



ZOE KERAMEA

Once you are able to utter the word 'icosidodecahedron', you may well be ready to tackle the work by Zoe Keramea (Athens / New York). The title refers to an interactive work, a cut-out that the artist created for the educational department of the 18th Biennale of Sydney in 2012. To begin with, the word has entirely Greek roots and translates literally into twenty-two single planes of a geometric solid. In other words, this complicated figure, one of the Archimedean solids, consists of twenty triangular and twelve pentagonal faces.

Zoe Keramea lifts the flat surface into two, three, and finally four dimensional planes. A knot, in the artist's universe, is a complicated graphite drawing of a single ribbon that writhes onto the paper's surface with multiple crossings. It becomes a large sculpture when heavy mooring ropes are woven into a ring by 1400 volunteers at New York's South Street Seaport.

Trained in printmaking, Keramea felt the need to move away from the limitations of traditional etchings on a single surface. At first, she created space on paper by lining up or stacking rows of floating squares and by twisting ribbons. Subsequently, this led her to introduce relief in her so-called intaglio 'zoetypes' by adding embossments of strings and geometrical forms to the etchings, requiring the transfer of images from one metal plate to another via a cloth woven matrix. The artist delved deeper into topological connotations of shape and space, selecting geometrical surfaces and folding the rectangles, squares and triangles into themselves, primarily using paper as medium. Complicated units thus occurred that were in turn sewn together into larger sculptural wholes. An example is the series of Moths, based on the hexahedron as modular unit, transforming a flat surface into a three-dimensional shape or dual pyramid and many of these further into a malleable object. These works can exist in multiple different states.

Geometric figures lay at the origin of spiritual and symbolic rituals and beliefs throughout ages and cultures. The All-Seeing Eye is caught into a triangle; Egyptian pharaohs were buried inside the pyramids; the Square is one of the governing principles of Freemasonry; the Minneapolis based publication for Native American News and Arts is called The Circle, and the tetrad was worshipped by Pythagoreans. The contemporary eye, guided more by the mind and trained in conceptual and activist language, may read the shapes as purely formalistic, tradition however reveals a richness of meaning, and life and

the universe were defined by them. Heaven and earth, chaos and order, boundaries and ratios were created out of geometric symbols in a bid to structure and understand human life.

Keramea comes closest to these spiritual qualities in her Mandalas, symbols borrowed from Hindu and Buddhist rituals. When Malevich painted his black square as a modern and meditative icon, he was not far from the essence of the mandala, which is representative of the universe through a combination of a square and a circle as basic forms. Religions refer to the space outside us; psychologists match geometric forms to our inner state. This takes us back to the initial topological notions of exterior and interior, to in and out, and of the experience of space through form and ultimately to our oneness with the universe.

Keramea's Mandalas are small to large sized paper cut-outs. They are variations on the circle and the square. Folding over a sheet of paper twice, four equal parts appear that are then cut into an ornamental pattern made up of letters, numbers and/or symbols set in a square or circle. Each mandala could easily form a unit for a larger pattern such as a tiled wall. Elevating geometry to abstract and further into decorative designs was practiced to an exquisite degree in Islamic art, and previously in ancient Greek, Roman, and Persian cultures among others, whereas Celtic knots were extensively used in book illumination.

At the heart of all works lies skill. Keramea's works are meticulously executed, with great attention to technique be it printmaking, cut-outs, graphite drawings, sculptural works consisting of folded sheets of paper or metal, and more recently ceramics. The rare and difficult old technique of paper cut resist is used to transfer a paper cut-out design onto earthenware. The paper cut-out is positioned on the freshly thrown earthenware, pressed onto the still wet clay and dipped into liquid slip. After drying, for a day, the paper cut-out is carefully removed from the surface of the pottery. The unwanted residue of the slip on the appearing design is scraped off with a special knife. The object is then fired once, then glazed and fired a second time.

From flat surface printmaking, Zoe Keramea has discovered multiple ways to overcome its spatial limitations into a surprisingly rich practice based on shape and form in combination with newly conceived and traditional skills.



INVENTORY

Els Hanappe has organized a solo show with Zoe Keramea in Athens, Greece, in 2011 (Hilton Athens)

Paper Cut-Outs

Mandalas, 2001

World Serpent Mandala, hand-cut paper, 181 x 181 cm framed

Fire Mandala, hand-cut paper, 181 x 181 cm framed

Ocean Mandala, hand-cut paper, 181 x 181 cm framed

These large size paper cut-outs are the culmination of several years of work in the medium on a smaller scale, for ceramics, artist's books, posters, etc.

The works are framed according to archival standards, with ultra-violet screen glazing for protection. The wood frames are unique and of high quality with a profile that is 10 cm wide and 4,5 cm thick, from solid old-growth cherry wood, black matte lacquered.

Mandala nos. 10, 13, 11, 8, 4, 12, 16, 5, 3, 2002, hand-cut paper, 80 x 80 cm each (framed)

Mandala nos. 1-4, 2001, hand-cut paper, 40 x 40 cm each (framed)

The Twelve Months (January through December), 2007, hand-cut paper, 40 x 40 cm each (framed)

From the limited edition artist's book: Zoe Keramea - 'The Twelve Months', Athens 2007.

Printed by Panos Davias in Athens in 2007 in a limited edition of 500 signed and numbered by the artist.

Zoetypes

Phrase II, 1990, intaglio – zoetype, 110 x 38 cm, unique print

Phrase IV, 1990, intaglio – zoetype, 110 x 38 cm, unique print

Drawings

Attracting Object, 2005, graphite on paper, 14,5 x 13,5 cm

Intertwining, 2005, graphite on paper, 11 x 18 cm

Midnight, 2005, graphite on paper, 17,5 x 18,5 cm

45 Minutes Later, 2005, graphite on paper, 17 x 18,5 cm

Wired I, 2011, graphite on paper, 100 cm x 16 cm (sheet)

Wired IV, 2011, graphite on paper, 100 cm x 17 cm (sheet)

Drawings will be delivered framed

Sculpture

Enfolded Paper Sculptures (editions of 3)

Circling the Square II, 2012, hand-folded paper and thread

Young Saguaro, 2012, hand-folded paper and thread

Double Torus, 2012, hand-folded paper and thread

Spiky Moebius II, 2012, hand-folded paper and thread

Large Mace, 2011, hand-folded paper and thread

Shadow II, 2011, hand-folded paper and thread

Black Vein, 2011, hand-folded paper and thread, 17 cm x 17 cm - *will be delivered in a Plexiglas box 25 x 25 x 25 cm to be displayed on the base 120 x 26 x 26 cm*

*Images of the works can be viewed on www.siakos-hanappe.com
For information on these and other works,
please contact: els@siakos-hanappe.com*