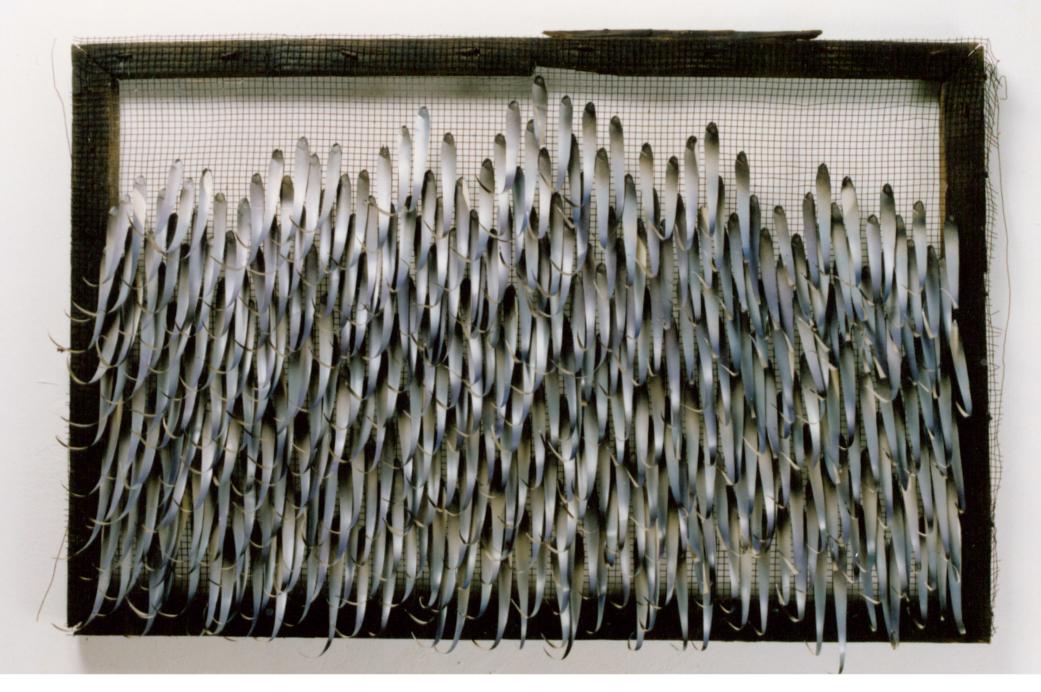
Fish are recurrent in his works over the decades: soft almond curves that converge into a sharp point. He is fascinated by this form, which he also sees repeated in the shape of eyes and boats. He describes the curves as vulva-like, a soft and welcoming form that is interrupted by the sharpness of its two points.





IMAGE 10: 441 Comestibles, 1995





In order to thoroughly contextualize his creations, it is interesting to also examine the artist's process:

"I always wanted to spread my works far and wide".

Yet he keeps his artistic process very close to home. Kypris' studio is integrated into his home in Athens where all of his works are designed and produced. He has worked with the same three collaborators for the past thirty years; two sculpture assistants, Konstantinos Fanouriakis and Vasilis Kavalaris, and one personal assistant, Katerina Dourou.

Over the years, as they developed their expertise and an ever-greater understanding of each other's work, the artist has gradually retreated entirely from certain tasks, and taken the opportunity to focus on designing and sculpting wax-casting models. Kypris readily admits that that his collaborators contribute to his work with important creative insight and decisions.

After all, he says, they have had lunch together in his home every day for the past thirty years.



IMAGE 12: Voice of the Sea, 1996





IMAGE 13: **Fish in Cage, 1997**

MEM ORY



In Cages and Flights, the artist curates a world of child-like wonder with vibrant depictions of escapism and wanderlust.

This world is the vehicle for exploring his **childhood** memories; a combination of **trauma** and the dream of how his **life** might have turned out differently.

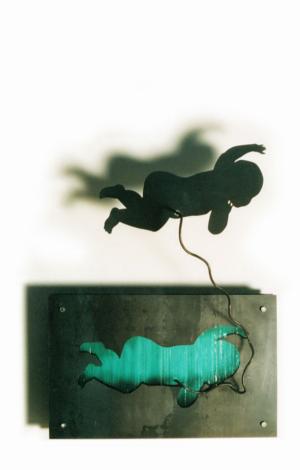
This deeply introspective collection was commissioned for an exhibition in Argo Gallery, in Cyprus. The works act as glimpses into the artist's past, filled with references to his **memory** and upbringing. They allude to his **childhood** night terrors, which felt like he was physically flying out of his bed. When he had a disturbed **sleep**, his father would tie his leg to the foot of the bed to prevent him from thrashing about. This traumatic experience led to a **fear** of **sleep**, managed by nesting under the bed and reading.

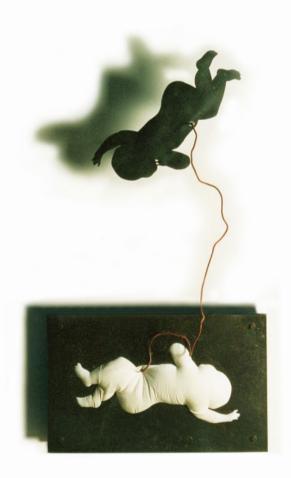


IMAGE 2: Dream in Evolution, 1998

Kypris accepts his memories as being fluid, treacherous, and faded. His intention is not to reconstruct a concrete narrative, but to welcome the uncertainty while expressing their psychological impact. To the artist, the factuality of **memory** is not of primary significance, as its impact on the psyche remains the same, regardless. **Memory** is filled with **childhood** trauma, fears, anxieties, parental expectations, **loneliness** and abandonment.









DEATH



IMAGE 1: **Dormitorium, 1998**

Death is explored in collective identity-less environments, and solitary **sleep** states.

Italian ossuaries, where human remains are stacked and stored, serve as the inspiration for these works. Bodies are turned into bones, stripped of their flesh and identity. They lay there in tandem, lonely and forgotten. n death, the human remains find community in each other, forming a collective identity that makes up for the loss of their living individuality. Perhaps the artist also participates in that loss by sculpting his own body's future, as a way to face his fear of death and loneliness.

Which one of these still bodies belongs to the artist?
Which one belongs to us?



IMAGE 2: Grandma's Dream I, 1997

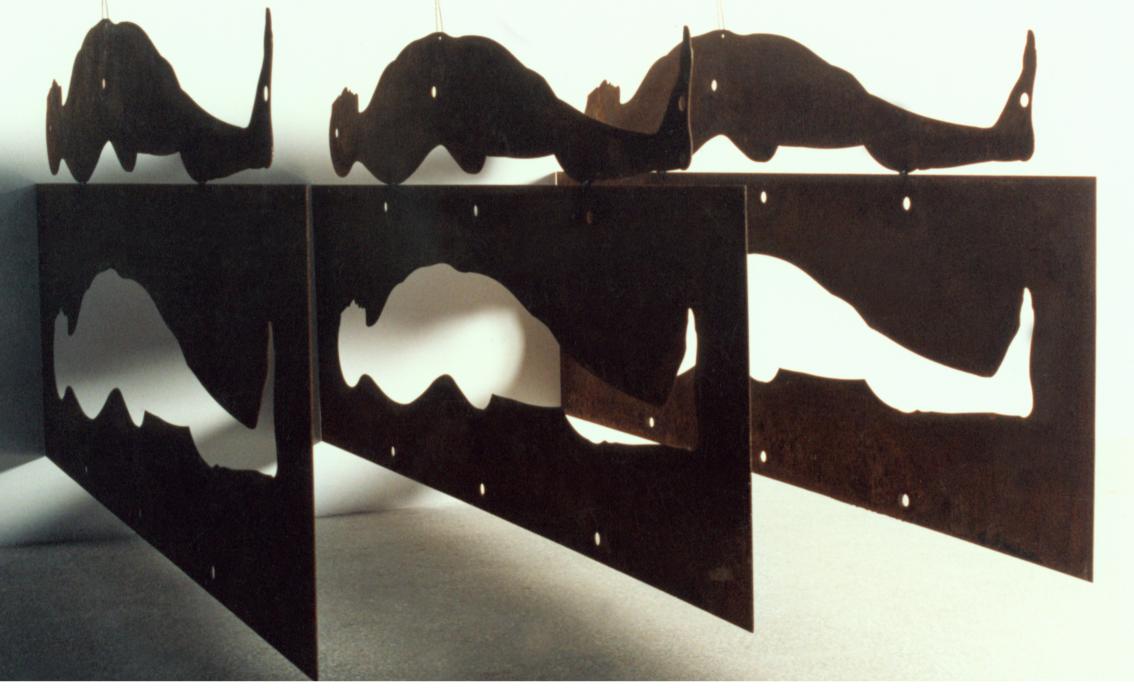


IMAGE 3: Dark Town, 1997

(NO) IDEN TITY



IMAGE 1: Untitled, 1999

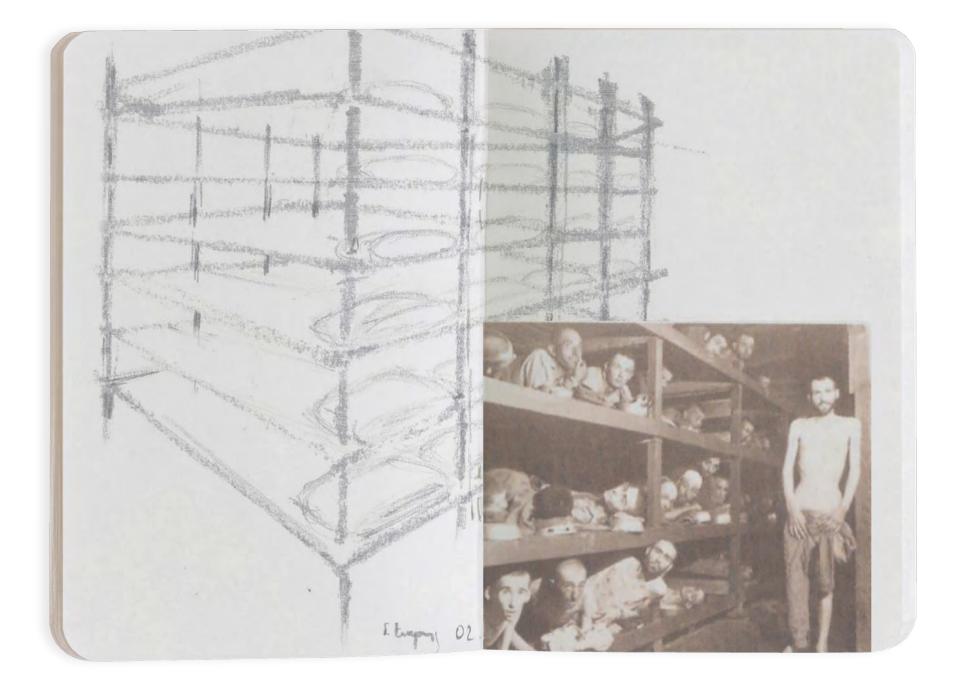
"The army camps, the hospitals and institutions, the barracks and the houses. plundered. filled with rubble and bedsprings. Burnt bedsprings, rusty and trampled, the next night full of people, bereft of clothes, bereft of blankets, maybe with some cardboard alone, bereft of bedding, lying in the dirt to get some sleep. Next day they rise, the doomed in hordes, howling and crying, raiding and shedding blood to make it through their day. Their souls become foul, they get used to misery, raid and fraud. seizing objects, seizing notions, seizing worries and distress, losing the others, remaining alone, going to bed alone, sleeping alone, dying void."



IMAGE 2: Camerata, 1999



IMAGE 3: Movement - Removement II, 2001



VOY AGE PASS AGE



The Passage

"The passage from life to death, From death to life, birth. Either way, a transition from one life to the next Life is transported on boats in Acheron river. Sunken into life, into death, a child acquires life inside the wet placenta. Passage to another life, With other (?) things and different (?) faces. The bliss of trying. The hardship of failure. Avoidance of data (They Pass) Discovery of the other; of the self. Negation of other cells More adrenaline General rehearsal I have to try to escape From stagnation's loneliness. Why be alone and aware, Why be with others and aware, I am surrendering the dream."

1991

The Ceremonial Boats are bronze sculptures displaying a passage, a voyage on water undertaken by archetypal human forms. Along with being heavily influenced by the artist's voyage from Cyprus to Greece, these works are also influenced by Greek and Egyptian mythology, as well as death rituals. The two cultures associated death with a passage made on water, either a journey toward their final resting place or to the afterlife.

The representation of human bodies, as well as the form of the boat hints at an archaic depiction of **life**. The figures are accompanied by a sense of **alienation**, **loneliness**, and melancholy, as each is focused on their task and avoid interaction.



IMAGE 2: Ceremonial Boat, 2014

LIFE

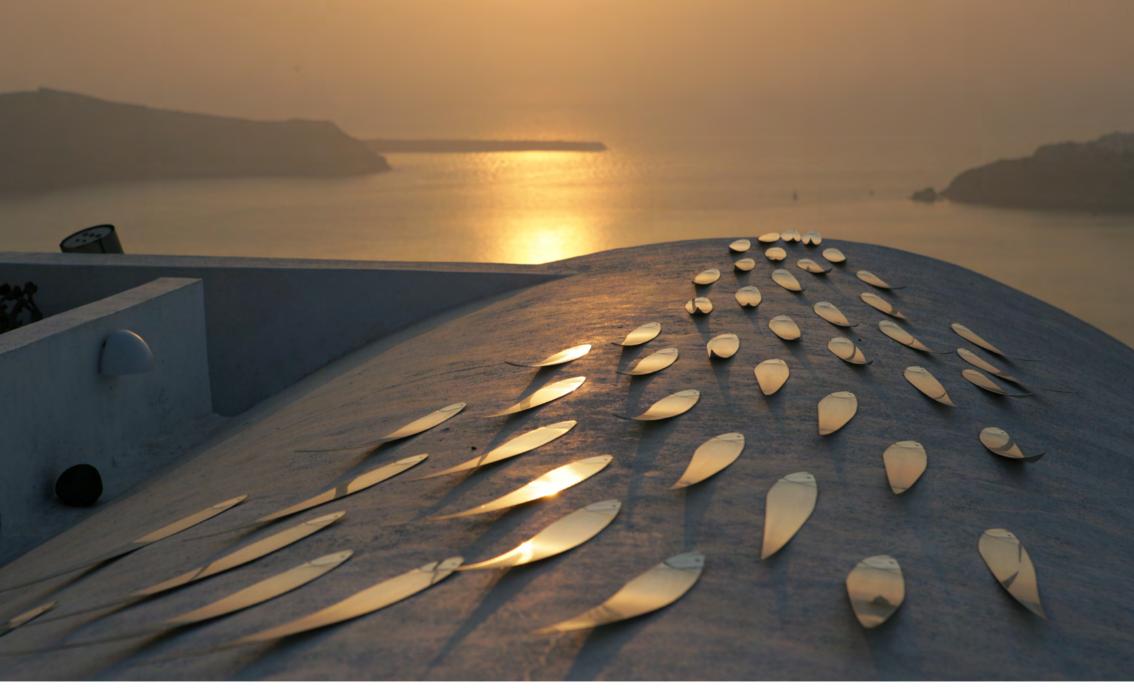


IMAGE 1: Emigration, 2007

After dealing with issues of **death** and isolation, the artist gradually shifted toward a neutral, observation-based representation of **life**. Whereas in the past he seeked absolution through the portrayal of fish decay, he now shifts towards a repetitive and therapeutic process of representing the fish's harmonious and collective movement.

During his -now peaceful- dives, the artist observes the fish's lively movement. He is able to replicate their formations in great detail, creating highly dynamic depictions of abstracted fish forms that move the focus from the individual to the harmonious collective.

The technical aspect of these works is extraordinary: by using matrials like plexiglass and metal, a three-dimensional effect is constructed through two-dimensional transparencies.

These works constitute -in volumethe largest collection of works that the artist has produced. It seems that the variations are inexhaustible, flowing out of him just like the thousands of individual metal fish he has adjusted onto hundreds of layers of plexiglass.

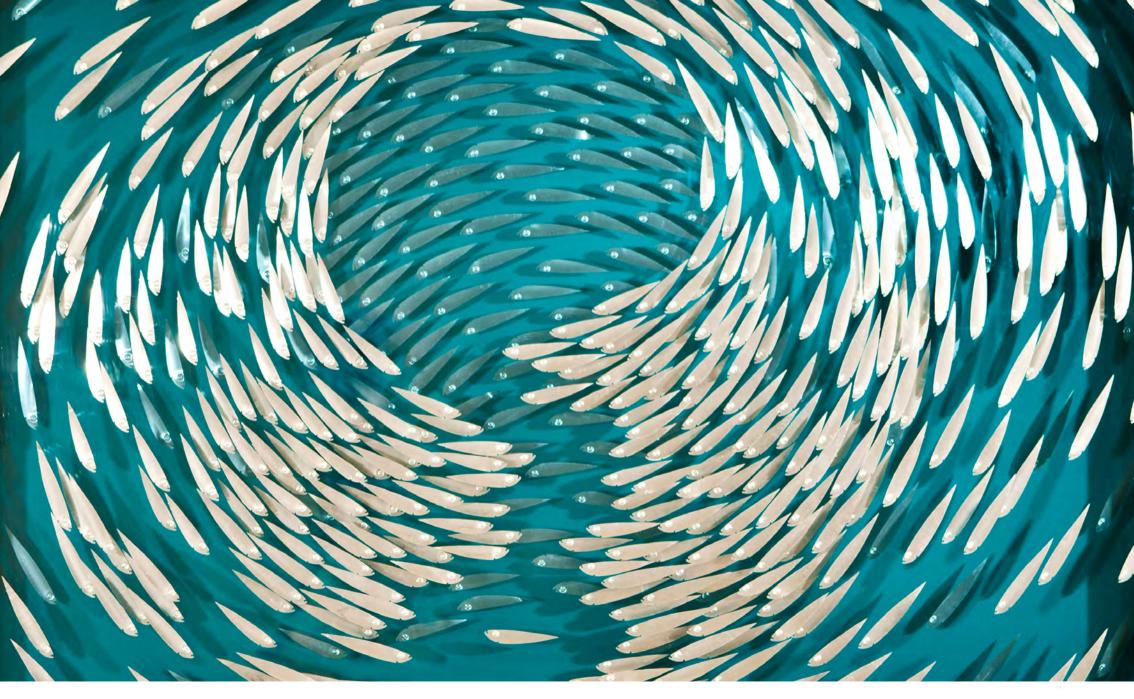


IMAGE 2: **Vortex, 2017**



IMAGE 3: **Acqua, 2023**



IMAGE 4: **Acqua, 2023**

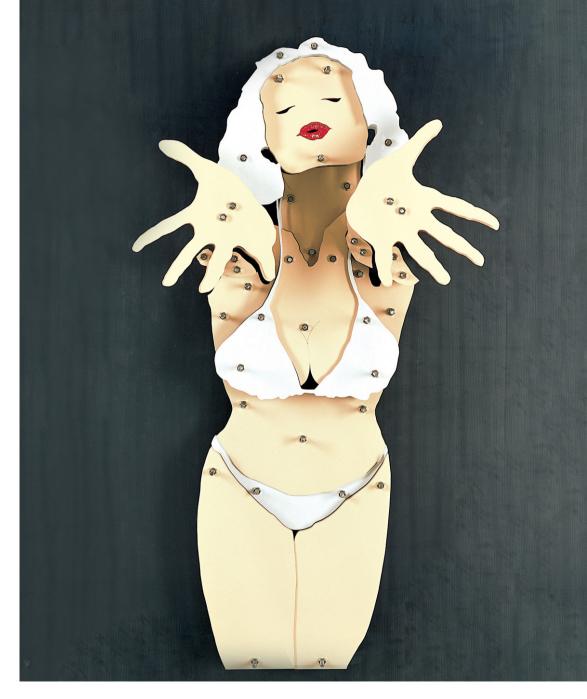
SOC IETY



IMAGE 1: Cassius Clay, 1998

Questions of vanity, mass production, consumption of media, and shallow pop culture are all prominent inthese works. The installations serve as a representational mockery of the spectacle of our cultural mainstream.

This collection seems to highlight a binary distinction of gender and the contrasting ways that each end of the spectrum performs their role. This raises questions of individual identity as shaped by mass consumption and sheds light onto the arbitrary characteristics that our highly visual **society** is obsessed with.



Kypris spent years collecting clippings from magazines and newspapers, accumulating a multitude of pictorial data points which he then processed to inform his "Vanity" works.

This caustic collection overflows with imagery appropriated from pop culture; imagery that is then distorted, magnified, and abstracted onto large sheets of monochromatic metal.



IMAGE 3: Muscle Exercises, 2007





IMAGE 5: Night Shot Frame, 2004



"As a boy I used to make shadow-theatre figures and organise performances, fascinated by the satirical characters and the semitransparent backlit screen which hides more than it reveals. Today I retain the articulated structure of the figures and the relatively small scale of the shadow-theatre stage, but I have abolished the cloth and the shadows, and the figures are brought to the forefront, no longer sheltered by the protective magic of the filter. Reworking my childhood memories, I treat life as a perpetual theatrical play in which people train in pantomime. I use human effigies to direct short one-act dramas as monuments to what is promoted as a contemporary trend. I make use of readymade images which I have fun deconstructing and rearranging, at the same time distorting their original meaning in order to alienate them from the messages they were meant to communicate. I have stressed particularly the sense of vanity which, in my opinion, they conveyed, so as to cause their unsound ideological support to collapse."



DOU BTS

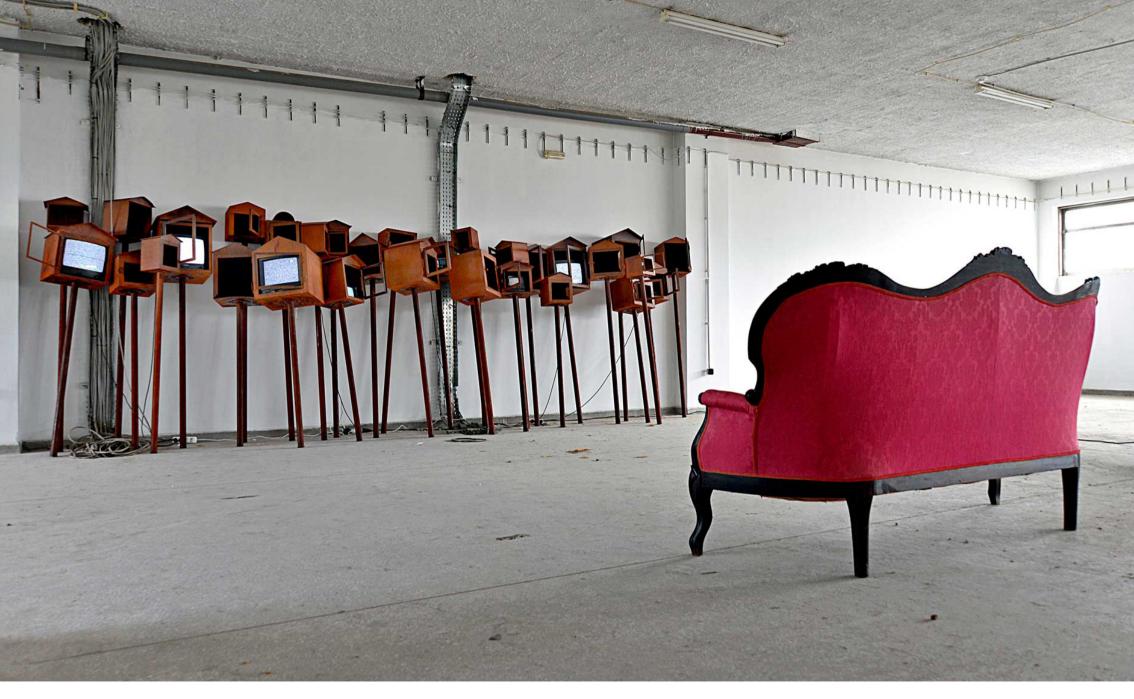


IMAGE 1: Oxidized City, 2015

Here the artist abandons the formal elements and sculptural techniques that inform most of his work, by transitioning into assemblages and installations that combine sculpturality with the readymade. Iconoclastic Exercises utilizes found objects to create sculptural installations and environments that immerse the viewer in the artist's sarcastic attitude towards organized religion. The focal topic for this entire collection is the intertwined relationship between church and state.

Having let go of some of his past anguish and limiting conventions, Kypris allows himself to express his critical opinions conceptually, rater than being bound by materiality and craftsmanship.

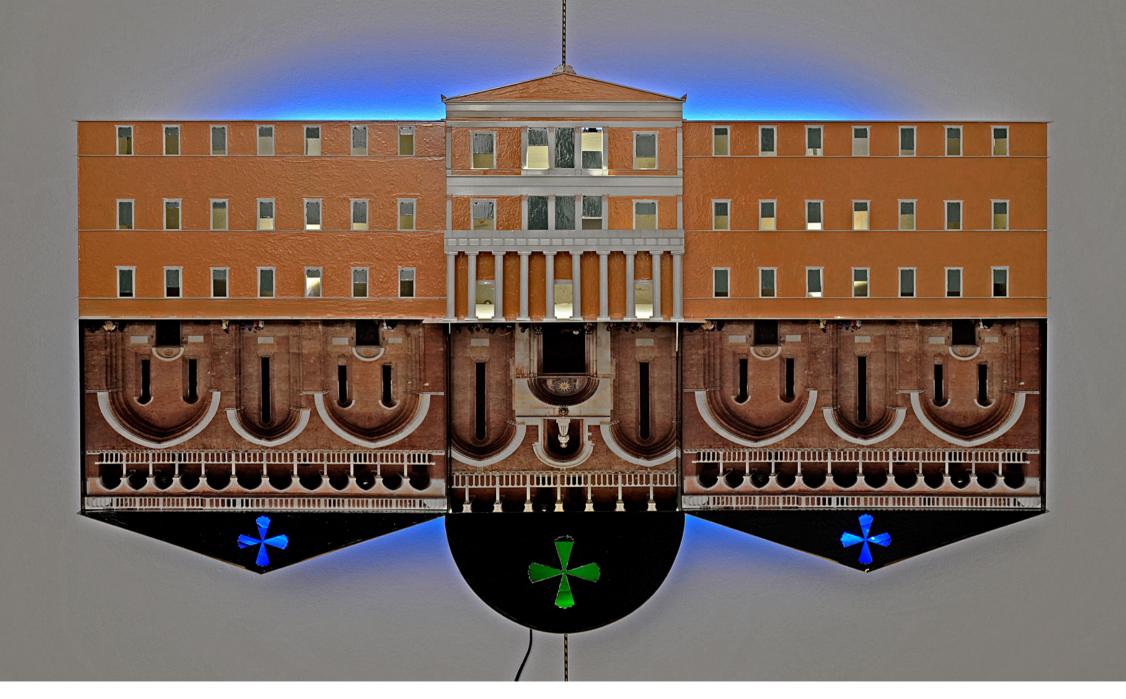


IMAGE 1: Oxidized City, 2015 (detail)









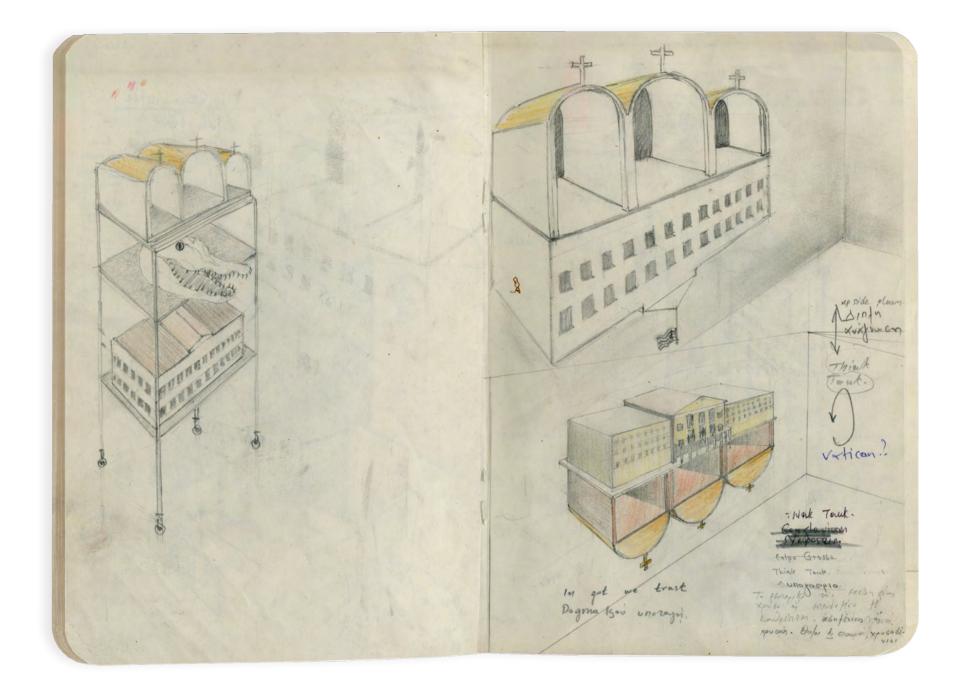




IMAGE 4: **The Utopia Maker, 2015**





Sharp social commentary, religious hypocrisy, political anger.

In Iconoclastic Exercises, a mature artist grows into a child that questions the world around him. Kypris makes use of distinct religious symbols such as those found in architecture and iconography, as well as in the personas of religious figures. Aesthetically, this collection appropriates the kitsch of Christianity and Islam. By placing powerful and evocative visuals next to plastic everyday objects, such as children's toys, the artist weaves a playful yet biting criticism of the societal norms surrounding religion.

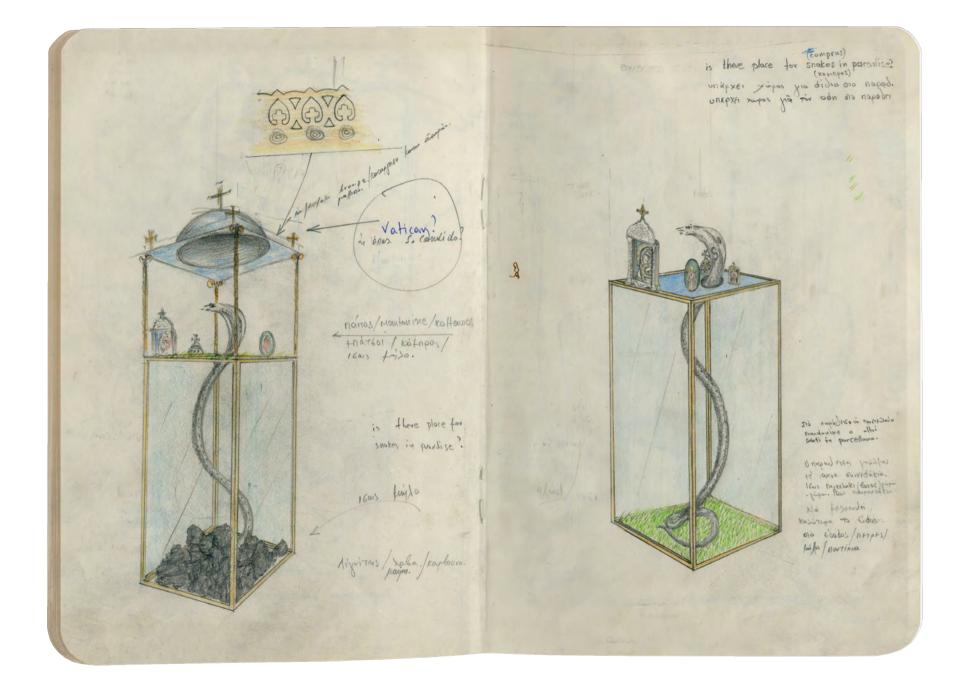


IMAGE 6: The Brides, 2015 (details)



IMAGE 6: Is there space for snakes in paradise? 2015





"I'm under the impression that I'm caught in a vortex of loneliness in my attempt to communicate. I'm only successful in charades. My attempt to show who I am ends up being an attempt to show who I wish I were."

When considering the themes of his works through the prism of his **life** and personality, we observe that the artist is ultimately baring his soul through his works. Having his experiences, **traumas**, memories as a starting point, he creates cleansing, sarcastic, confrontational pieces that resemble psychotherapy. In his own words, "Is there a better form of therapy than art?". This intense need to publicly process his internal conflicts is hindered by his **fear** of taking up too much space and being excessively self-centered in his art.

Yet, in the thorough examination of his life's work, it cannot be denied that the materials and his experiences co-create chained sequences for the development of his art.

CHILDHOOD

IMAGE 1

Yorgos Kypris (middle) and his family in Cyprus

IMAGE 2

Childhood Drawing, 1972

IMAGE 3

Solemn Ceremony, 1977. Glazed stoneware, 40x35x5 cm

IMAGE 4

Theater 1984. Coloured clay, 40x40x20 cm

IMAGE 5

Heroic 1982. Glazed stoneware, 95x35 cm

IMAGE 6

The Mirror, 1984. Coloured clay, 60x30 cm

IMAGE 7:

Drier, 1995. Aluminum sheets, iron, copper, 66x39 cm

IMAGE 8

Shipwreck, 1997. Terracotta, porcelain, 110x70x80 cm

GUILT

IMAGE 1

Dinner's residue, 1995. Fishbones, wooden frame, 63x48 cm

IMAGE 2

Entrapped Fish, 1997. Cast bronze, wooden frame, dimensions variable. Commissioned for the World Bank Center. WA

IMAGE 3

Big Trophy, 1995. Glass, cast bronze, dimensions variable

IMAGE 4

Entrapped Fish, 1990. Cast Bronze, dimensions variable

IMAGE 5

Ecce Agnus Dei, 1994. Lithography, styrofoam, 47x37x78 cm

IMAGE 6

Silence, 2007. Cast bronze, stainless steel, dimensions variable

SLEEP

IMAGE 1

Broken Heart II, 1997. Rusted steel, pillow, 180x80x100 cm

IMAGE 2

Analytic, 1998. Black steel, stainless steel, string, 160x80x100 cm

IMAGE 3

Broken Heart, 1997. Rusted steel, pillows, 180x80x100 cm

IMAGE 4

Broken Heart III, 1997. Rusted steel, pillow, 180x80x100 cm

IMAGE 5

Identification Card II, 1999. Black steel, X rays, pillows, dimensions variable

IMAGE 6

White Sarcophagus, 1997. Stainless Steel, 200x70x200 cm

IMAGE 7

Ice Box, 1995. Cast bronze, glass, wire, iron, nylon, 520x380x270 cm

IMAGE 8

Frozen Fish, 2013. Glass, cast bronze, dimensions variable

IMAGE 9

Ceremonial Boat, 1995. Cast bronze, glass, 95x15x15 cm

IMAGE 10

441 Comestibles, 1995. Aluminum sheets, fishing line, 200x200x270 cm

IMAGE 11

Seascape, 1995. Aluminum sheets, wire, wood, paint, 126x80x20 cm

IMAGE 12

Voice of the Sea, 1996. Black steel, copper, 140x140x250 cm

IMAGE 13

Fish in Cage, 1997. Cast bronze, cage, 50x38x22 cm

MEMORY

IMAGE 1

Projection, 1998. Mixed media, 45x21x21 cm

IMAGE 2

Dream in Evolution, 1998. Mixed media, dimensions variable

IMAGE 3

Jack in a Box, 1998. Mixed media, 21x45x14 cm

IMAGE 4

Water-Mother-The Desire, 1998. Black iron, glass, pillow, toys 102x80x28 cm, 139x80x25 cm, 128x84x30 cm

DEATH

IMAGE 1

Dormitorium, 1998. Rusted Iron, pillows dimensions variable

IMAGE 2

Grandma's Dream I, 1997. Rusted Steel, 140x75x100 cm

IMAGE 3

Dark Town, 1997. Rusted steel, 120x200x230 cm

(NO) IDENTITY

IMAGE 1

Untitled, 1999. Rusted steel, pillows, dimensions variable

IMAGE 2

Camerata, 1999. Tin-plated steel, pillows, nylon, 200x71x300 cm

IMAGE 3

Movement - Removement II, 2001. Rusted steel, pillows, slide projections, dimensions variable

VOYAGE & PASSAGE

IMAGE 1

Ceremonial Boat, 2017. Cast bronze, 84x5x11 cm

IMAGE 2

Ceremonial Boat, 2014. Cast bronze, 20x66x13 cm

LIFE

IMAGE 1

Emigration, 2007. Stainless steel, dimensions variable

IMAGE 2

Vortex, 2017. Aluminum, plexiglass, 120x80x12 cm

IMAGE 3

Acqua, 2023. Plexiglass, copper, aluminum, 190x115x12 cm

IMAGE 4

Acqua, 2023. Plexiglass, copper, aluminum, 190x115x12 cm

SOCIETY

IMAGE 1

Cassius Clay, 1998. Steel, 150x150x125 cm

IMAGE 2

Kiss Me, 2004. Black steel, coloured steel, 130x80x34 cm.

INDEX

IMAGE 3

Muscle Exercises, 2007. Plexiglass, 100x56x34 cm.

IMAGE 4

Wrestlers, 2004. Coloured steel, stainless steel, 120x110x25 cm

IMAGE 5

Night Shot Frame, 2004. Stainless steel, coloured steel, 120x85x22 cm

IMAGE 6

Harlequins, 2007. Black steel, coloured steel, 76x65x17 cm

DOUBTS

IMAGE 1

Oxidized City, 2015. Oxidized steel, TV monitors, light, sound, couch, dimensions variable

IMAGE 2

Reliquary, 2015. Bronze, acrylic, plastic, glass, textile, alligator shell, wood, 170x105x163 cm

IMAGE 3

Think Tank, 2015. Bronze, steel, glass, paint, digital print, lights, 146,5x41x111,5 cm

IMAGE 4

The Utopia Maker, 2015. Bronze, acrylic, plastic, polyester, textile, found objects, 60x60x156 cm

IMAGE 5

The Brides, 2015. Bronze, oxidised steel, plastic, wood, textile, found objects, dimensions variable

IMAGE 6

Is there space for snakes in paradise? 2015. Bronze, acrylic, plastic, polyester, textile, lava stones, embalmed cobra, 30x30x97,5 cm

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