

# IASONAS KAMPANIS

WORKS BASED ON ICONOGRAPHY OF ANIMALS AND NATURE  
IN ANCIENT GREEK ART AND MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE

EXHIBITION EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SUNAT REBECCA CAMHI GALLERY IN ATHENS, 2022

CURATED BY MARINA FOKIDIS

### Epistemologies of the Sun // Marina Fokidis

The exhibition includes Zoë Paul's weavings on obsolete fridge grills, Iasonas Kampanis' painted portraits of animals taken from ancient Greek mosaics and friezes, Yugoexport's collection of zoomorphic ceramic sculptures and vases, Panos Profitis' facemask-sculptures, inspired by the iconography of ancient Greek amphorae, and Eleni Kotsoni's ongoing collage-installations, made from material fragments of the past and the present, to create a continuous narrative.

This paradoxical title emphasizes how crucial light is in the conception and creation of these artworks. It examines the sun's ability to transcend geographical boundaries, and to heal the human condition and our environment. The artists of the exhibition were born and raised in countries of the so-called broader south, where the sun is untamed and powerful. These include Athens, Belgrade, Kythera, Livadia, South Africa, and Rhodes.

Their works carry the influence of a shared understanding of South-eastern cultures: their myths, traditions, political idiosyncrasies, economic realities, and craftsmanship. The metaphorical and literal "shapes" and "colours" in these works encourage the viewer to look beyond the hegemonically imposed "white" purity of the Renaissance and Classicism, as well as Enlightenment's rationalism and in general, the prevalence of western thought in society today.

The branch of philosophy called epistemology is defined by the relationship between the researcher and reality, the artists and their surroundings. This is what constitutes their version of the Epistemologies of the Sun.



***Bull in Sacrifice***

acrylics on canvas mounted on wood

98,5 x 126,2 cm

2022

***Bull in Sacrifice*** refers to the block XLIV from the Parthenon's south frieze, designed and built under the supervision of the sculptor Pheidias, which depicts a scene from the sacrificial procession of an oxen, in honor of the city's guardian goddess Athena, during the festival of Panathenaia, where the bull is seen bellowing? However, the scene in the painting is altered, based on the thought I had when I first looked at the animal's expression in the original work; the bull, enchanted or not by the vague anticipations of an impending afterlife, whether resigned to the inevitability of ritual customs, or persistent in his redemption, he is now free. Although this impression implies an ontological tension, the sanctity of choice is of main importance.

sacrificial procession (slab SXLIV)  
south frieze, Parthenon  
Athens 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC



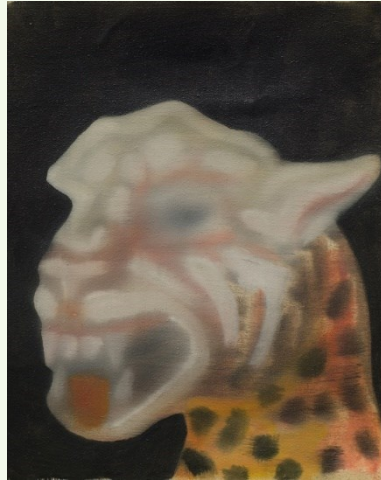




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2



3



4



5

### Studies on Hellenistic mosaics with leopards

oil on canvas

24 x 21 cm each

2021

Dionysus or a maenad riding a leopard  
Opus vermiculatum mosaics (details)  
House of Masks, Delos, Greece 100 BC





*Leo Pella*

acrylics on canvas mounted on wood

55 x 48 cm

2022



Dionysus or a maenad riding a leopard\  
Opus vermiculatum mosaic (detail)  
Pella, Greece  
400-360 BC







*Zeus*  
acrylics on canvas  
70 x 70 cm  
2022

The Abduction of Europa  
mosaic, Roman villa  
Tor Tre Teste, Italy  
100-200 AD





*Deer of Artemis*

acrylics on canvas mounted on wood

27,3 x 27,3 cm

2022



Mycenaean figurine  
1750–1050 BC





***Actaeon***

acrylics on canvas mounted on wood

27,3 x 27,3 cm

2022



Mycenaean figurine

1750–1050 BC



These works belong to a series that started in 2019 and still goes on. It has at its core, ancient Greek art and the place animals and plants hold in it, either religiously or philosophically. Although my intention does not focus on depicting the human, the human element is integrated in various ways in the images of creatures or elements of nature. This functions as a reference to Animism, variations of which are found in mythology and iconology of the Eastern Mediterranean region, as well as in religious iconography in general. At the same time, it concerns the light attributed to the *genius loci*, 'the protective spirit of a place' in classical Roman religion. As the term *genius loci* today also refers to the character or the essence of a place, spirituality for me cannot be of meaning, if cut off from the transcendental or from human relationship with the divine and the natural world. Attempting to restore and renew communication with these 'totems' that humans once gratefully allowed to help them co-exist and self identify, form part of my objective. At the same time, my visual language is my way of understanding the art and culture of the wider region where I grew up: not only by paying a tribute, but hoping through this study to get closer to them or, with a semiological exaggeration, to bring them closer to me.