

Homage to Manolis Andronikos' critical work

An introduction to the event by Efi Strousa

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Today's event, dedicated to the texts written by Manolis Andronikos on art, is for us a major milestone. Today the Association of Greek Art Critics pays tribute to —but is also honoured by— the magnitude of the intellectual presence of a man who presented this country with a wealth of thoughts and studies, some of which we decided to preserve in the publication presented here, under the title Manolis Andronikos. Texts on Art.

The city where this book is presented, Thessaloniki, was not a random choice. We saw it as our duty to get his thoughts to be heard again where Manolis Andronikos sowed them, devoting much of his activity to bolstering and reviving the city's art life. As we shall hear from the distinguished speakers, Andronikos expended a large proportion of his energy trying to improve the reception of recent and contemporary art. This aspect is not widely known to the public, and in this sense the book contributes to a more spherical acquaintance with the intellectual identity of Andronikos.

Another deliberate choice was the venue, the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art which responded so warmly to the organizing needs of this event. The Museum is one more example of Manolis Andronikos' progressive attitude and active efforts in the area of cultural projects, as he was among the main advocates of its establishment.

About this book and its content and about the man himself as teacher and friend we shall hear from people who knew him, worked with him, shared his thoughts and went on to become outstanding members of our intellectual community: Nikos Nikonanos, Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, Angeliki Sachini and Dimitris Fatouros, while the significance of Manolis Andronikos' attitude towards culture in the sense of a poetic act could not be better commented on and interpreted by any other than Titos Patrikios. Our Association wishes to thank them all for their crucial contribution to this event; from them we shall gain an insight into the man's thinking methods and learn about the way a creative life is built.

Those of us who are engaged in the study and criticism of art, approaching it from the multiple contemporary viewpoints of artistic creation, we must acknowledge and appreciate in this book something which seems to me to be of crucial importance for today, for contemporary reality: the fine example of a way of thinking, a way of living where the measure of all phenomena was an education spanning the entire historical spectrum. The deficiency of contemporary culture lies in the loss of this all-round education, which is evident in many aspects of modern life.

I should like to add some information about the history of this publication. It is the first of a new series called "Art Library", which we intend to continue with more volumes. There is a long history behind this book and I wish to present it in a few words, since all I and my colleagues on the Board have done is to build on the initiative of other people before us. The original idea came from Alexandros Xydis some twenty years ago. Practical reasons prevented its realization until 1999, during the term of the previous Board under Mary Michailidou, when it was decided for the project to proceed in celebration in 2001 of the 50 years of our Association, of which Manolis Andronikos was among the earliest members. This presentation today attests to our belief in our duty to promote the worthy ideas and useful works of our distinguished colleagues.

The book Manolis Andronikos. Texts on Art owes its existence to the kind response of Angeliki Sachini, who edited the book in an admirable way and deserves our full gratitude. Thank you very much, Angeliki.

Finally, I should like to present today's speakers in the order in which they will appear. First, Ms. Amgeliki Sachini will introduce us to the method by which the texts in this book were selected; then we shall hear many interesting things

from Ms. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, one of the most worthy successors of the scientific work of Manolis Andronikos in the field of archaeology; next we shall learn about many unknown aspects to the multifaceted personality of Andronikos from Mr. Nikos Nikonanos, our worthy colleague who was fortunate enough to get to know him, while Mr. Dimitris Fatouros will reveal some little known aspects of Manolis Andronikos' activities around the art scene of his time. Our tribute to Manolis Andronikos shall close with the thoughts of Mr. Titos Patrikios. At the end of this modest gathering, which has been lovingly embraced by all those who attend it, we shall watch Andronikos himself talking about his life here in Thessaloniki, in a video supplied by Hellenic Radio & Television thanks to the initiative of Anna Hatziyannaki.

I cannot stress enough the fact that the Association of Greek Art Critics is honoured by his memory. And this honour we wish never to forget. Thank you very much.

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