**Christiana Soulou**

***Firmament***

**January 12 – February 29, 2024**

Bernier/Eliades Gallery presents the third solo exhibition of Christiana Soulou *Firmament*, on Friday, January 12, 2024, at 18:00 - 21:00. The artist will be attending the opening.

Soulou presents a display of approximately 25 artworks, based on a study of the drawings from her previous work *Water,* and on a selection of her drawings from *Imaginary Beings after Borges*. The common denominator and the point that links the works presented in the current show is the question of the relation between movement and animated form, as captured in pencil on paper. The title of the show, *Firmament*, results from the distance the artist takes from any narrative representation, to reach a truth that doesn't take place in time, but in an instant that escapes of any duration.

*“Firmament, like the bright night sky. The stars brightening in the night, immobile like pinned-up - instants that escape of any duration - but still in perpetual movement.”*

Investigative, enigmatic, and obsessive, the work of Christiana Soulou goes beyond representation and mere recording to focus on the deepest soul of things - in what animates forms - so that what she makes is alive[[1]](#footnote-1) and animated. In Soulou's works, myth and extreme subjectivity meet in images that work as part of the magical, the incantatory. Part of this ritual is the titles of her work that constitute a parallel textual work. Her works are metaphorical, following a process of successive disguisements of forms, including sex. The form of a human can be neither that of a girl nor that of a boy. It is the “*ephebe – kóre*”. Far from an erotism extricated from the limits of the body, her works are about “*the dream of a love free from the limits of sex that traverses the bodies of women and men, boys and girls, like the light that passes through glass*”. Her works show the discrepancies between beautiful and ugly. For Soulou, ugliness is an aesthetic truth and real beauty is related to the monstrous, as hell can be a hollow heaven. Still, the real subjects of her work, what she cares to associate us with, through the humans, the animals, and all the depicted elements, is the uneasiness, the violence, evil, love, enchantment, death: the big images that traverse humans, animals, and nature.

For Soulou, it is directive forces that animate forms. These forces, animal, rotatory, contain for the artist the truth of forms. It is them that inspire life to forms and make them move. These forces are common for all forms, whether they are human or forms belonging to the realm of animals and plants. Her work is a conversion of forces into lines and forms. They are recording an anatomy of movement and, as she says, her work can be seen as “*a study of the curve*”. Her inspiration comes to a great extent from nature. For the artist, the true sense and the real character of nature are the supernatural. The precision of the line of Soulou is fundamental. Her line, fine, tenebrous, and at the same time firm and decisive, aims at clarity which, for the artist, signifies the light. Her works are rotatory, one can see them from any side, and most importantly, they are to be conceived and imagined as three - dimensional objects. Forms that are moving in a moving space.

Christiana Soulou was born in Athens, originally from Alexandria, where she spent much of her childhood and studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux - Arts in Paris. She is an internationally acclaimed artist, who has a plethora of collective and solo exhibitions to present both in Greece and abroad. Examples of her solo museum exhibitions include *Neun neue Räume* (2023) and *Hommage aux mères* (2018) at the Fürstenberg Zeitgenössisch Foundation in Germany, *Sonnet to the Nile* (2016) at the Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne, and *Christiana Soulou* (2016) at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art Foundation in England. She has also exhibited at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), the 4th Berlin Biennale (2006) and at the *Skin Fruit: Selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection* (2010) at the New Museum of New York. Last but not least, her recent collaboration with the fashion house Christian Dior is noted, in the *Dior Cruise Collection* (2022).

**The gallery is open Tuesday - Friday 11:00 - 18.30 | Saturday 12:00 - 16:00.**

1. This goal embraces Marcel Duchamp's idea of alive painting and echoes “*the approach of the truth of the object in its own plastic identity*”, as it was meant by Duchamp. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)