

Irini Diadou

Mark of Cain

A treatise on violence. A contemplation of life and death.

Irini Diadou wanders through the history of mankind evoking, with her painting, actual facts that stir us up and awaken us. Her artworks, non-representational scenes from a macabre theatre of the absurd, imply threatening and hostile situations and raise feelings of precariousness.

The works, in total synergy with the architectural space of the until-recently abandoned Old Paper Warehouse filled with evident signs of decay, overwhelm the viewer by composing a charged painterly environment.

The titles function as an a priori interpretive tool leading to the decoding of the works. *A Grave in the Sky*: with this verse from Paul Celan's *Death Fugue*, Diadou implies by association the Nazi extermination camps. The My Lai massacre, the killing fields and the S21 prison of Pol Pot's Cambodia, the child soldiers/slaughterers of Sierra Leone and the young girls/sex slaves abducted by Boko Haram, Islamist suicide bombers and persecuted refugees are the additional archival material of her grim subject matter. To this repertoire, she adds the evolution of weapons science producing new and increasingly effective means of mass extinction - from the atomic bomb to the latest technology in unmanned drones, the infamous Reapers. The shape-shifting warfare domination techniques are being constantly updated so to obtain optimum results, namely instant death to more people.

These horrendous moments of history depicted on the canvas have mutated into an act of personal liberation and exorcism of evil by the artist. Violent gestures that automatically seem to externalize both the conscious and the unconscious, outline compositions that evoke associations with explosions, darkness, blood, scorched earth.

Diadou's paintings, under the guise of the lyrical veil as well as the dynamic fist of Abstraction and belonging to a profoundly political and social Art, perform as a kind of visual manifesto. The exhibition highlights the everlasting unspeakable violence, present since the beginning of the world as suggested by its title's biblical reference to Cain, by raising moral questions about human nature itself.

Safe-Place

The *Safe-Place* section, presented in the serene environment of the nearby Fotagogos Bookstore (from April 15), functions in dialectical terms to this artistic treatise on violence. It manifests an alternative, more optimistic view of the world, consistent with Diadou's desire for a better tomorrow. Here, small-scale works are composed by serene, horizontal brush gestures. The titles reveal that these are landscapes of calm seas and clear skies which seem to promise arrival to harbours of places safe, peaceful, utopian.