

**MARO MICHALAKAKOS**

*The Doors of Perception*

13.01 - 04.03.2017

Galeri Nev Istanbul is excited to announce the first solo show of Maro Michalakakos in Istanbul. The exhibition brings together several works of the artist from different periods and debuts a three-meter long velvet installation that transforms the gallery space.

The title of the show, *The Doors of Perception*, is inspired by the famous lines of William Blake: *"If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is: infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."* It emphasizes the idea that all experiences are colored by one's perception of the world and their place in it. The extent to which one has "cleansed" their "doors", eyes, or "I(s)", relates directly to where and what one looks at.

The central work of the show, doubly titled as *Eye, I*, demonstrates a plethora of point of views that people look at things throughout their lives. Commonly known by the name "mériidienne" (meridian) in French, the psychoanalyst couch alludes to knowing "thysself" by discovering one's coordinates in space, one's bearings and position in relation to their surroundings. The soft red velvet of the couch connotes both to luxury fabric and a fetish object. It is sculpted in an inverted way by removing the velvet with a scalpel.

Formerly installed on the wide windows of a 12<sup>th</sup> century prison later transformed into art space (Chateau des Adhémar), *Future Proof* filters the light through the gaze. Its saber-rattling, ominous gazes imbue with fear, masochism, eros, guilt, shame and aggression – all the aggressive human instincts. The artist discovers that transforming such instincts is magical. It allows us to grow, communicate despite our differences and stimulate different point of views and plurality of choices.

The expandable marquetry table, *In Between*, suggests that we never come close enough to the other so as to "touch" him or her, there always remains a distance, a gulf, an abyss in the middle, no matter how deep the love is in between two people. It brings into mind the essay of Aldous Huxley, named after the same lines of Blake: *"Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature, every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insights, fancies – all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable."*

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The watercolour drawing, reminiscent of those shown in Istanbul Modern a year ago, is part of what the co-curator Paolo Colombo called Michalakakos' "archive of mythological animals, that through interspecies mating, become the chimeras of our times."

Michalakakos' art is a perpetual oxymoron between beauty and fear, reality and dreams, love and submission, the bond and the shackle, sensuality and cruelty, the soft protection of domestic interior and the coercion it exerts. The artist spares us any statement, but opens the door of her own world in full elegance and offers us illusions and allusions to share and to look through the glass of our own feelings.

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**Maro Michalakakos** (b. 1967, Athens) studied Fine Arts in Ecole Nationale d'Arts Plastique de Paris-Cergy in France and in Hochschule for Bildende Kunst in Braunschweig, Germany. She held exhibitions in Greece, France, Switzerland, Germany, Istanbul and the United States. Her works have been included in shows in Istanbul Modern Istanbul; Contemporary Art Center of Adhemar Castle, Montélimar; Athens Epidaurus Festival (NEON production); Pierrefonds Castle, Paris; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki; Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens among many others. Works of Michalakakos are part of the collections of FNAC (Fonds National d'art contemporain), FRAC (Fond Regional d'art Contemporain) and Istanbul Modern. The artist lives and works in Athens, Greece.

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