

DIARY

## FOR LOVE OR MONEY

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Left: Artists Panos Tsagaris and Vassilis H. with Dio Horia director Marina Vranopoulou. Right: Dio Horia terrace.

**THE ISLAND OF MYKONOS** has absolutely everything for the discerning bon vivant and has managed, in spite of its popularity with twenty-four-hour party people, to remain largely unspoiled and, well, absolutely fabulous. Marina Vranopoulou, who manages the Deste Foundation’s slaughterhouse project space in Hydra, upped the ante last weekend with the opening of the new residency and exhibition space Dio Horia (Greek for “two places”). After a devastatingly early five-hour ferry voyage from Athens, I arrived bleary-eyed with a group of curators, artists, and writers for the inaugural event, the whitewashed villas perching on the rocky landscape before us instantly reinforcing the mythic superlatives.

“Everyone has an opinion about Mykonos whether they’ve been here or not, as if it is a person,” Vranopoulou explained over drinks that evening on the Dio Horia terrace, illuminated only by the setting sun and Olga Migliareso-Phoca’s pastel neon sign *Cocktails &*

*Dreams*. Real estate in Mykonos clearly has a market value all its own, and Vranopoulou, who spent all her summers growing up on the island, found a long empty three-story house among the high-end shops and convinced the owner to let her renovate and rent it out for a bargain price. The artistic directive for the inaugural shows—a group exhibition and two solo presentations, “Vacation,” by Vassilis H., and Selma Parlour’s “Paradoxes of the Flattened-Out Cavity,” was to engage with the island and its often infamous image. Vassilis H.’s paintings and sculptures are striking compositions of brightly colored forms resembling sun-bleached afterimages of the island architecture that intermingle memory and imagination. In delicate, precise paintings referencing iconic architectural geometries, Parlour’s canvases are cosmic windows that compress time to merge the forms of present and past.



Left: Artist Malvina Panagiotidi, writer Efi Falida, and artist Panagiotis Loukas. Right: Artists Olga Migliaressi-Phoca and Selma Parlour with Dio Horia’s Branislav Mihajlovic.

The group exhibition, “Dio Horia in Mykonos,” comprises a compelling eclectic mix of work by nineteen young artists. “Delos was the Super Mario of the ancient world,” said artist Rallou Panagiotou, whose print *Common Deity* is a luscious close-up of the shimmering folds of a pair of electric blue Lycra shorts. Elias Kafouros’s *You won’t see the birds but you will find their feathers* is an intricate vintage-style mirror image, one upside down above the other, evoking an island holiday held in a blue metal frame as on a postcard stand. “The most important thing about Mykonos is that it’s right next door to the most important Greek island, Delos: the birthplace of Zeus,” resident filmmaker Marco Orsini set the scene. “The beaches, the light, the food, and the energy are brilliant. Yes, there are wild clubs and parties but there is also a peace to the place you cannot describe.” From fishing village to jet-set

mecca, windswept Mykonos is an embodiment of Heraclitus’s “unity of opposites” theory. The global island village is like the modern twin to ancient Delos, which was a key political nexus and trading port, a Switzerland of the Mediterranean, as well as home to the most erotic gods, and the cult temples devoted to them.

News trickled through the reception that bailout talks had broken down that day and Greek banks would be closed from Monday for at least a week, but the legalization of gay marriage in the US seemed to be a more worthy topic among the crowd—the Greek situation has been going on for some time, and people have no idea what will happen, nor what a yes or no vote on the referendum really means, so it seemed useless to speculate. And Greeks have been through much worse in recent memory, not to mention the ancient past: Thucydides may have paralleled the current stance of the EU toward Greece with the ultimatum the Delian league, led by Athens, threatened Melos with if it did not comply and join; the island decided to remain autonomous, and was destroyed. In spite of proximity to precedent, the artists and curators at the intimate dinner later at the Hotel Belvedere exclaimed mostly about the amazing food, and the art.



Left: Artist Rallou Panagiotou, dealer Marta Kolakowska, and curator Nadja Argyropoulou. Right: Artists Elias Kafouros and Antonis Theodoridis and critic Alek Hudzik.

Delos has the house of Hermes, while Mykonos has Vuitton, dressed in chic white Cycladic vernacular; Apollo was worshiped on the ancient islet, where colossal phalluses are still erect in honor of Dionysus (aka Bacchus), whose cult prevails in Mykonos. There is definitely something supernatural about the place. Jackie Onassis famously coveted Mykonos for a



residence. The turning point for this naysayer was a day at Jackie O, a gay beach club overlooking Super Paradise beach. On the road to this hedonist heaven, tanned beauties whizzed past on motorcycles, dressed only in bikinis. Everyone there seemed pleased as the punch they were drinking, breaking out in dance—starting with perennial fave “Y.M.C.A.”—and lurching spontaneously into the pool, oblivious to the no-diving sign and their Ray-Bans and Rolexes. There was no point to resisting all the good feelings, but I had to leave all too early to make it to the next party.

The opening of Dio Horia that evening was equally chilled, and collector Dakis Joannou arrived with a T-shirt he had just bought printed with Jeff Koons’s *Balloon Dog*, of which he owns an original. (Ironically I had coveted a gold Ilias Lalaounis bracelet that day, until I asked the price: €11,100, nearly that of an apartment in Athens these days.) The afterparty was again at Hotel Belvedere, where room rates start at over a thousand, the liquids flowed freely around the elegant modernist-style pool, and the Asian-fusion finger food served by the hotel’s new restaurant Thea was nothing less than divine. Next stop was a bacchanal on Paradise Beach, where Stelios Joannou, son of Dakis, DJed till dawn and everyone appeared to be blissfully oblivious to the impending economic oblivion.

— Cathryn Drake



Left: Dio Horia's Dimitra Kollerou and Nefeli Papakyriakopoulou with Yorgos Tzirtzilakis (center). Right: Deste's Regina Alivisatos, artist Honza Zamofski, and curator Stamatia Dimitrakopoulos.



Left: OMMU's Marina Legaki and Tasos Gaintatzis with curator Stamatia Dimitrakopoulos. Right: Artist Dimitris Douramakos, critic Stephanie Bailey, and dealer Umer Butt.



Left: Collector Dakis Joannou and artist Yannis Varelas. Right: Critic Evagelia Ledaki and State of Concept director Iliana Fokianaki.





Left: Louis Vuitton in Mykonos. Right: Writer Efi Falida.



Left: Shaun Duncan and Cristina Michelle. Right: Writer Kyriakos Spirou.

**ALL IMAGES**