

"Figure and Form: George Petrides and Nassos Daphnis"

Thursday, December 16th, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

Consulate General of Greece in New York at 69 East 79th Street.

This exhibition presents works of two Greek-American artists in dialogue curated by the respected New York curator Paul Laster. Figurative sculptor George Petrides and abstract painter Nassos Daphnis were both born in Greece (Athens 1964 and Krokees 1914, respectively) and made their way to New York City at young ages. Both chose to live and make art in New York City, with trips back to Greece that had great influence on their work: many of Petrides' works are informed by ancient Greek precedents; the Daphnis works in this exhibition are from his "Pixel Fields/Aegean Series." Paul Laster, curator of the exhibition comments: *"Taking a traditional approach to figurative sculpture, Petrides mines the past to create something new and when making his Pixel Fields/Aegean Series paintings, Daphnis tapped into new technology to update modernist abstraction. Petrides' sculpted figures are perceptively born from the primordial mud of ancient cultures and modified in the artist's hands, whereas Daphnis cleverly combined computer-generated graphics from an Atari ST with his own particular painting process.*

George Petrides (born 1964, Athens, Greece), who lives and works in New York City and Athens, Greece, creates contemporary, figurative sculpture, in sizes ranging from a few inches to over life-size. He is steeped in ancient Greek sculpture and the later works that were influenced by it, for example in Italy and France. He is concerned with the human experience in the abstracted form of the body and the head, exploring the beauty and the imperfection of people and of life. His creative process is of his own invention: he usually starts with a live model, sometimes in a pose inspired by a historical sculpture. From these traditional sessions, he comes away with a head or a full body modelled in natural clay or plasticine. Then, without the model, he works to transform the form from imagination and from memory, typically using power tools. He deploys a range of materials, including epoxy clay, plaster, metals, acids, dyes, acrylic paint, oil pastels, wood, stone and found objects. Sometimes, when a piece could be considered finished, he re-engages with it, breaking it apart and reassembling it into new configurations, usually altering it substantially. His process is "image seeking" (for example: Basquiat painting over his earlier work on a canvas or crossing out words) rather than "image making" as in much of Western art, where the artist has an image already in mind from the beginning of the creative process.

He learned to make art by taking drawing, painting and sculpture classes, off and on, for over 20 years at the New York Studio School, where Philip Guston, Alex Katz and Meyer Schapiro once taught and where Robert Storr was the dean. He also studied in Paris, at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière, whose celebrated sculpture alumni include Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Alberto Giacometti, Isamu Noguchi, Germaine Richier. Earlier, he had a successful first career in finance while he studied art part-time. He has had solo shows in Dubai, Monaco and Mykonos and group shows in Athens, London and New York.

Nassos Daphnis (1914, Krokees, Greece - 2010 Provincetown, USA) was a Greek-born American painter and sculptor recognized for his mastery of geometric abstraction and his evolution into what became known as hard-edge painting. In the late 1950s, Daphnis developed his color-plane theory to liberate color from the restriction of form. In doing so, he used multiple planes of solid color to create the illusion of depth, space, and movement amid smooth, uninterrupted surface textures. The interplay of Daphnis' carefully chosen palette and dynamic shapes results in a vibrating, tension-ridden energy that allows color to be the primary element of the work, unconstrained by line or form. Critical reception of his exhibitions, including a breakthrough solo show with Leo Castelli in 1959, praised Daphnis as being both of the moment and ahead of the next; he remained outside recognized schools and moved fluidly among emerging styles.

Daphnis' work was represented by long-time friend and iconic dealer Leo Castelli for forty years. Major institutional exhibitions include six editions of the Whitney Annual (1959–67), 64th Annual American Exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago (1961) and Geometric Abstraction in America at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1962). In 1977 he received the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship and was later the recipient of the Francis J. Greenburger Foundation Award (1986) and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award (1986). His work is included in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York;

Baltimore Museum, Baltimore, MD; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; and Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece.

The Estate of Nassos Daphnis has been represented worldwide since 2015 by Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York. (<https://richardtaittinger.com/artist/nassos-daphnis/>)

Paul Laster, Curator, is a writer, editor, independent curator, artist, and lecturer. He is a New York desk editor at *ArtAsiaPacific* and a contributing editor at *Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art*. He was the founding editor of *Artkrush* and *Artspace*; started *The Daily Beast's* art section; and was previously art editor of *Flavorpill* and *Russell Simmons OneWorld Magazine*. He is a frequent contributor to *Art & Object*, *Time Out New York*, *Harper's Bazaar Arabia*, *Galerie*, *Sculpture*, *Architectural Digest*, *Surface*, *Garage*, *New York Observer*, *Cultured*, *ArtPulse*, *Upstate Diary*, *Conceptual Fine Arts*, and has written for *Art in America*, *Artnet*, *Interview*, *Paper*, *Flash Art*, *Newsweek*, *Modern Painters*, *Bomb Magazine*, *Flatt Magazine*, *ArtInfo*, *Avenue*, *Tema Celeste*, *amNew York*, *99 Percent*, and *On-Verge*.

A former adjunct curator at New York's P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1), Laster has organized exhibitions for galleries and nonprofit institutions since 1985. His curatorial projects from the past five years include *Adam Frezza & Terri Chaio: Paper Islands* (2015) at Humanities Gallery, LIU Brooklyn; *A Weekend in the Country* (2015) at Magnan Metz Gallery, New York; *Maker, Maker* (2017) at Children's Museum of the Arts, New York; *Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim* (2019) at Outsider Art Fair, Paris; *Relishing the Raw: Contemporary Artists Collecting Outsider Art* (2020) at Outsider Art Fair, New York; *Five Artists, Five Mediums, Five Days – A Curated Selection for One Thing* (2020) at Intersect Aspen; *An Alternative Canon: Art Dealers Collecting Outsider Art* (2020) at Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York; *Now's the Time: Eight African Painters* (2020) at Scope Immersive; and *The Desire for Transparency: Contemporary Artists Working with Glass* (2020) at Intersect Chicago.

An exhibiting artist, Laster has had 17 solo exhibitions in the United States and Europe, and participated in numerous group shows worldwide. His works are in many public and private collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Los Angeles County Art Museum, Smithsonian American Art Museum, National Gallery of Art, Philadelphia Art Museum and Whitney Museum of American Art.

As a lecturer and visiting critic, Laster has spoken on art and curatorial practices and the use of the Internet and social media for building careers at Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Sandberg Institute, New York University, New York's School of Visual Arts, Pratt Institute, California Institute of the Arts, Otis Art Institute, University of California in Riverside and Santa Barbara, Florida Atlantic University, Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, Brooklyn Museum, National Academy Museum, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Cyan Museum of Art, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Art Omi, Expo Chicago, the Armory Show, Art Chicago, NEXT Art Fair, Marc Straus Gallery, New York Academy of Art, Tyler School of Art, Residency Unlimited, Soho Beach House, Rizzoli Bookstore, Wave Hill, ESKFF at Mana Contemporary, Outsider Art Fair, Trestle Art Space, Pioneer Works, Intersect Aspen, Scope Art Fair, Intersect Chicago, and Asya Geisberg Gallery. Related, Laster worked in Publications (1977-88) at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and was Publications Manager (1995-98) at Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York.

Duration of Exhibition: December 16th, 2021 (opening at 6:30 PM) through to January 20th, 2022. 9:00 a.m to 2:30 p.m, except weekends and holidays. Kindly **RSVP** though [Eventbrite](#) by December 13th, 2021.

Proof of vaccination, ID and the use of face masks are compulsory.

We are looking forward to welcoming you at the opening reception!