

# Layers of Depth

Yorgos Papadopoulos

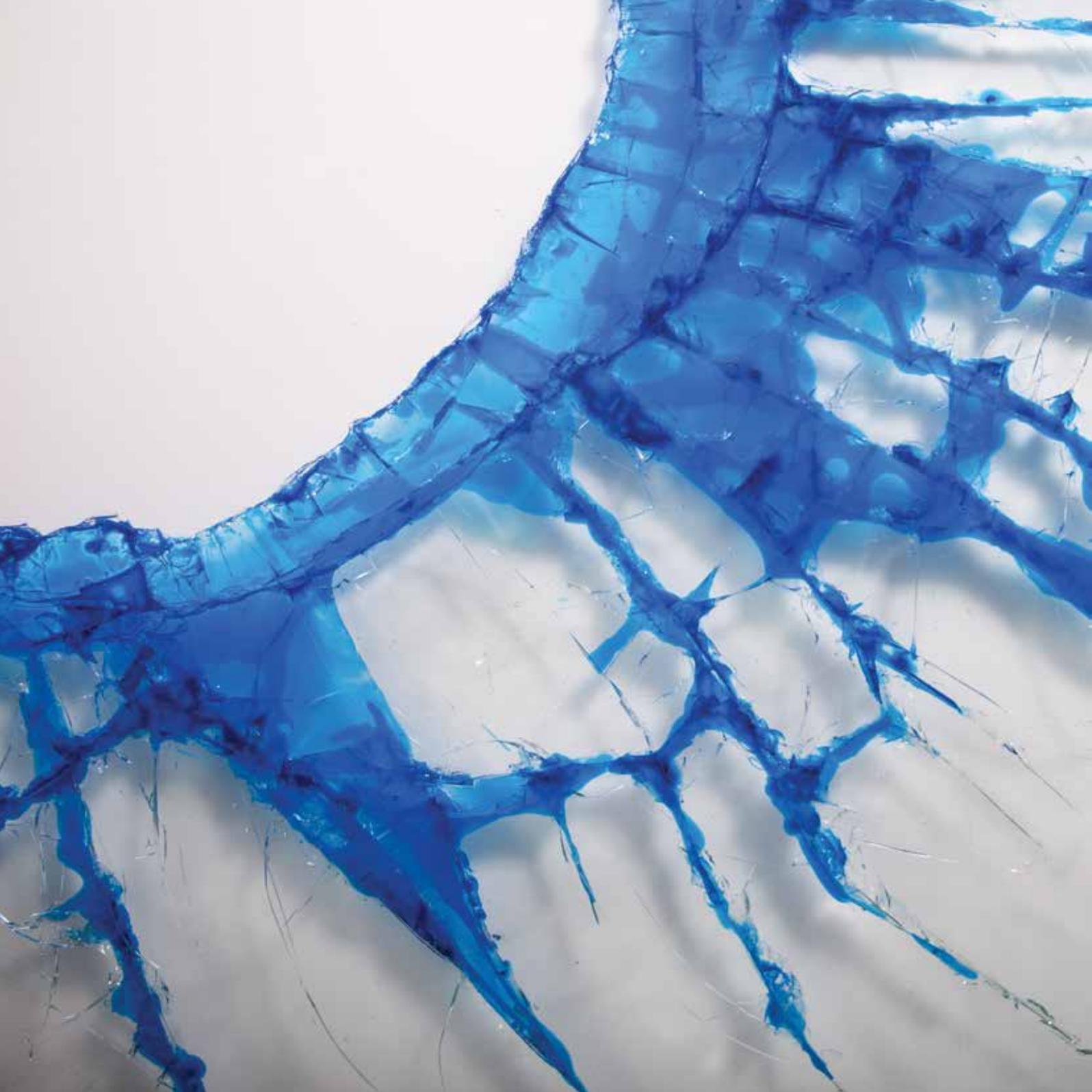


# Layers of Depth

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ALPHA C.K. ART GALLERY

MAY 2019



## The Compass Always Points to Home

When even journalists in New York are noticing, it must be something exciting. The Cyprus art market is buzzing. And strangely enough, we have the financial crisis to thank for it. Cypriot artists that used to spread their wings and try their luck in the big metropolises now tend to come home. Journalist Cathryn Drake explains that physical space is less expensive and mental space is more expansive.

Yorgos Papadopoulos is no exception. In 2017, after running his studio from his north London house for two decades, he has decided to remigrate to his native country, at least partially. The old house was no longer fit for the larger scale of the work he's imagining, nor for diverging into different materials, techniques and art forms. Notwithstanding the financial crisis and the economic uncertainty that seems to be looming at the moment, the London real estate market is still a difficult place for artists.

It has been a great blessing for Yorgos that his family supported him throughout his career and that he now owns the house his late grandmother was clever enough to buy off the council in the Thatcher years. It's an even greater blessing that mum and dad also safeguarded some property in Cyprus. Because like many a Cypriot in the diaspora, Yorgos has never lost touch with his homeland. In fact, nearly all of his art somehow references back to Cyprus, its beauty, its nature and its culture.

A temporary studio was set up in Kedares, a little sleepy village that carries part of the ancestral history of the artist. The garage pappou used to keep his bus in has been turned into a little gallery. The old stone walls of the little courtyard talk inspiration. The sloping vineyard with 360° views of the surrounding foothills of the Troodos mountains allows the mind to wander. In the olive grove one can pick olives without seeing a single soul all day. No internet distraction. Unobstructed breathing space is as much the artist's ambrosia as the ripe fruit of the orchard.

Unlike any other glass artist, Yorgos does not treat his material with caution but rather with violence. He smashes, drops or shoots the glass. The violence always a reminder of the Turkish invasion he lived through as a toddler. The ensuing shambles ever a sign of the imperfections of life. The aesthete ever wishing to turn it back into beauty. Significantly, after Athena's tree had been burnt by the armies of Xerxes during the Persian wars, the tree survived. Similarly the Cypriot society remained resilient under the violence inflicted on it. Yorgos's dissection of violence and beauty can be found in the new work presented in this exhibition as Ripples of Time (2019) and 35° 6.8' N / 33° 57.2' E - Then & Now (2018). The latter two works refer in their title to the exact coordinates of the place Yorgos was living at the time of the Turkish invasion of Famagusta in August 1974, 'then' expressing the impact of the violence on the artist, 'now' the emptiness, the void of not being able to go home. In Ripples of Time the artist develops the idea by showing how the perception of past events evolves, each panel representing a reflection of a moment of greater significance to the artist.

## Choices

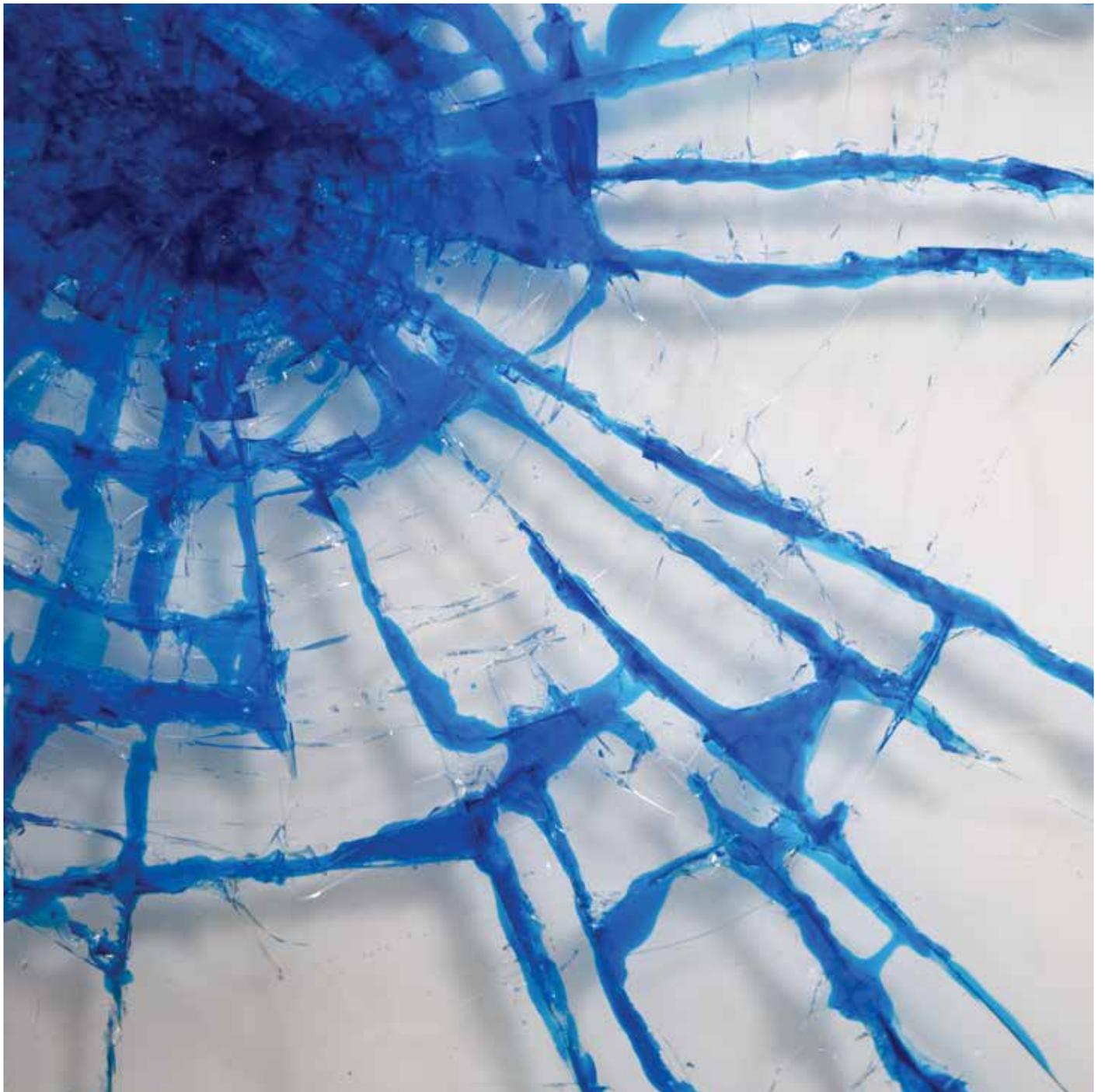
The cultural divisions of Cyprus have been seminal to Yorgos as an artist. The Turkish invasion has not just left an incurable wound, it unknowingly drove him to create art that would help build bridges across the divides. The works of the Stratified Jewels series were originally inspired by the matopetra, the blue and white amulets used against the influences of the 'evil eyes'. Not being superstitious himself, Yorgos has turned this around. Instead of protection against evil he has conceived them as conveyors of good. They have been abstracted both in physical and conceptual terms in order to promote values, concepts and attitudes in art. The softness of the magenta epitomises the compassionate nature of man. Black and white invokes the empowerment of steering one's boat down the river of time. The cobalt blue and gold bids to consider the person, activity or cause we hold most dear in devotion. Gold by itself represents integrity and *Dissected Integrity* (2019) develops on this theme. Others have taken on the calm oceanic turquoise colours to symbolise harmony. The human brain is unique in that it allows us to imagine—i. e. to consciously represent that what is not yet present to the senses, and to create and to shape our futures. It is this what gives us choices.

## The Shortest Way Home

When James Joyce wrote his *Ulysses* he filled it with enough enigma and riddle that he could insure his own immortality. And succeed he did: to this day his escapist works are hotly debated by scholars around the globe. Escapism is no longer a determining artistic idea. The artist does not necessarily have to be removed from society to be able to critique it with his creations. Like the story of Leopold Bloom, the life of Yorgos has had some measure of it: he needed to remove himself from his homeland in order to combat it and the demons it created for him, only to find himself longing for return.

With the new works that are presented in this exhibition—the first to be created on Cyprus soil—the idea of *nostos*, of homecoming by the sea, is reflected in the use of the horizon and Mediterranean blues, which create a Cavafian image of unsurpassable sensuality. Especially when living on the western side of the island, Cyprus, with its numerous days of sunfilled skies, is an ideal place to get inspired by the setting of the sun, its fabulous colours and its seemingly endless variations. It gave birth to 5 new works called *Radiant Dusk*. The enigma of the subject matter is further enhanced by the traces of time that are created during the curing of the silicone used to glue the layers of glass together and by the radiance of the fluorescent pigments and ultra-violet light.

The latest works of Yorgos presented in this show are further explorations of materials, transparency and reflections combined with the philosophical considerations of unconventionality. The treatment of glass and exploring of light, reflection and shadow through the material, have always been compelling elements for Yorgos's practice. Influenced by the work of American contemporary artists Larry Bell and Donald Judd this new body of work reflects a lifelong investigation into the physical properties of light, space and the relationship of environment with the transparent qualities that glass offers as a material. The fascination with cubic form also relates to the artist's continual struggle with the labelling society. *Inside the Box I - IV* (2019) invites the viewer to look inside and think outside the box.







**Eye of Devotion XI** (2018)

Glass, silicone, cobalt and black pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 120 cm

**Eye of Devotion XII** (2019)

Glass, silicone, gold leaf and powder, pigments  
Ø 120 cm



**Eye of Devotion III** (2016)

Glass, silicone, cobalt and black pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 60 cm



**Eye of Devotion VII** (2016)

Glass, silicone, cobalt and black pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 50 cm



**Eye of Devotion VIII** (2016)

Glass, silicone, cobalt and black pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 40 cm

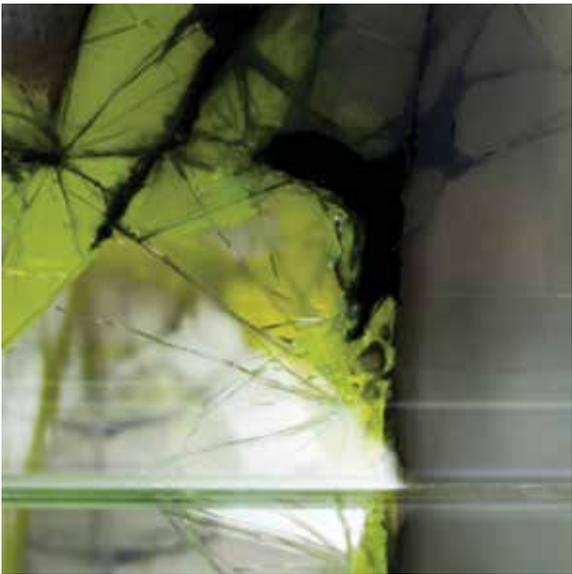


**Eye of Integrity II** (2016)

Glass, silicone, black and white pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 60 cm







**Inside of the box I** (2019)  
Glass, silicone, (fluorescent) pigments, mirror  
30 x 30 x 30 cm







**Inside of the box II** (2019)

Glass, silicone, pigments, mirror

35 x 35 x 35 cm



**Inside of the box III** (2019)

Glass, silicone, gold leaf, pigments, mirror  
40 x 40 x 40 cm







**Inside of the box IV** (2019)

Glass, silicone, pigments, mirror

45 x 45 x 45 cm





**Fovea Eye I** (2012)  
Glass, silicone, pigments,  
stainless steel bezel and stand  
60 x 67 x 10 cm

**Fovea Eye III** (2012)  
Glass, silicone, pigments,  
stainless steel bezel and stand  
60 x 67 x 10 cm



**Eye of Compassion I** (2016)

Glass, silicone, quinacridone pigment, silver leaf and powder, stainless steel bezel and stand

50 x 57 x 10 cm



**Eye of Empowerment I** (2016)

Glass, silicone, black and white pigment, silver leaf and powder, stainless steel bezel and stand  
60 x 67 x 10 cm





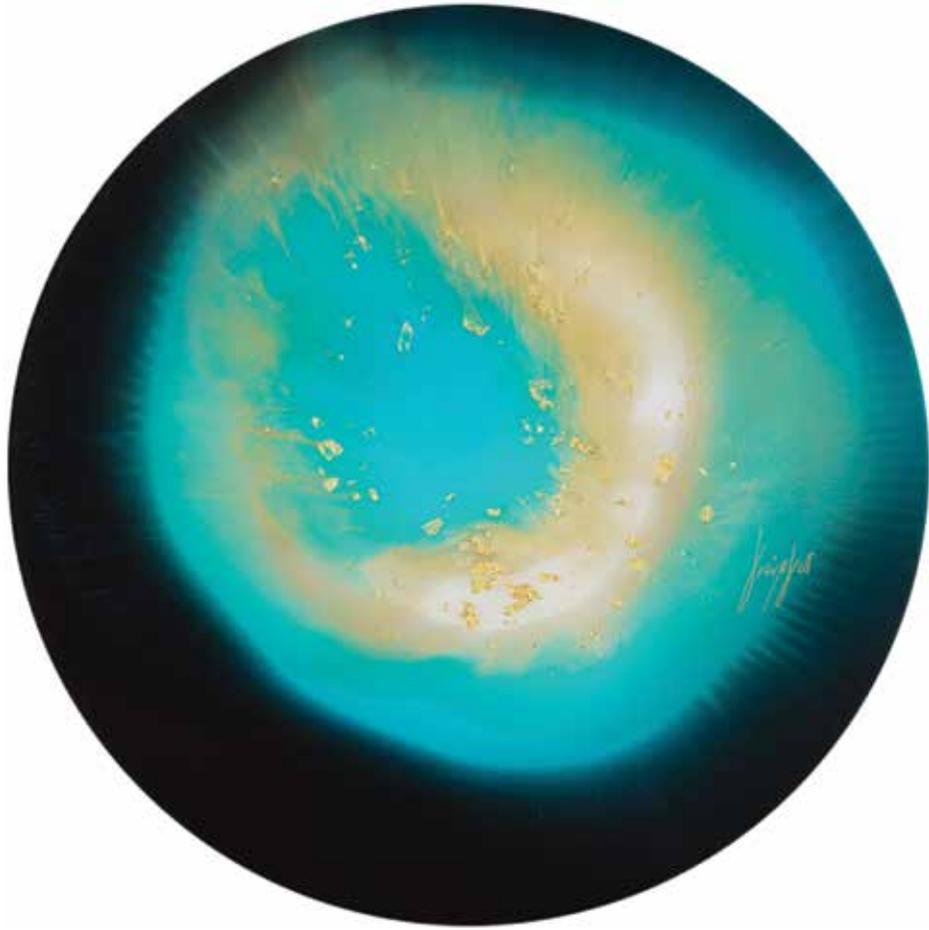
**Eye of Harmony II** (2016)

Glass, silicone, turquoise and black pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 60 cm



**Eye of Harmony III** (2016)

Glass, silicone, turquoise and black pigment,  
24ct gold powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 60 cm



**Eye of Harmony VIII** (2016)

Glass, silicone, turquoise and black pigment,  
24ct gold leaf and powder, brass bezel and chain  
Ø 40 cm

**Ripples of Time** (2019)

Glass, silicone, pigments, stainless steel

6 panels of 70 x 70 cm





**Dissected Integrity** (2019)

Glass, silicone, gold powder and leaf,  
pigments, steel brackets  
9 panels of 30 x 30 cm

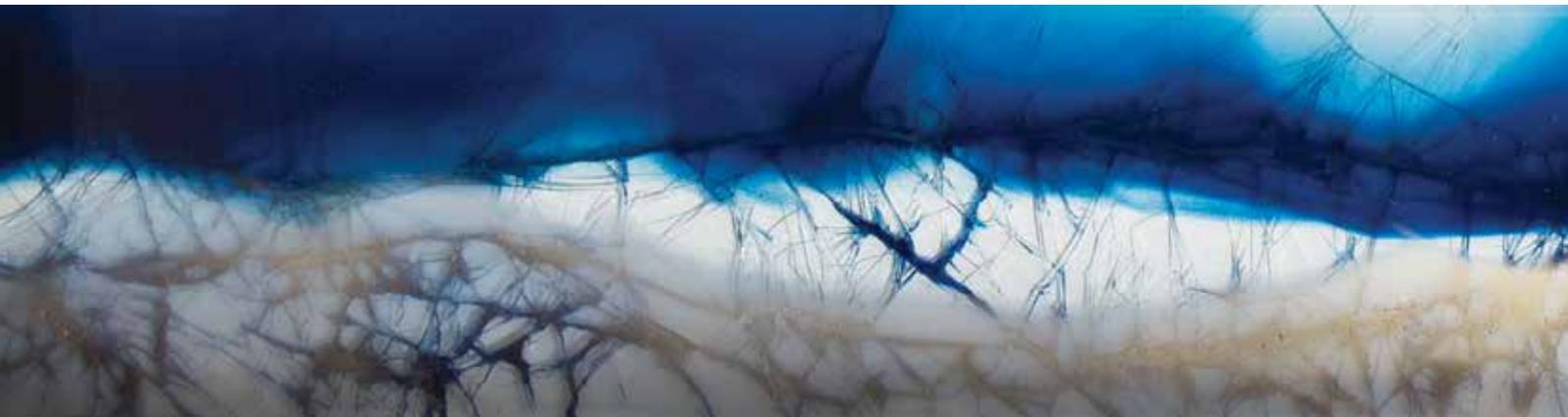




**Nostos** (2018)

Glass, silicone, pearlescent powder, pigments  
210 x 70, 70 x 70 and 50 x 70 cm

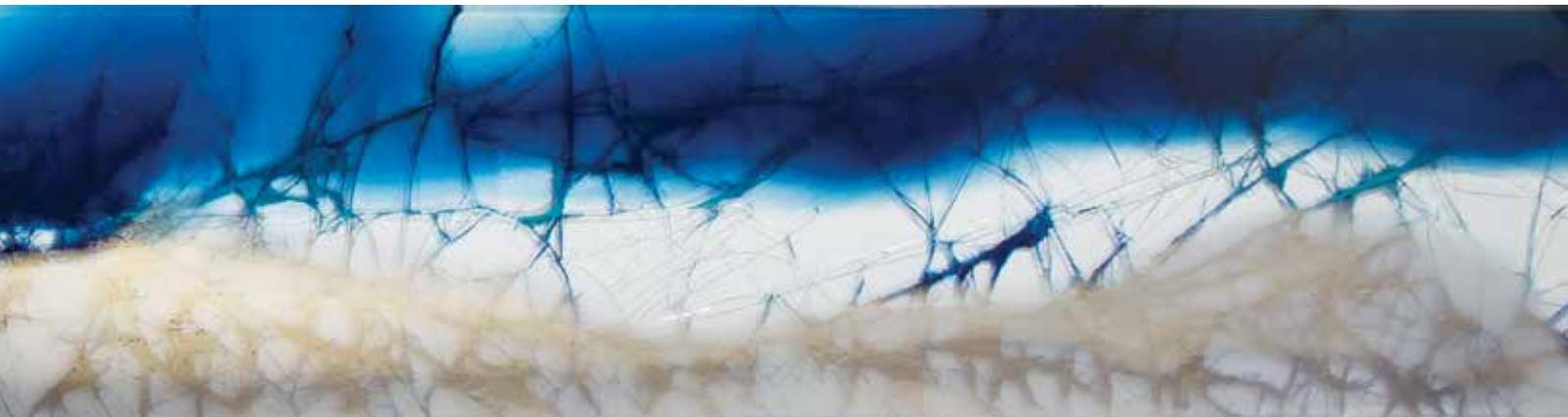


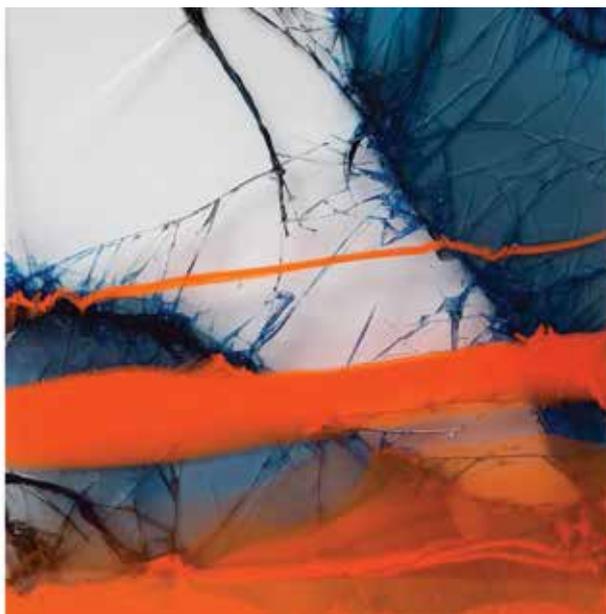


**Seascape II** (2017)

Glass, silicone, pearlescent powder, pigments

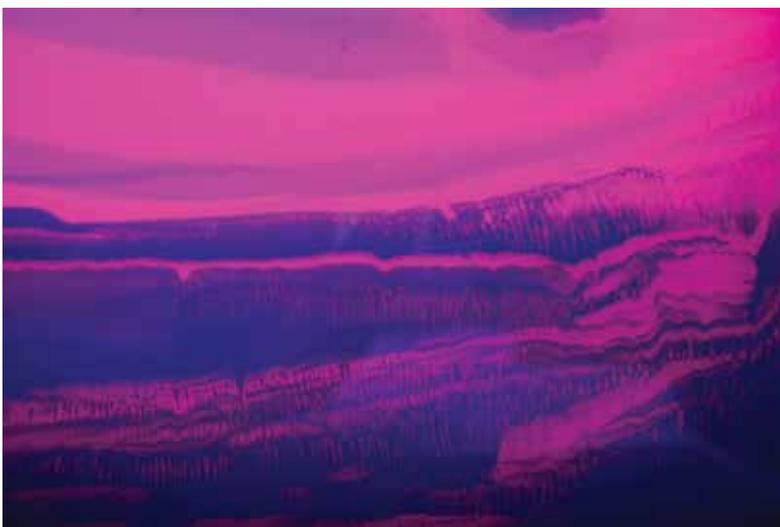
30 x 225 cm





**Seascape III** (2019)  
Glass, silicone, pigments  
5 panels of 30 x 30 cm





**Radiant dusk II** (2019)  
Glass, silicone, (fluorescent) pigments  
120 x 120 cm





**Radiant dusk III** (2019)  
Glass, silicone, (fluorescent) pigments  
120 x 120 cm



**Radiant dusk V** (2019)  
Glass, silicone, (fluorescent) pigments  
120 x 120 cm



**Radiant dusk IV** (2019)

Glass, silicone, (fluorescent) pigments

120 x 120 cm



**Radiant dusk I** (2019)  
Glass, silicone, (fluorescent) pigments  
120 x 120 cm

Yorgos Papadopoulos was born in Cyprus in 1969. He studied Art & Design and Interior Design at the Middlesex Polytechnic in London and continued his studies earning an M.A. in Ceramics & Glass from the Royal College of Art in London.

He has exhibited his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the UK, the USA, Cyprus, Australia, France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and Turkey.

His work is in public and private collections in the UK, the USA, Cyprus, France, Germany, Italy, South Africa, and Switzerland,

He is author of the book titled 'Lamination' published in 2004 by A&C Black and has lectured and given master classes at various institutions of higher education, including the Pilchuck School of Glass founded by Dale Chihuly.

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2019 Art Unbound, Rococo Garden, Painswick, Gloucestershire, UK
- 2019 Layers of Depth, Alpha C.K. Art Gallery, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 2018 35° N / 33° E Georef, Pafos, Cyprus
- 2017 Choices, Clerkenwell, London, UK
- 2015 Rational /Irrational, Frederick Holmes & Co., Seattle, USA
- 2012 Modern Icons, Keir Townsend Interiors , London, UK
- 2009 Through a Glass, Darkly, 12 Star Gallery, London, UK
- 2008 l.con.i.cal.ly, Bridge Gallery, New York, USA  
The 12 Madonnas, Famagusta Gate, Nicosia, Cyprus  
The New Icons, Vessel Gallery, London, UK  
Flora, Margo Selby Gallery, London, UK
- 2004 ELEA, The Gallery Cork Street, London, UK
- 2005 Elais + Grove, 50 Bank Street, Canary Wharf, London, UK
- 2002 Water II, Holmes Place, Canary Riverside, London, UK
- 1999 Ninety Degrees, Hockney Gallery RCA, London, UK



 YORGOS

**Alpha C.K.**  

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