

DAZIBAO

HANDMADE NEWSPAPERS

PRESS RELEASE

In his new exhibition Marios Spiliopoulos presents 114 works on the ephemeral nature of newspapers — a reflective look at the current affairs of the last nine years (2010-2019) as they were registered by the print media (newspapers, magazines, advertising brochures, etc.).

Reworking the printed page with colour, collage and drawing, deletions and additions, changed headings and distortions, Spiliopoulos comments on events and their reporting by altering the form and the content of printed news in an attempt to express his personal take on events and create his own narrative about recent history.

In Chinese, *Dazibao* means literally 'handmade poster with large letters', and in practice it denotes a 'handmade wall-mounted newspaper'. In imperial China there was a tradition of citizens putting up dazibao papers to protest against administrative acts or omissions or to pose political and moral questions for public debate. The tradition was revived under China's 'Cultural Revolution', used by the Red Guards to attack the political opponents of Mao Zedong. Marios Spiliopoulos puts up his own “Dazibao” posters on the gallery walls, inviting the viewer/reader to a peculiar rereading of events.

This is an arduous manual work on original copies of print media at a turning point in their history, when digital news increasingly drive them out while the facebook wall appears to be the new version of Dazibao.

The *Handmade Newspapers* of Marios Spiliopoulos take us back to a pre-monitor (i.e. pre-computer) age and recall the importance of printed news and their effect on the course of events that make History.

The *Dazibao* of Marios Spiliopoulos make up a kind of personal diary of 114 days— a clear allusion to the 'One-One-Four' political slogan in 1960s Greece. At the same time, they monumentalise the ephemeral nature of newspapers through the 'oblique' gaze of the artist, whose painterly act constitutes an ironic comment on current affairs as he brings into the 'here and now' past events which have affected our daily life in recent years.

From among the texts in the exhibition catalogue:

Ch. G. Lazos:

"...The painterly intervention of Marios Spiliopoulos on the newspaper sheets follows two paths: one of critical and subversive irony and one of selecting and highlighting the elements he deems to be important. In this way, each work is also a 'handmade newspaper' of his own. He

focuses mainly on five subject areas: politics, ads for consumer gods—mainly food, culture, science and sports. While not exhaustive, this list includes most of the elements, the major or trivial events, that make up the current affairs, the everyday reality of all of us, the web that is weaved on a daily basis and makes up our life and our world... From this point of view, the exhibition is an example and a reminder to all citizens that no one can relieve them of the duty to think for themselves. This is the prerequisite of freedom and autonomy..."

Takis Koubis:

"...It is this endless explosion of pictorial phrases that Marios Spiliopoulos 'propounds'. Starting from the *dazibao* experience and a selection of specific copies from the Greek and international press as a substratum, he produces 114 new sheets, a kind of personal diary where the image-artefact emerges thanks to a montage of excerpts from years past and the multiple repetition of phrases and images. A poetic mechanism of irony is put to manual use through distortions, deletions, deviations, subversions, reversals, chromatic alterations, layering... In short, the methodically scathing painterly/photographic montage of Marios Spiliopoulos dissects the recent period of 'crisis', attempting not just to understand the events differently but also to take virtual action by way of a 'pictorial political' intervention in the field of memory, of conflict, of rejection..."

Yorgos Tsaknias:

"...by reworking the newspaper sheet and distorting it, Spiliopoulos changes the meaning of words, erases entire phrases and forces readers to see only those he chooses, alters photographs, erases captions and writes his own, disconnects information, people and events or connects them the way he wants. By erasing he removes, not in the way of a visual artist's abstraction but musically: the erased words are the notes that were not played. And as Miles Davis or Jerry Garcia would say (the phrase is attributed to both these great musicians), "It's not the notes you play, it's the notes you don't play"... Yet by 'interfering' with newspapers, Spiliopoulos immortalises them at the same time; removes their key attribute of the ephemeral... The works of Marios Spiliopoulos are—thankfully!—neither 'anti-systemic' nor 'systemic'. They are certainly authentic, but they do not claim to be authoritative. As fiction, I believe they constitute a comment on current affairs and on what is topical today, how we can identify it and engage in discourse with it: something that seems increasingly difficult these days, for all the increasingly easier access to information—or perhaps precisely because of it. Above all, however, the 114 handmade newspapers of Spiliopoulos constitute a peculiar kind of diary for a strange and difficult decade; the palimpsest with which the artist, to return to Myriam Revault d'Allonnes, attempts to devise and construct an ontology of the present, an ontology of his self."