

On May 21st, a new series of projections of STILLS was presented at the Klafthmonos square in Athens. Two days later, on May 23rd, they were stopped by the authorities.

The projected images, the STILLS, are gigantic images of two nudes. A man and a woman. There are different versions. The STILLS are based on the caryatids, sculpted figures which support an architectural structure. In the same Athens there are world famous examples to be found on the Acropolis. Mostly, these figures are strong men and women who support the building, which is often a symbol of a religious, political or financial power. They believe in the system they represent. In my version of the caryatids, the strong idealistic men are replaced by normal people, who struggle to continue to bear the burden of the system they have to represent. They are weighed down by the representative system enclosing them. The STILLS are about the nature of contemporary humanity and its place in the world and the difficulties we have in adapting to the political and economic situation in which we find ourselves. It is a purely humanistic vision.

Artistically I have used the same language as the traditional caryatids: nudes, often bended, that are carrying the weight of a building. The figures are deformed to fit into the architecture, just as we are deformed by the straitjacket of the politico-economic situation. The STILLS that are at issue here, are two enormous projections, 24 by 15 meters, which were shown at Klafthmonos square in Athens. For me they are fragile giants. Very powerful and at the same time moaning under the weight of a system. I believe this is the situation for many people of Athens. We have arrived in a condition in which an inhuman globalised financial system is tangibly steering our everyday lives.

The censored STILLS were to me like a painting, a gift for the city of Athens and its inhabitants. The aesthetical design, the attempt to deliver a product as highly qualitative as possible, was primordial to me. Every detail, every movement, every expression of the projected figures had to be visible. I have chosen for tattooed figures. They resonate with the numerous graffiti in Athens. A city's graffiti is like 'the book' of the city, you can read in what condition the society is. The people I projected draw their lives onto their bodies. If I may be honest: I was very proud of the result. The tattoos became colourful drawings, continuing from the bodies into the city wall's graffiti.

My goal with this work is the opposite of a provocation. I wanted to give a gift without offending anyone. To hearten the citizens of Greece in these times of crisis. I had never thought these images could come across as shocking to anyone. Aren't we all adults capable of appreciating an artistic nude as it is? The nudes had no sexual connotation whatsoever. The images are not blasphemous. There is no religious or political statement. Only a sincere question on the human condition. To my great surprise the religious order has brought in the police to shut down my projections, to censor them. I am shocked by the clerical reaction and its hyper-conservative mind and reflex.

I heard and read that the political and religious powers in Greece are not separated. Here I can make a statement about: I personally believe in the separation of powers. But this is *not* what the STILLS are about.

I would like to send a message to the priest who banned my images. I hope this man is as moralistic, to the same extent, when dealing politically, financially and socially with his own life. I hope he is as severe to himself and the power he represents. If the ecclesiastical power in Greece is as pious and devout as it pretends to be, I respect them deeply. If not, I despise them. Nevertheless I hope this incident puts the political power of the church in Greece up for discussion and that a healthy debate arises on censoring works of art. I regret the fact that the images are no longer on view. But I am glad that the STILLS have brought up a discussion I support fully.

Brussels, 25th of May 2015