

DIMITRIS CONSTANTINOU





DIMITRIS CONSTANTINOU • SCULPTURE • MARCH 2015 • ALPHA C.K. ART GALLERY



Dimitris Constantinou, 1924-2010



Geometric | 1978 | stainless steel | 60x60x6 cm

## THE SYSTEM OF GEOMETRIES

*How we met...*

February 2007. Behind the gallery window of his solo exhibition, a cube under construction emerges.

The exceptionally blue patina on the outer casing of the black iron disregards the textures in the heart of the work. This was the beginning of my relationship with Dimitris Constantinou, sculptor and fellow man.

*Reversing materiality...*

The origins of modernism constitute an enduring legacy in the work of Dimitris Constantinou.

The kinetic works of the 60s were created at the same time with the international contemporary currents in Sculpture, despite the fact that he had probably no direct relationship with them.

The kinetic sculptures are shaped, transformed, structured and deconstructed. The stiff metal is transformed into a ductile veil, as a result of the exceptional abilities of the sculptor in both composition and technique.

Through the reformulations of his kinetic works, various anthropomorphous forms emerge, such as korai statues, statuettes and idols, demonstrating an apparent relation to the historic inheritance of the island.

The events of 1974 constitute a starting point for the creation of works of protest - always with the use of metal - representing expressionist images in an intensely dramatic way.

Then, in the 80s, he begins to explore archetypal geometries such as the cube, the sphere and, sometimes, the pyramid, without abandoning other constructivist styles.

The archetypal structure is creatively reformulated, enabling space to enter into the material structure and substance of the sculpture, describing, therefore, the production of the work.

The intensity of movement of a geometrical static shape resists the determinate immobility of the matter.

The processing of steel, stainless steel and bronze offers to the metals an unexpected texture and a chromatic substance.

*Architectural sculpture...*

The sculptural gestures of his works are inevitably architectural.

Doric simplicity, harmonious development of volumes, tectonic structure and minimalist shape are architectural characteristics defining his overall work.

*«what is beautiful is not immoderate» Plato*

Dimitris Constantinou modernised the course of Visual Arts in the Cypriot Art. By broadening both shape and materiality and by enhancing his creations with spirit and moderation, he left behind some exceptional sculptures, capable, in my opinion, of characterizing him as the most important Cypriot sculptor of the 20th century.



Kinetic | 1966 | iron | oil paint | 84x135 cm

Dimitris Constantinou belongs to the generation of Cypriot artists born in the interwar period, a group of whom strove, from the late 1950s to the early '70s, to "synchronise" Cypriot art with international developments. This course was drastically interrupted by the political and military events of 1974. When Cypriot art returned to a state of "normalcy", around 1980, most of these artists produced work that not only did not strive to follow the latest artistic expressions any more, but was also a "conservative" regression, in relation even to their own work from the decade before 1974. Constantinou is among the few exceptions: his work in the post-1974 era, although it has not been in step with contemporary trends, it constitutes both a smooth progression from his 1960s production, as well as a very interesting case of modernist sculpture, which successfully claims a place in the contemporary era.

Constantinou arrives at such expressions not based on conscious, ideological stance, but through personal interaction with material, and as a result of his "need" – in the above works – to deconstruct the compact shape and form of the rhombus or the square. This does not subtract from the strength or "value" of his works; on the contrary, his sculptures acquire a special interest, in that they seem to carry simultaneously, on one hand modernism's emphasis on the exploration of material and on form; and, on the other, the reaction against such focus, as expressed at the beginnings of post-modernism, with the emphasis on the repetition of the motif, and on the mechanically-uniformly (re) produced work of art.

Dr. Antonis Danos  
Professor of Art History and Theory



Cubes | 1990 | stainless steel | 38x24x24 cm

We realize that in our times the categories which used to differentiate the property in every art-expression do not exist, or rather they may exist at a very low level or even appear to have a different form than they used to.

Pierre Francastel, who may have been the greatest exponent of the new branch of sociology concerning Art, has acutely analyzed this phenomenon, as well as the psychological relationships that relate the work of art to the environment where it is created and is alive.

We may therefore conclude that the present manifestations in art most often cannot be differentiated or separated, they reflect the complications of modern life.

The above reflections may facilitate us to view Dimitris Constantinou's sculpture with deeper understanding.

What are his main traits?

Two trends seemingly opposite are apparent in his work. They both derive from the same spirit though. The first, almost static, orients the spectator towards a wavering balance of elements that suggest a rhythmic movement. Of such character are the sculptures in metal and the columns; their discontinued and repeated elements suggest continuous movement in the time which comes out of the very quality of the material. The other trait contains movement in different form though. The construction allows complicated and many-sided variations by moving the various elements (triangles, circles, semi-circles etc), that play about, turn, rotate round their axis, thus inviting the participation of the spectator in the re-creation of the same piece of work.

This last trend-which in spirit classes together with the most advanced trends – proves the positive and considerable route covered by the artist since having freed himself from the bonds of representational sculpture.

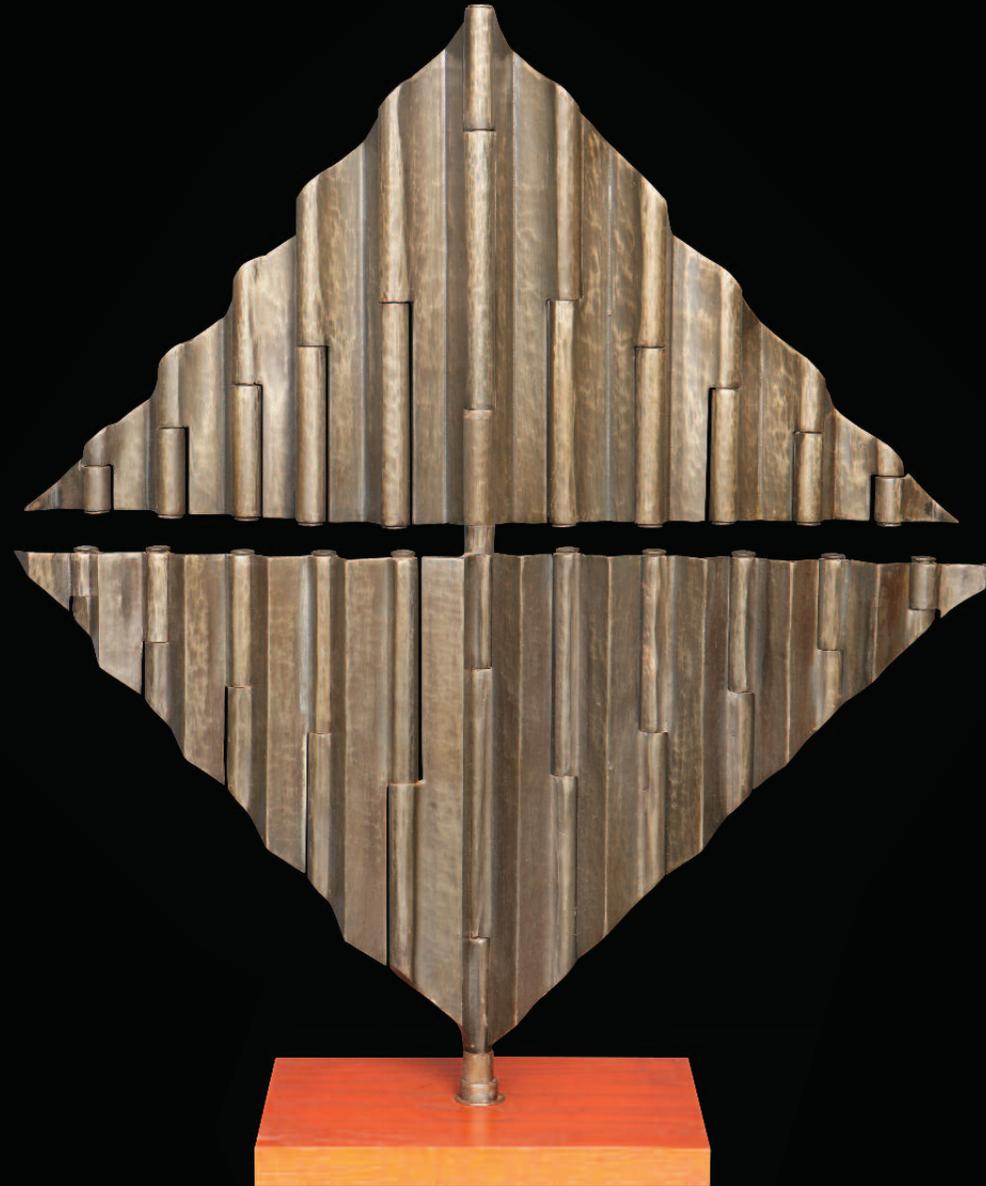
Tony Spiteris  
Art historian and critic



Multi-Dimensional | brass | 66x23x26 cm



Geometric Planes | 2006 | stainless steel | 100x70x70 cm



Kinetic | iron | 48x45 cm



Kinetic | 1970 | iron | 39x64 cm



Encounter | 1970 | brass | 45x20x40 cm



Sphere-Fission I | 1988 | iron | 36x26x32 cm



Genesis | 1975 | stainless steel | 110x110x30 cm



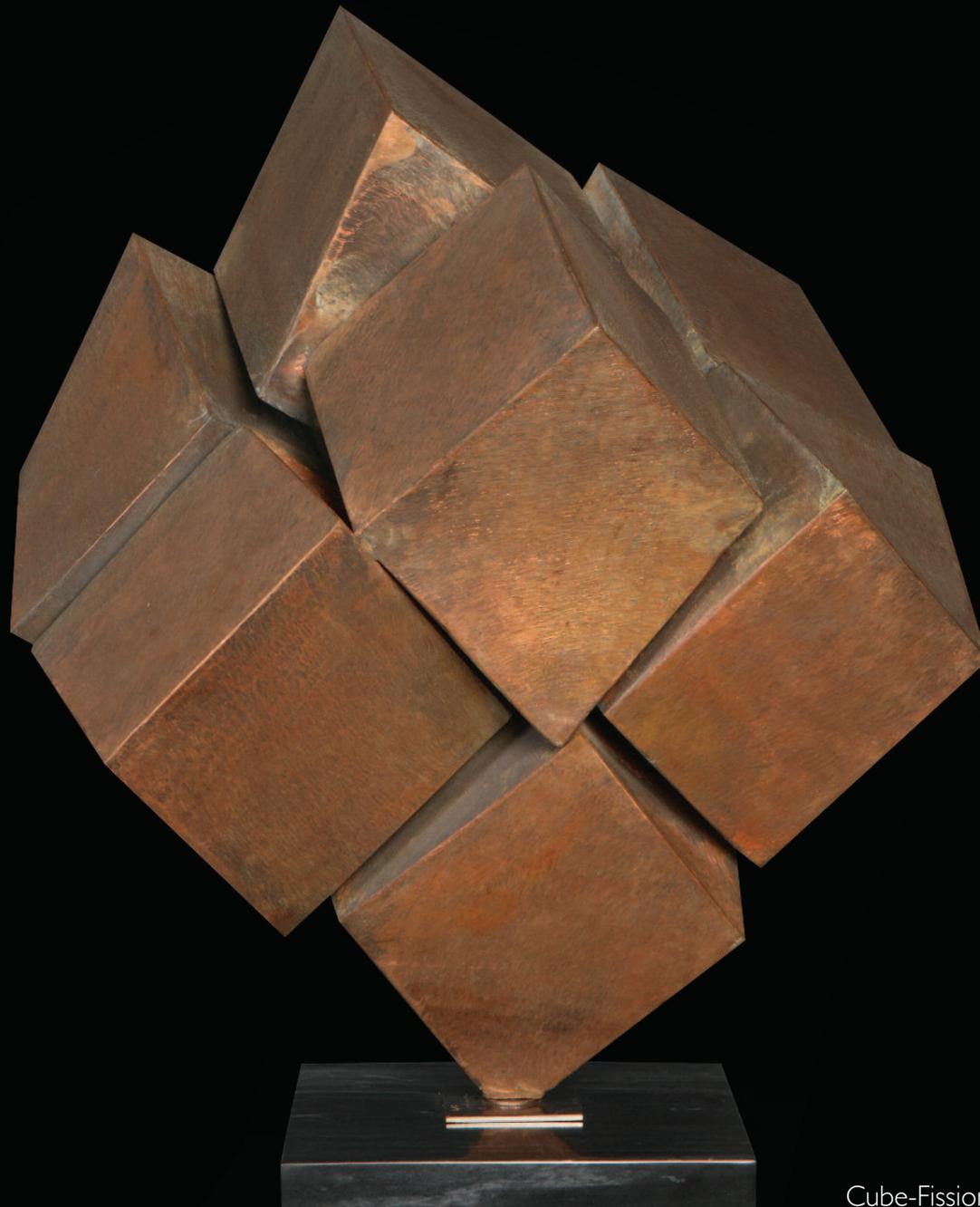
Geometric Fission | 1978 | stainless steel | 54x54x54 cm



Circular Motion | iron | 43x40x35 cm



Sphere-Fission II | 1988 | iron | 45x45x45 cm



Cube-Fission | 2007 | bronze | 54x54x40 cm



Maiden | 1985 | brass | 93x7x7 cm



Maiden | 1985 | brass | 83x7x7 cm

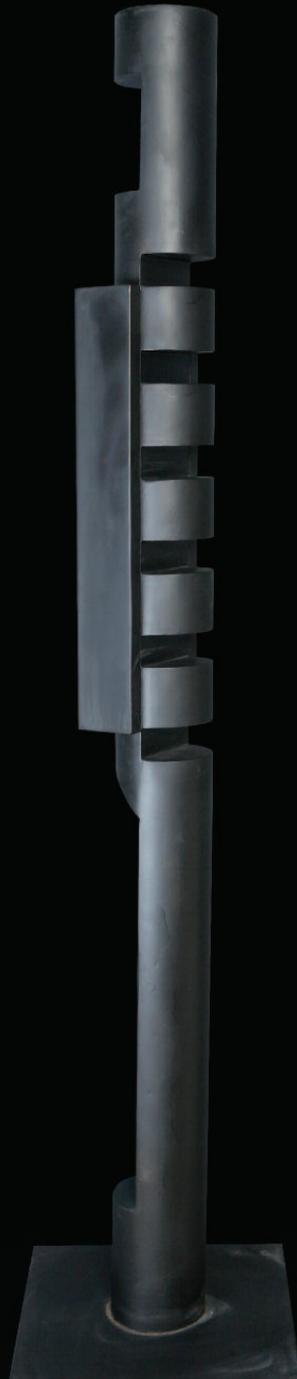


Figure | 1962 | iron | 178x19x16 cm



Genesis | iron | 19x22x22 cm



Geometric Coupling | stainless steel | 73x107x88 cm

Dimitris Constantinou was born in Alexandria in 1924 to Greek Cypriot parents. He studied artistic metalwork at the Italian Technical School Don Bosco.

He exhibited his work extensively in numerous solo and group exhibitions, most significantly at the 1970 Alexandria Biennale where he was awarded the 2nd prize in sculpture.

His sculptures are in the collections of the Greek National Gallery, the Greek Ministry of Culture, the University of Thessaloniki, the National Bank of Greece, the State Collection of Contemporary Cypriot Art, the Central Bank of Cyprus, the University of Cyprus, the Archbishop Makarios Foundation, the Laiki Bank Art Collection and many private collections in Cyprus, Greece, the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere.

#### Solo Exhibitions (selection)

- 1973 Desmos Art Gallery, Athens, Greece
- 1976 Kochlias Gallery, Thessaloniki, Greece
- 1977 Art Theater, London, UK
- 1981 Ora Cultural Centre, Athens, Greece
- 1983 Athenaeum Art Gallery, Athens, Greece
- 1985 Gallery Gloria, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 1988 Gallery Gloria, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 1993 Epipeda Art Hall, Athens, Greece
- 1996 Argo Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 2007 Gallery Gloria, Nicosia, Cyprus

#### Group Exhibitions (selection)

- 1970 "Contemporary Cypriot Art", Commonwealth Institute, London, UK  
"Fourteen Cypriot Artists", Ora Cultural Centre, Athens, Greece  
8th Alexandria Biennale, Alexandria, Egypt
- 1971 "Contemporary Cypriot Artists", Ateneo de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
- 1974 "International Open-Air Exhibition of Sculpture", Museum of Modern Art, Milan, Italy
- 1975 "Panhellenic Artistic Exhibition", Zappeion, Athens, Greece  
"Cypriot Artists", National Gallery of Art, Athens, Greece
- 1984 "Contemporary Cypriot Art", National Gallery, Athens, Greece
- 1986 "Athens-Cultural Capital of Europe", Athens, Greece
- 1991 "Contemporary Greek Sculpture", Maison de l'Architecture, Paris, France
- 1992 "Olympia '92", Olympia, Greece
- 1995 "Hommage to El Greco", National Gallery, Athens, Greece  
"Olympia '95", Olympia, Greece
- 1997 "Thessaloniki '97 – Cultural Capital of Europe", Thessaloniki, Greece
- 2014 "Art-Athina International Art Fair" with Alpha C.K. Art Gallery, Athens, Greece



Alpha C.K.  

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