

Graceful runners, speeding automobiles, seagoing vessels, intimate still-lives, and breathlessly alive sea and landscapes. No matter what the subject, Mina Papatheodorou-Valyraki's paintings have an electricity, a dynamism that issues directly from her skilled use of a gemlike palette and a loaded brush. Her figures exist in fully activated pictorial spaces. They emerge from their picture plane and then fold back into it, making the point that the world around us is in constant flux, restlessly moving, always in a state of becoming. Papatheodorou-Valyraki feels this rhythmic energy at her core and infuses her art with her own life force. For me, this is the key to her expressive gifts as a painter.

In writing this brief note of appreciation for the artist's first monograph, it is my pleasure to say that I became acquainted with Papatheodorou-Valyraki in 1999 when I was President of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Her work had first been exhibited in the United States in the 1990 exhibition, "A Glance at the Contemporary Greek Art" in Dallas, Texas, where she was one of the youngest artists represented. Like her art, it was clear she was moving along a fast track. In 1998, she was commissioned by Automobili Lamborghini to create a cycle of paintings for their headquarters. Just this past year she was named an official artist for the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, and also for the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece. These are wonderful markers in a career that has been strong and vital for almost two decades.

Recognizing Papatheodorou-Valyraki's accomplishments through the publication of this book is an important step as well. So often in the past and even in present times, women artists have had to struggle for recognition. Often there was no significant monograph, and their works were overlooked or under-appreciated. It is my hope that this volume will help secure Papatheodorou-Valyraki's reputation as a Greek woman artist of stature today and in the years to come. We are delighted to have *Still life in yellow* in our permanent collection at the National Museum of the Women in the Arts.

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