

# Almost Polaroid

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The day proceeds with great force  
its hooves ringing in the clouds  
The milkman plays sonatas on his clanging pails,  
bridegrooms rise to the heavens on escalators -  
wild the white and black hats blow by, with great force...  
Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Utopia (excerpt)\*

Polaroid by its nature makes you frugal.  
You walk around with maybe two packs of film in your pocket.  
You have 20 shots, so each shot is a world.  
Patti Smith

The internal unblemished time in Katerina Tsebeli's painting is woven loosely but stably, using a long ball of yarn made up of memories, which retains the thin partitions of the mind, dragging forgotten places to the surface, re-mining veins of moments regained, resuscitating silent affinities in relationships.

The white hats of temperate climes in her work - which embroider combinatorially and mnemonically link her confidences, familiar as family polaroids - are the unseen white holes of our existence and, simultaneously, the latent surfeits of a tender private suspended microcosm.

Acrostics of elaborate pigmented picnics on the grass and charming sepias of literary idylls of the nineteen thirties, the encaustic haze of lazy student summers on the island of Hydra and palimpsest mixed-media sketches of faded encounters, both sexual and amongst friends, are composed with empathic and sculptural eloquence in the painter's simmering workshop of ideas.

Katerina Tsebeli collects images, usually with minimal narrative features, re-shaping minor poignant moments and attempting to immerse herself in self-awareness while narrating their fundamental structural materials. In unwinding the birth-giving ball of yarn made up of journeys and personal experiences from Athens to Crete: from the dense urban web to the relaxing interstices of the countryside; from childhood to adulthood; with an intermediate stop for self-contemplation on the island of Hydra; utilizing a wealth of archival material and recording improvised breathing exercises, she explains mainly her self. She then goes on to paint feverishly, with her precious prize, these inversions of time regained.

One could say that the issue of significance and the recollection of what has been lost function as the most valuable vertebrae and the internal rhythm of this entire group.

Lost loves in early youth and ambiguous active familial ties; young endlessly-moving children and grannies floating on motionless seas, which inhabit the painter's works, articulate words

and phrases of a common reading primer, punctuated with dormant memories and vigorous desires.

In such low-voiced investigative and compositional hand-work with processed photographs, compositions of diverse elements, role assignment; and painstaking trials; in the illustrative self-sufficiencies with the curved bouncing light and dark semitones; the fragile tentacles of lines and the sensitive drawn arrays; the consecutive confessions are succeeded by silence; the tender humour followed by sadness.

And what finally is transformed into a work of art, even when it includes some painful memory, has for some time constituted an intuitive experiential reconciliation with the flow of things.

Through her works, the painter seeks out what was missing in her previous moves from one place to another and ways of existence. The surfeit of personal time and unreasoned joy; proximities and conversations that were lost; experiences and emotions that were forgotten; the unbearable lightness of youth and the unexpected relief of age; the ever-sustaining power of hope and love.

Her reconciliation with the anti-heroes of her images; the fact that she does not turn away from their externally-produced and internally-created weaknesses, also constitutes a reconciliation with her own self. And, simultaneously, the gradual creation of an innocence regained with a light fuzz of wisdom.

And this gallery of retrievals, instants and images: almost Polaroid, almost illusion and almost actual memory, constitutes the rare distillate of a young, invented, evergreen age.

\* Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Poems (Translation from the German into Greek and Measure: Yiorgos Kartakis)

Iris Kritikou

May 2017