



ZOI GAITANIDOU

Risk Aversion

Opening: Sunday, September 8, 6 - 8pm

Exhibition dates: September 8 - October 27, 2013

"All that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men."

-Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

Scaramouche is pleased to present "Risk Aversion", the first New York solo exhibition of Greek artist Zoi Gaitanidou (Athens, 1981). The ominous environment in Gaitanidou's work is the natural habitat of the universal tribe. Thick vegetation covers every inch of earth. Towering trees elevate the sky to unreachable heights. Aggressive leaves and branches of unknown species of vegetation hinder all motion. Perils lurk slyly from every direction. The crow's caw, the spider's deafening silence, the fire's crackle echo in the vastness. As one navigates through the uneasiness, survival mode is constantly activated. The abstract figures are in a state of colorful decomposition maintaining only basic human features and having begun to adjust to their overpowering environment by generating animal attributes on their complexion and posture. Their facial expressions, triggered only by reaction, give away traces of a culture of intellect. Gaitanidou's ethnographic depiction in "Risk Aversion" demonstrates fear as the prevalent emotion of the tribe's innate behavior.

It is said that when faced with fear, the choice to avoid danger either by escaping, confronting, or grinding to a halt before it, the so-called *fight-flight-or-freeze response*, is instinctive, almost primitive. To all outcomes of the dilemma, the driving force is one, the lowest common human denominator: deterring harm to survive with the purpose of perpetuation. The phrase *risk aversion* is a behavioral term that suggests selecting a potentially lower, but more certain, return to avoid risking a more substantial loss in the unsure prospect of a larger gain. In advanced societies the notion of assessing the value of the cost in order to minimize the risk factor of the profit is more immediately associated with financial investment. The predicament seems far more complex when it comes to human survival. A conservative, risk-aversion approach to the fight-flight-or-freeze response to the fear of death, implies a compromise that negates the value of the safe yet moderate payoff. Existence in perpetual fear is a high price to pay in order to maintain life.

In a state of universal numbness, Gaitanidou attempts to deconstruct the human condition, as it has and continues to be formed amidst, or in some cases following, a global economic crisis. Such extreme conditions have served as a backdrop to stern ethical conundrums, and have inescapably led to an existential quest concerning value. Gaitanidou's universal tribe demonstrates fearful reactions to the threat of human life. In the wilderness of today's grim reality, the danger lies in risking an unafraid life. In the words of Henry David Thoreau: *"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."*

Zoi Gaitanidou (b. 1981, Athens, Greece) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. A graduate of the Athens School of Fine Arts, Greece in 2005, Gaitanidou has exhibited internationally with recent solo exhibitions at Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt, Germany; David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL; and Loraini Alimantiri Gazonrouge, Athens, Greece. Recent group exhibitions include Christina Androulidaki Gallery and The Breeder, both in Athens, Greece. Gaitanidou participated in the 2nd Athens Biennial in 2009, curated by Nadia Arguopoulou.

Introduction by Evita Tsokanta. Tsokanta is an art historian and independent curator based in Athens, Greece.

For more information please contact the gallery:
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www.scaramoucheart.com
Hours: Wed. - Sat. 12N - 6pm, Sun. 1 - 6pm and by appt.