

COLOUR IS THE FORCE OF DESTINY

by Pierre Restany

Pavlos loves life, it is the force of destiny and the ineluctable and spontaneous source of his language. His art follows the lines of his hand, it becomes one with the constant present of his creation. His memory is also vital. What a memory! A hypersensitive memory which associates the vitality of his youth, of his Athenian training, of his encounter with Paris and all the major implications of an international career. The extraordinary associative, even at times agglutinating power of his memory constitutes the backbone of Pavlos' personality. It is the element needed to achieve a harmonious cata-lysis of his sensitivity, allowing unison with what represents his "*truth*". His "*truth*" is lived on a daily basis, just like the emblem of life and its immanence. The least deviation from such a state of unison is unbearable. **Foucault** has remarkably well analysed the concept of temperance, one of the most important virtues of the Ancient Greeks' moral philosophy. A supreme passion for life, which is the ultimate reason of all things, excludes, a priori, the dispersion of the human being in the labyrinth of petty human passions. Not having lived up to the principle of Universal truth which he embodied, **Socrates** had placed himself in a false position vis-a-vis life.



The principle according to which temperance is the ultimate truth of life is the almighty active principle of Pavlos's conscience. Pavlos, being of an emotional character, is capable of outbursts of cold rage and unheeding anger. These psychosomatic states are not long-lasting. Self-control is quick to return and it triggers a fascinating mechanism allowing a "*healthy*" vision of life. His approach to daily life is direct and gives rise to a serene and naive presentation of the surrounding objects. The verist setting of the artist's panoply of subjects — vegetables, plants, food and clothing— is characterised by the expression of a joyful vitality. His communicative impulse is irresistible and contagious. There are trees made of curling twists of gift-wrapping paper, hats, shirts and ties in a shop-window, a man's vest thrown on a chair, breakfast served on the kitchen table, delicious still-lifes of dried fruit or of conspiratorial paintbrushes and one cannot resist the gratifying sensation of experiencing direct veracity resulting from the three-dimensional images. The images are the result of the perfect control the artist has of paper-cutting techniques which give rise to forms that appear more real than in nature. Pavlos is truer than nature itself; the same was

said of **Zeuxis** in ancient times and of **Chardin** in the 18th century. The simple pleasure which Chardin's public felt when looking at his "*everyday subjects*" we also share when contemplating Pavlos' paper-cuttings. And yet two centuries separate Chardin from Pavlos. Chardin died ten years before the fall of the Bastille, Pavlos is about to cross the threshold of the Third Millennium in a



entirely post-industrial society. An appropriation of urban reality has become a "*common*" trend of the other side of our century's art. We now have permanent workshops in which thought evolves yielding alternative answers to one of the most important questions: "*What is the future of Art in our post-industrial society?*"

Pavlos, when we refer to the other side of art, joins New-Realism and Pop-Art. He keeps a certain distance, though, and remains himself, obeying only the organic logic of his personality. It is at this point that a question assumes great importance, according to me. Why should I feel the same simple joy when contemplating a still-life by Pavlos or by Chardin? The fact is that two centuries apart, a most remarkable oil-paint craftsman and a master in paper-cutting have both managed to express, with their own means, the truth of a non-affected, direct and poetic form of language. What I must also underline is that I do not feel the same sensations when looking at one of Pavlos' shirts or one of **Gnoli**'s shirts, or when looking at Pavlos' photo-camera or **Klapheck**'s typing-machine. Nowadays, simple joy is not on the actual painting's side but on the side of simulated, non-pictorial images which communicate to us the gratifying sensation of a truth truer than nature. The day will soon come in which virtual reality's holograms will take over the craftmanlike devices of Pavlos, **Oldenburg** or **Warhol** type truth.

For the time being, we should still consider Pavlos as an exceptional craftsman of Truth in Simulation. As a matter of fact, we should also point out the remarkable course followed by an artist who knew how to contribute in a supreme manner to the aesthetic promotion of raw materials, such as posters, newspapers and packaging. Furthermore, we must consider that it all took place in decisive circumstances —Paris in the Sixties. [Pavlos' s story](#) is the story of an artist who knew how to assert and develop the originality of his talent, while profoundly



s memory. Availing himself of the specific material, Pavlos created objects-images which ion with painting in the very heart of his painter than a painter, without wanting to,

ce to his childhood in Philiatra, in the south of i in 1930. That is where the axial vectors of existential sufferance are repressed in the

artist's vision, excluded from his creative history, it is because of his mother's gaiety. It was she who embodied the joy of living in the family. The feeling for materials and the expressive possibilities they offer, Pavlos takes from his father, an artisan-shoemaker. Pavlos as a child would be amazed at the sight of leather gradually taking different shapes in his father's workshop. The same wonder was felt when looking at his toys taking shape in the thick flesh of a prickly pear's leaves. When Pavlos first discovered poster-paper, he was to apply to it the very same instinctive organisational principles of matter which he had applied to the flesh of the leaves.

Pavlos establishes himself in Athens and attends the School of Fine Arts from 1949-1953. His talent as a draughtsman allowed him to obtain scholarships from the French State in 1954 and from the Greek State in 1958. The Greek scholarship consisted in a three-year stay in Paris. Pavlos is 28 years old and settles in Paris with the firm intention of staying there for good. I can easily imagine him spontaneously reacting to a form of informal abstraction whose sudden flourishing barely hid a rising form of academism.

I recall Paris in 1958. It was the year of Yves Klein's *"Emptiness"*. Bare walls in Iris Clert's Gallery and awareness made possible just by the presence of the monochromic artist ... a blue dais and Republican guards in dress uniform at the door ... bustling in the streets ... le beau scandale ... and in the midst of all the radiant presence of Yves Klein. I remember Tinguely's surprise; there was Yves *"in the middle of the stupefied and mocking crowd and yet functioning like a loaded battery, like an engine"*. Those were Tinguely's words and he visited the seven-day exhibition every evening. He wanted to have a full-immersion in space, in the *"emptiness"* and feel *"as an engine"*. He wanted to feel just as the engine kept in hiding by the Swiss sculptor which he was going to project in the middle of scrap in such a way as to emotionally activate it, bring it to life, give it character and an existence. 1958 is the year in which Tinguely becomes Tinguely, as a consequence of *"Emptiness"* and of his collaboration with Klein's *"sheer speed and monochrome stability"*. 1958 is also the year in which I visited an exhibition at the Venice Biennale dedicated to *"International Young Art"*. It was a spectacular preview of *"Aperto"*. With Jean Larcade we discovered three works of art which superbly embodied commonplace metaphysics: an American flag set against an orange background (of the same 'mine orange' nuance of Klein's monochrome which had been refused at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles in 1955), a grey alphabet and a green target, all *"encausto"* painted on crumpled newspaper pasted on canvas. The author: a young unknown American who had just exhibited his works for the first time at Leo Castelli's in New York, Jasper Johns. Jean Larcade shared my enthusiasm and three years later the Rive Droite Gallery organised in Paris his first European exhibition.

The Jasper Johns exhibition in 1961 greatly impressed Pavlos because of the exaltation of commonplace, daily banalities contained in John's direct, verist poetical expression. A painted bronze sculpture representing a cluster of paint-

brushes in a "Savarin" coffee-box enters once and for all in the computer of Pavlo's gigantic memory and a "bunch of paint brushes" still plays an important role in the panoply of the "artist's workshop".

1955-1963 are years which mark Pavlos's destiny in Paris and which are very important for the early history of **New Realism**... 1960 was a decisive year as far as awareness of modern, industrial, urban nature and media goes. It was a vital year because apart from rousing awareness it also revealed its expressive potential. That was also the time in which I was having long discussions with **Klein, Haynes** and **Tinguely** at the Coupole in Montparnasse. The discussions gave rise to three major families within New Realism. These families, or groups, were formed according to their elective affinities and according to their different approaches to urban reality. **Klein, Arman, Raysse** and later **César** and **Christo** tended to have a direct quantitative appropriation approach. **Rotella** along with Haynes, **Villeglé** and **Dufrêne** mainly concentrated on "pagination" and the third group was composed of Tinguely, **Spoerri** and **Niki de Saint-Phalle** who were mainly concerned with the staging of urban reality.

Raymond Hayne's favourite idea of having a Journal of the World Poster, and a giant-poster catalogue of the Walls of the Streets Grand Museum appealed too Pavlos. The young Greek artist detached himself from the conformism of the trendy "informal" painting and gradually replaced drawing paper with newspaper and brushes with a cutter. Pavlos starts frequenting the "Flore" cafe and "Les Deux Magots" where he meets Haynes and César, who come and go between Saint-Germain-des-Pres and Montparnasse. Pavlos slowly starts to feel the implicit complicity which unites them. That common feeling was in fact a certain fascination for urban landscape as a new source of expression and as a repertoire of a virtual language which becomes total reality under the influence of the poetic catalysis of a glance. "Art is created by those who look...".

Pavlos is very intuitive. He does not need theoretical speeches, but follows his intuition. His presentiments were to be spectacularly confirmed by the acceleration of events in 1960, Niki's first experiments at the "Impasse Ronsin", Spoerri's first "tableaux-pieges", Christo's first packages, Deschamps' first rags. 1960 was also the year of César's scandal at the "Salon de Mai", everyone was expecting from him a new work of art in welded metal and the sculptor from Marseilles presented his new creation: "compressed" car-bodies calibrated in prismatic bales weighing one ton each. In October **Arman** fills the Iris Clert Gallery from top to bottom with discarded objects of all sorts. Arman's "Fullness" is exactly the counterpart of Klein's "Emptiness". On October 27th, 1960, I founded the New Realists group at Yves Klein's Parisian home. The founding declaration underlined the raising of awareness of the artists' collective singularity and



was in fact limited to one general statement: New Realism = new perceptive approaches to reality.

What we did then was a very important gesture. The New Realists proved that industrial society had found its own style and that a language had been found to express the sensitivity and truth of the environment as well as the production - consumption relationship without neglecting the presentation and pagination of society's quantitative appropriation.

It was a statement full of optimism, fully reflecting the euphoric climate of Paris in the early Sixties. It expressed faith in a newly rediscovered wealth, in a consumer society's dynamic power, in technological development stimulated by unlimited energy supply and illustrated by the extraordinary exploits in Space. Pavlos was intoxicated by the general climate which reigned; what a contrast with Greece, which had sunk in the apparent lethargy of provincial routine after having emerged with difficulty from a civil war on which a curtain of silence had been drawn. It was an exalting period of time for Pavlos, who fully participated in the discovery of a new urban landscape and felt that it would become the main source of his inspiration.

Pavlos' passion for magazines sets him in the right direction. He reads the magazines quickly and recuperates the material, cutting the pages in thin strips, assembling the paper material and gluing it on panels. He was faced with two fundamental questions which concerned the same problem of how to animate matter: movement and colour. How to bring newspaper into life? Cutting the strips diagonally and placing them obliquely in such a way as to make them vibrate with the vertical rhythm of the composition and using colour was the answer he found. Chromatic effects though are proportionally rare when in the presence of packed newspaper pages presented in slices. The weekly press of the time was very loquacious. The black and white share overwhelmingly prevailed in coloured parts in the magazines. The dominating colour of magazines was very grey.

Then one day Pavlos discovers the huge posters pasted to the walls of the subway stations. The passage from magazines to posters was a revelation for him and offered a brilliant solution to his previous technical problems. "*Posters are full of colour, it's wonderful. One can find them as large as six feet high*", says Pavlos. Trimmed strips of poster paper glued together produced thin sections which offered a complete range of colours while at the same time allowing the material to become animated. The effect of the surface's vibrating verticality is especially fascinating. The Greek artist feels that he has found the basic element of his artistic expression. His pleasure when handling trimmed poster paper increases when he realises that the material itself will reveal its unlimited number of expressive possibilities. All the artist had to do was follow the raw materials inner logic just as his father had done with leather and he himself with the prickly pear's leaves in Philiatra.

The organic instinct of matter was the key to everything. The stakes were high in 1963 and ungluing posters became the New Realists' private hunting ground. Unsticking and non-sticking were allowed but any addition or form of composition was no form of composition was not. The piece of "unglued" poster corresponded exactly to the picture one saw when looking at the "skin" of a wall. Since **Vostell** had not respected this fundamental principles, I had refused him the right to join the group in 1961. At the second New Realism Festival in Munich in 1963, **Rotella**, on my request, had given a public demonstration of "unsticking".



All of a sudden, at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles in 1963, there were Yves Klein's "Monochrome Mine Orange" had been refused, I see Pavlos's trimmed posters! You can easily understand my surprise, I was at that time totally involved in my theoretical militancy! I believed that Rotella, Haynes, Villegle and Dufrêne had already said all there was to say about poster "skins" and there unexpectedly appeared an unknown Greek artist presenting "flesh" in the form of ultra-thin, multicoloured and shimmering slices!

Immediately demanded to meet the artist and went to see him at his "atelier-caparnaüm" in Rue de Vaugirard. He was slightly intimidated but we quickly established a good relationship. I felt the authenticity of his vision of urban nature and I also felt that he loved life as much as I did — naturally assuming that it was "400 below dada". I also realised that Pavlos had been to the exhibition at the Galerie J and had read my preface, which was in fact New Realism's second Manifesto, following the Milan Manifesto at the Galerie Apollinaire. The logical force of his instinct had brought him in the wake of the New Realists and he lived this rapprochement as a vital moment which reflected the "Truth" of the times but not as the ultimate truth of his own life. It would not be long before I saw the first manifestations of the active principles of Pavlos's philosophy based on temperance.

During his "rimmed poster" period Pavlos revealed himself to be more New Realist than nature itself. In that period the public fully understood the artist — it was a period in which New Realism was being asserted for "the first time". The critics who were more sensitive to my messages also understood. They unanimously recognised in Pavlos's works the effects of unexpected density and colour which distinguished him from other "affichistes" or poster artists. It was natural for me to invite him to exhibit at the Galerie J in 1964, which was my platform-workshop. **Jeannine de Goldschmidt** was in charge of the gallery and played an important role in bringing about many happenings from 1961 to 1966. The gallery shut down when its function of verifying in practice a theoretical

experimentation had lost its *raison d'être*. Pavlos' next one-man exhibition in Paris took place in 1968 at **Ileana Sonnabend's**, who had introduced American Pop-Art in Europe.

Much happened between 1964 and 1968. Pavlos was searching for his own artistic expression —he finds his own language and syntax. He decides to present it as a poster and then cuts it up with the trimmer. he recognises himself in the printed paper field which represents for him the mirror of urban landscape. In a first stage he reflects his sensation of a global vision in which urban landscape becomes a picture of abstract synthesis with an intense effect of colourfully vibrating matter. From 1966 onwards, Pavlos instinctively follows the materials interior logic. Everything moves. The strips of paper undulate, they wave, they evoke the profile of familiar, daily objects; the abstract reliefs become baroque and more representational. One could even say that they become representative to a third degree. The image of the object which Pavlos's work reflects neither corresponds to its representation nor to its direct presentation. The structural composition of the image gives the viewer a sensation of similarity with the real object and the final result is that the image appears more real than in nature. A sandwich, a flower pot, an ashtray, a tree and hats made up of strips of multicoloured paper give the viewer a gratifying sensation of looking at a picture which is more realistic than nature itself. The "*added*" truth of the object gives it an independent character. The object no longer has historical or environmental connotations and becomes a free form in space, free and familiar at the same time. We can adopt Pavlos's work spontaneously, without necessarily referring to a specific cultural situation and the vitality and joy it emanates easily conquer our sympathy. This is the fundamental difference between a Pavlos-object and a Pop-object which cannot be conceived without referring to the American Metropolitan lifestyle of the Sixties and to its planetary expansion. Pavlos' objects, representative of a harmonious quality of domestic and urban life met a great success when presented at the **Fischbach Gallery** in New York. They pleased especially because there was no ideological reference. Ileana Sonnabend, though, as leading agent of Pop imperialism, immediately set things straight and placed the "*made in USA first*".



Pavlos's two exhibitions at the Sonnabend Gallery in Paris (in 1968 and 1971) can be placed under the sign of the environment. In 1968 Pavlos exhibited four columns of trimmed posters which went from the ground to the ceiling, and curtains which perfectly matched the size of the walls on which they were presented. It was a return to a natural scale, after the "*giant*" productions of 1966-1967 (a sandwich nearly 3 feet long, an ashtray 4.5 ft high). Pavlos's 1967 trees were a compromise, being approximately 9ft high they were "*large*" objects if

placed in an apartment, "normal" trees if in an orchard and "small" bushes in a jungle. The "large as life" effect worked, so much so that a visitor who happened to walk into the gallery a few hours before the vernissage thought that the exhibition wasn't ready!



The subject of the 1971 exhibition was clothing: jackets, coats and hats hung on coat pegs fixed to the walls. Pavlos' idea was to return to black and white and to use charcoal to recreate a vernissage on the walls of the gallery. His idea was to draw paintings on the picture mouldings like shadows that coming from the ground would be projected on to the wall. Ileana Sonnabend thought it was an excellent idea but hard to sell. She hadn't thought of the simple solution **Sol Lewitt** will come up with a few years later: to sell to a possible buyer

the plans of the mural design and the right to reproduce it at home. Ileana Sonnabend instead asked Pavlos to find a more concrete formula which would make his work more "saleable". A housewife buying Jex steel wool set Pavlos on the right path. Using metal wadding, which thanks to its fibrous structure allowed the depiction of "fantomatic" shadows of people or objects, the artist could project his pictures onto a wall. The public was pleasantly surprised and **Gilbert Galleries** in "Opus International" gives us a fair account of the public's favourable reaction. Being of a much less substantial and consistent nature, the new material used by the artist allows us to dream of matter, shadows, and memories. In "Connaissance des Arts" **Pierre Faveton** explicitly underlined the specific dimension of an existential memory attached to steel wool objects: *"Unlike Pop-Artists, who try to convey a form of civilisation in which man is daily assaulted by objects which condition him, Pavlos preferred a familiar object, closer to our body, which would preserve our smell or a piece of discarded clothing bearing witness of our passage and contact. He uses a telepathic language shared by animated and non-animated beings, when describing his objects in poetical and detailed manner".*

A reverie of memory's materiality and the mnemotechnic telepathy of the everyday object: it was the first time that such an immediate reaction to a series of Pavlos-objects was felt. It was a black and white parenthesis in the coloured ocean of Pavlos's work and for this reason it was more striking. Pavlos exhibited his "shadow" clothing at the **New Smith Gallery** in Brussels (1971) and at the **I.C.A.** in London (1975). He soon abandons steel wool, though, because of the softness of its texture which made it difficult to fix. In the invitation to the 1971 exhibition, **Jose Pierre**, in a thundering poem publicising the event, exhorts the visitor to scour his vision: apparently they listened to him!

A word to the wise is enough! Now Pavlos-objects can be diffused without instructions for use. This most Parisian Greek artist's public extends well beyond the French borders and takes over Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and

Switzerland. Pavlos consolidated his position in the years which followed and would prove to be remarkably stable during the crisis of the Nineties. The artist's relations with Athens, and with Greece in general would become closer.

Alexander Iolas took over from Ileana Sonnabend in 1973 and became the pilot-gallery for Pavlos' adventures. In every way an exceptional man, **Iolas** abounded in all forms of excess, sex, money, intelligence and he detected Pavlos' calm strength, his ethical strategy of temperance. The artist was to remain a faithful friend of Iolas even after the dismantling of his network of galleries in Paris-Geneva-Milan and New York at the end of the Seventies. Pavlos would remain a close friend after Iolas's return to Athens and until his death in the 1980s.

For the time being we are still in 1972 and Iolas's network of galleries is thriving. Pavlos's energies are absorbed in the preparation of a retrospective which is being prepared for him by **Kunstverein** in Hanover. Together with the sculptures collected on the occasion of Pavlos's first retrospective, there will also be five large "*environments*": a corridor, a temple, a men's boutique, a forest and a classroom. Some of these objects, which cover a vast range of Pavlos's production, can be seen in the present exhaustive retrospective in Thessaloniki, especially trees. The forest is very much present in the artist's work of the early 70's. Trees were first exhibited at the Kunstverein in Hanover, then in Hamburg (1972) and at the **Iolas Gallery** in Milan (1977). Pavlos loves the forest-theme because of its proportions. The spectator is fully integrated into the landscape, in its dimensional reality (i.e., natural dimension both of the tree and of man). Just as in a real forest, the spectator cannot see the environment surrounding him in its entirety. The lack of distance vis-a-vis the work-of-art —accentuates its verism.

At the Hanover retrospective **Gottfried Sello** gave a precise description in **Die Zeit** of the Pavlos-object, which by then had assumed its definite structural consistency : "*Pavlos, unlike other Parisian poster artists, only uses new posters (neither used or torn), cut up in long narrow strips, assembled, shaped and preserved in Plexiglas*" That is exactly how a Pavlos-object appears today.

At his first exhibition at Iolas's Gallery in Paris (March 1973) Pavlos decided to face a new subject, which later becomes recurrent in his work : still-life -i.e.,



pictorial subject par excellence, but mainly and foremost an opportunity to define his own personal status vis-a-vis the creative act. Pavlos never uses brushes, colour in tubes or canvas. Nevertheless, he is a painter because his art depends on colour, which is a pictorial element par excellence. We can see colour in the thickness of the paper, in the intangible reliefs and almost imperceptible vibrations of the slices. Such almost a talent in giving colour effects a specific treatment is well worth Chardin's most

delicate glazes and skilful thick tonalities. We feel a simple pleasure when looking at the everyday objects which Pavlos cherished, bottles, glasses or fruit,

which acquire without any effort an "a la Morandi" metaphysical allure. Coming back to simple joys, Pavlos loves saying that he finds great pleasure in doing what he wants without questioning himself. It's life that actually raises queries. Pavlos is too attached to life to avoid facing issues and especially the problem of painting, even if he faces these questions in his own manner. One of his own favourite metaphors well describes his manner of facing certain issues : *"An artist such as Cézanne paints with paint and brushes, places an apple on a table. Then places his easel and canvas in front of the apple and paints it just as he sees it. I would replace the apple with Cézanne, and cut off his head, I would then search in it for the image he had of the apple and then I would try to depict that image."*

When in Sept. 1973 Pavlos was invited by the **Essen Museum**, the artist found he had to face a new problem: performance. The Folkwang Museum had organised an international two-year program on films of artists' performances. Each action was filmed on video. *"I had to imagine a scenario",* Pavlos said to me, *"and I wanted it to be very animated just as at a party. I immediately thought of confetti. I ordered transparent magnetic slow-to-dry glue so as to be able to draw invisible characters that would take shape as the public threw confetti on the wall and the multicoloured rain remained on the impregnated surfaces. I borrowed my characters from the world of football and basketball. Throwing confetti, the public seemed to rediscover the gestures made by the athletes whom I had drawn in full action. The final result was a grand sportive ballet in a rainbow-coloured fresco. It was a wonderful feast."*



Pavlos was the author of a second and last happening, a year later, in Hydra (15 Aug. 1974). The circumstances were special. I was spending the whole summer on the island, writing a book on Nikos Kessanlis and I became the eye-witness of the entire operation. Pavlos was also spending his holidays in Hydra. Summer leisure stimulated his memory's associative mechanisms. Visual souvenirs became scenario-images representing a highly symbolic action. In Greece a shoe-shiner was considered the lowest rung of the social ladder, whereas wearing a tail coat the highest. Pavlos remembered the group of characters wearing tail coats that appeared on the front pages each time a new government was formed. He also remembered how he used to shine the new shoes his father made, in such a way as to make them sparkle for the customer. What a distance between those two worlds! It was in the heat of the summer of 1974 when the boy from Philiatra, who had become a well-known artist, decided to abolish the distance between the highest and lowest rung of the social ladder. Well-dressed in a suit and with his box of shoe polish the distance between the

highest and lowest rung of the social ladder. Well-dressed in a suit and with his box of shoe polish he starts shining the shoes of the many people strolling along the port in the early evening hours. I was one of Pavlos's first customers. At the end of the performance we had dinner together and he said : *"I 'm tired, but I feel fine. It was a necessary action for me"*. I had nothing to add. I knew that Pavlos had just experienced an exclusive of *"truth"* of real harmony with his memory.

Pavlos's work by then had achieved maturity and fullness of means. He could afford to simply enjoy the delights of painting. He could alternate his major subjects according to his own will, while at the same time not precluding new adventures, leaving things to chance, which creates real emotions and simple joys.

At the beginning of 1980 Pavlos invited me to his atelier to show me his most recent works-works of art which he was going to exhibit at a German gallery and which he intended sending to Venice, where he was going to represent Greece at the Biennale. I found myself in a breathtaking symphony, an orgy of colours. Curling ribbons, gift-wrapping strings and bows triumphed; it was the *"bolduc"* miracle. The Dutch town *"Bois-le-Duc"* gave the name to the ribbon used for gifts and Pavlos decided it was time to return to ribbons the magnificent splendour of the most sumptuous oriental fabrics. Bolduc nowadays is not made of linen but of a synthetic and plasticated material. But it has not lost any of the richness of colours. Presented in columns of reels piled one on top of another or in monochrome panels of tousled accumulations, the material exultantly explodes with a serpentine exhilaration. Wonder quickly follows surprise. A complete metamorphosis takes place. Pavlos rejoins the coloured abstraction of his first compositions of trimmed posters cut in vertical strips in 1963. This time, though, in an atmosphere of high optical tension which makes walls and ceilings explode and recreates its own structural environment: colour acquires a new space-time dimension.



My enthusiasm was infectious and if Pavlos still had the least of doubts it was dispelled. Pavlos' s bolduc creations went to Venice. In Venice the installation was sumptuous: the Greek pavilion was transformed by Pavlos into a hymn to colour. Unfortunately, such an optical maximalism, or form of super Op-Art, clashed directly with the conceptual and neo-Expressionist climate of the Biennale, whose intention was to consecrate both L'Arte Povera and the Transavanguardia without neglecting the German Neue Wilden. **Kiefer** and **Baselitz** triumphed at the German stand and **Kirkeby** had a great success at the Danish stand. Pavlos arrived at a bad moment. The specialists expert in following trends pay no attention to his works. The public at large, though, which enjoys simple pleasures, practically gave him a standing ovation, as usual.

Another salient moment in Pavlos' s career is the Flag Exhibition of the European Community held at the **Pierides Museum** in Athens 1985, which was the moment of Greek accession to the European Community. The most important date is 1988, the "*Champs Marines*" Exhibition at the **Veranneman Foundation** in Belgium. On that occasion Pavlos treated us to a marvellous surprise in the way in which he handled material, and he was never sparing in sharing the secrets of his surprises. After the optical abstraction of his curling ribbons, Pavlos set off to conquer nature and its essential, fundamental components: grass and water. Poster paper torn in long strips conveys the picture of a wave animating the water-surface. The same paper when cut in very thin linear slices becomes a blade of grass, an element of a field. Quite rightly **Otto Hann** says : "*It is just a pretext for Pavlos, a pretext to show that with no matter what sort of material, the profound nature of a "colourist" will inevitably be revealed. Pavlos the "colourist", after having gone a long way, can finally consider himself as such*".



In the Nineties we witness a major expansion of Pavlos' s visual imagination and total naturalism when using colour. Treating paper as "*blades of grass*" actually reveals to him a new configuration of trees: a cypress. Returning to still-lifes and to his articles of clothing (shirts) the celebration of colour continues. Such a celebration reaches its momentary peak at the present time in the artist' s studio: Pavlos obligingly shows the panoply of a painter' s

instruments, from a palette and easel up to brushes, all instruments which Pavlos never uses. He has perfectly overcome his existential paradox: to be more painter than a painter by simply availing himself of the magic offered by colours, and what colours, the industrial colours of printed paper!

His strategy of temperance was successful. Pavlos lives a simple joy, which is the ultimate truth of his life, by exalting colour. The illuminated and illuminating proof of this was seen last year in Andros at the Kydoniefs Foundation, where he presented an anthology of his works. Pavlos the artist who fully lived the emotional plenitude of his times and who easily evolved in the artistic field between New Realism and Pop-Art, a fulfilled artist of his time who remained the boy from Philiatra. He remains a boy and is constantly amazed at the simple joys of life and does just what he feels like doing. His memory is impeccable : it is the force of destiny, which made him discover poster paper after the leather in his father' s workshop and after the prickly pear of his childhood. Pavlos is in complete harmony with his memory and we can see that with each day that passes in the inventive richness of his artistic creation.

Simplicity is the only existential path that leads to the essence of things. One must find that path and follow it. Pavlos' s life, dominated by a higher moral code of temperance, has led to the plenitude of colour in time and space. Talent, if not

guided in the right direction is useless. Pavlos' s talent is led to the plenitude of colour in time and space. Talent, if not guided in the right direction is useless. Pavlos' s talent is totally fulfilled, in all simplicity.

Pavlos, my friend, is an implicit and precious source of reference and reflection. It is impossible for me to dwell enough on the very essential philosophy contained in his message: colour is the force of destiny.

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