

Marios Loizides (1928-1988)¹

“My work, to begin with, is rooted deeply in the soil of my country. The currents of East and West have always merged here, under the abundant, clear yet unrelenting Greek light, which reveals, liberates and dematerialises everything; [this encounter] giving rise to what we regard as the Greek Thought and the Greek Spirit. My work draws upon the boundless Spirit and Light, while following its own course”. [Marios Loizides, 1976]

Marios Loizides can be classified along with a number of modern Cypriot artists, who lived and produced the greatest part of their oeuvre outside Cyprus, while preserving some connection with their place of origin. He belongs to the second generation of artists, most of whom had ties with the UK; Loizides, though he also studied there, spent most of his life in Greece, just like some of the leading members of the first generation. Among these was Takis Frangoudes, and like him, Loizides created his mature and most important work in non-representational or abstract painting.

He was born in Nicosia in 1928.² Roger Maybank notes that Loizides drew and painted as a child, and during his high school years at Pancyprrian Gymnasium, he was encouraged towards the arts by his teacher and leading artist, Adamantios Diamantis: “Diamantis, [...] not without considerable difficulty, persuaded Loizides’ father (a cantor, renowned throughout the island for his voice and deeply versed in Byzantine music; for whom, however, the career of *painter* was something quite unknown) to pay for him to study abroad”.³ Diamantis himself refers to young Loizides, in an article on the second exhibition of the “Art Votaries Society” of the Pancyprrian Gymnasium graduates, in 1947: “Marios Loizides shows promise, with the sensitive rendering of matter in *Karava’s Mountain*”.⁴ According to one piece of information, after high school he worked for two years as assistant to set designer and decorator Marios Angelopoulos, who was then in charge of Ledra Palace Hotel’s interior decoration.⁵

¹ My thanks to Roger Maybank, for providing me with important and very interesting information on the life and work of Loizides.

All translations from Greek are mine, unless otherwise noted.

² The main sources for the life and work of Loizides are: the bilingual Exhibition catalogue, *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988* (Nicosia: Ministry of Education and Culture, 2002), edited by Nicos Nicolaou; and the material in the artist’s file, in the Archive of the State Gallery of Contemporary Cypriot Art in Nicosia.

³ Roger Maybank, “Marios Loizides: Quest toward the light in form”, in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., p. 10; emphasis in the original.

⁴ A. Diamantis, “The second exhibition of the ‘Art Votaries [Society]’: some thoughts” [in Greek], in the journal *Kypriaka Grammata*, nos. 149-150 (November-December 1947), p. 294.

⁵ Note by Popi Perpiraki [in Greek], in *Phileleftheros* newspaper, dated 23/05/1984 [photocopy no. 30, M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery]. This information is repeated in a series of articles in Cypriot newspapers, in August 1984. These texts (in *Eleftherotypia*, *Aghon*, *Phileleftheros* and *Alithia* newspapers

At the end of 1949, he went to Athens, with the intention of studying architecture and interior design, but soon he opted for focusing on painting.⁶ So, at the end of 1951 he is found attending St. Martin's School of Art in London, from which he received the National Diploma in Design (NDD), with painting and lithography as his special subjects, in 1954 or 1955.⁷ During this period, he also attended set and costume design classes, before working as graphic designer and decorator. According to one source, his illustration for the record sleeve of Edvard Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, on *His Master's Voice* label [fig. 1], won a year's best cover award.⁸ In the years 1954-58, he also participated in group art shows in London. Despite his successful career as a graphic artist, in 1958 he left England. According to Maybank, his decision had to do, on one hand, with his desire to concentrate fully on his painting, and on the other, with his nostalgia for the "Hellenic world".⁹ Taking up an offer for the use of a small house in Rafina, he settled in what was then a fishing village in Attica, where he lived and painted for a year. From that period, exist a number of drawings, mostly in pastels and charcoal on paper [figs. 2, 3]. They are representational, rather academic works, which do not allude to the development of his oeuvre within the decade that followed.

In the autumn of 1959 he returned to Cyprus, responding to an invitation to teach art at the Boys High School of Famagusta. At the end of the school year, however, his desire to dedicate himself fully to painting was once again the reason for leaving for Greece – settling first in Athens, in a room at the foot of the Acropolis hill, and staying at the Rafina house during the weekends. Apart from his artistic production, he gave English lessons in order to support himself financially.¹⁰ In 1961, he moved to the island of Hydra, which was to be his main place of residence for the rest of his life.

[photocopies nos. 31-34, M. Loizides' file, Archive of the State Gallery]), are almost identical, since they were probably derived from the same report by the Athens News Agency.

⁶ See "Marios Loizides" [in Greek], in *Cypriot Artists* (Nicosia: Chr. Andreou, 1982-83), p. 126; also, Perpiraki, op. cit.

⁷ All publications mention 1954, but in the hand-filled form for the Artists Archive of the Ministry of Education [M. Loizides' file, Archive of the State Gallery], 1955 is given as the year of his graduation.

⁸ *Cypriot Artists*, op. cit. In an e-mail communication on September 7, 2008, Roger Maybank confirmed to me that the record cover in question is the one illustrated in figure 1. In the Artists Archive document, op. cit., Loizides is referred to as "artistic director" of D'Arbly Studios in London, for the production of record sleeves for the EMI Company, during 1955-58. Maybank writes that this studio was set up by Loizides and a friend.

⁹ Maybank, in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 13. In the above mentioned e-mail (7/09/2008) to the writer, Maybank mentions various members of the Greek literary and artistic scene, as being among Loizides' friends in Athens at the time, such as Nikos Karouzos, Vassilis Zioghas, Maria Servaki, Katerina Angelaki-Rooke, Nikos Phokas and others.

In the 1960s, part of his oeuvre appears to be similar to the sketches from the preceding years, most possibly intended for sale to visitors on the island, views of which he had already painted in 1958 [figs. 4, 5]. Gradually, however, in some of these drawings, though still representational, there appears a tendency for simplification, deduction and/or abstraction [fig. 6], bringing them close to the non-figurative compositions that would constitute his essential work. As early as 1960-62, he produced his first non-figurative or “abstract” works [figs. 7, 8, 9, 10], mostly in charcoal and pastels or gouache on paper (considerably less expensive than canvas), some of which seem to have developed out of the more simplified drawings of trees, of the same period. Such creations place him, at the same time, in line with a generation of Greek artists who began producing work within abstraction, from the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, onwards.¹¹ Soon, the abstract character of Loizides’ works proceeded toward “*art informel*” (“formless art”):¹² expressionistic compositions, lacking clearly defined form, where the emphasis is placed on free or “gestural” brushwork and, in some cases, on the very “presence” of the painterly material [figs. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15].

In Cyprus in the early 1960s, artists such as Christoforos Savva and Glyn Hughes produced work that can be placed within *art “informel”*, with regard to form (better, to its absence) and to technique – particularly, with regard to various “unorthodox” materials, such as sand, sack, etc. Their use of such new media, however, served mostly compositional, technical and practical needs and intentions, without the

¹¹ Loizides’ absence from critical narratives for this period, raises questions (not for his own oeuvre, but) for Greek art historiography, similar to the questions concerning also the absence of Takis Frangoudes’ work of the same time.

¹² “*Art informel*” was a product of the philosophical and artistic environment of continental Europe, in the years following the Second World War. The existential anxieties in Jean Paul Sartre’s philosophy and elements from Surrealism, provided the “material” for the work of artists in the 1940s, such as by Jean Fautrier and Jean Dubuffet, which constituted both a reaction to the tragedy of war, as well as to the new artistic developments in the USA (Action Painting and Abstract Expressionism). Leading French critic Michel Tapié, used the term “*art autre*” (“other art”). His ideas found greater resonance in the 1950s (his book *Un art autre* came out in 1952), within the abstract character of “*art informel*”. The French artists Fautrier, Dubuffet, Pierre Soulages and Georges Mathieu, as well as the Spaniard Antoni Tàpies, the Italian Alberto Burri and others, created works laden with philosophical and social connotations, where the materials stand “autonomously”, while the whole work rises as a “self-sufficient” material presence. In the compositions of Tàpies and Burri in particular, the use of “unorthodox” materials (such as, marble dust, sand, sackcloth, etc.) along with oil on canvas, resulted in a shift in emphasis, from representation (even when this is no more than an arrangement of colours and shapes) to the very presence of the materials, which acquire an “autonomy”. An unexpected encounter thus materialises, between materialist theories (under the influence of Carl Marx) and spirituality (eastern philosophies were among Tàpies’ influences), along with the desire to produce art with “poor” materials, which embody the tangible, “everyday” reality – an urgent need, after the destruction and the horror of the wars. Bibliographical references are too many to mention here; for a brief, comprehensive analysis, see Edward Lucie-Smith, *Visual Arts in the Twentieth Century* (Laurence King Publishing, 1996), chapters six and seven, “1940-1949” and “1950-1959”, respectively. Another name given by Fautrier to his work is “*art brut*” (“raw art”).

philosophical and social connotations embodied in the work of their European colleagues. On the contrary, the affinity with “formless art” in the works by Loizides at the time – though they do not include “unorthodox” materials – concerns, besides the absence of clearly defined form, a certain spiritual quality with which they are imbued, that also apprises the changes about to occur in his oeuvre.

Even though Loizides lived mostly on Hydra, he kept himself informed about developments in international art, since he travelled and also participated in exhibitions abroad, such as in the summer group shows at the Redfern Gallery in London, in 1965 and 1966. In the winter of 1966-67, he travelled to Canada, where he held two solo exhibitions (at the Delos Gallery in Montreal and at H. V. Rattray’s house in Winnipeg). The drawings he made during his stay there, were mostly of landscapes with a tendency toward abstraction, thus offering a convincing rendering of the snowed, white vastness of the country [figs. 16, 17]: “The new development in my work began at the same time as my first acquaintance with the prairies [of Canada]. The feeling of freedom which was awakened in me was enormous. Corresponding in many ways to the feeling I get back in my Greek island studio. [...] I find too that the light [in Winnipeg] in [the] summer is very much like the light in Greece. But the expanse is unique, and I find it stimulating, liberating, inspiring and restful”.¹³ In 1969, he had another solo exhibition in Winnipeg (at St. John’s Ravenscourt School), with drawings and paintings.

After his return to Greece, he focused once again on non-figurative compositions, including a number of collages [figs. 18, 19], which constitute the first samples from the largest and most mature part of his oeuvre, under the overall title *Arrangements for Contemplation*.¹⁴ This unit of his work spans from the late 1960s to the mid 1980s. Formalistically, Loizides proceeded from the “formless”, expressionistic non-representation of the earlier works, to a more geometric abstraction, where the constituent shapes in the compositions are accurately and clearly defined [figs. 20, 21, 22]. On a first level, this production alludes to Geometric Abstraction and to Minimalism – manifestations in the international art scene of the 1960s, with which a

¹³ From the “biographical note” in the exhibition brochure at Albert White Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 24 October-12 November 1970.

¹⁴ “Arrangements for Contemplation” was first given (in English) at the exhibition of his work at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, in the summer of 1970. Loizides explained the reasoning behind the title in a typed text (in Greek) from May 1976 (from which comes the quote at the beginning of the present monograph) [photocopy in M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery]. It was published, revised and extended (as “Marios G. Loizides on his work”), in the catalogue of his exhibition in Nicosia (Acropolis Gallery), in November 1977. It is included, in the later version and in an English translation, in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., pp. 120-23.

group of Cypriot artists (of Loizides' generation) had already been engaged.¹⁵ In spite of any similarities, however, these works by Loizides embody such a sense of mysticism and spirituality, as to place them apart from the above "movements": Geometric Abstraction dealt mostly with problems of structure and "basic design", while Minimalism was largely concerned with the elimination of the "presence" (or "expression") of the artist.

The geometric forms in his creations, though harmoniously placed on the painterly surface, are not of pure colour, nor do they make up strictly balanced compositions – basic characteristics of both the earlier abstraction of Piet Mondrian (which was laden with spiritual concerns) and 1960s Geometric Abstraction (where structural, rather than "metaphysical", concerns dominate). The colours in Loizides' paintings display a range of tonal gradations (at times, he would even use gouache or watercolour on the "ready" pieces of paper in his collages, in order to "break" their colouristic clearness), often resulting in the impression that light is emanating from within, giving the works an enigmatic character. "[M]y work remains a mystery to me. Without abandoning feeling [sensation] or intellect, by letting my instinct completely free, and above all, by trying to suppress my *ego*, I am always an open passage. After all, I constantly have this strange feeling that I am carrying out someone else's job. I realise that the work itself does not merely refer to one or two things, but to a million of them, of which I do not always have a clear understanding".¹⁶

The "first cycle" of the *Arrangements for Contemplation* was presented at the Institute of Contemporary Arts [ICA] in London, in the summer of 1970, and then, at the Albert White Gallery in Toronto, in October and November of the same year.¹⁷ In his text in the brochure for the Toronto exhibition, Loizides explained the overall title given to his new work, noting the word "*rhythmesis*" as the source for "arrangement": "It means to bring about order, to give form, to create rhythm. [...] By this I don't mean that the work is aiming only at order, form and rhythm. But inside this triad, from it and

¹⁵ Loizides possibly kept in contact with the Cypriot art scene. In 1968, for instance, he participated in the Fourth Pancyprian Exhibition organised by the Chamber of Fine Arts [E.KA.TE.]. In the same year, he appears to have participated at the Alexandria Biennial, possibly representing Cyprus.

¹⁶ Text by Loizides, May 1976, op. cit.

¹⁷ Loizides himself wrote of three "cycles" of *Arrangements for Contemplation*, in the catalogue of the November 1977 exhibition. In the leaflet with the list of works, there is a more detailed description: "first cycle", 1967-70 (exhibitions at ICA, London, and at Albert White Gallery, Toronto); "second cycle", 1970-75 (exhibition at Galerie L'Angle Aigu, Brussels); "third cycle", 1975-77 (exhibitions at Acropolis Gallery, Nicosia, and an upcoming one at Galerie L'Angle Aigu, Brussels) [photocopy in M. Loizides' file, Archive of the State Gallery].

through it, the whole and the reality in each painting evolve and emerge”.¹⁸ At the same time, he analysed his creative process, which began from “studies” (“mock-ups”) in collage, and upon arriving at the desired composition, they were transferred onto the final painting, “enlarging” them, “very much as a sculptor or even an architect enlarges his work from a small working model” [figs. 23a-b, 24a-b].¹⁹ Finally, he added that most of the collages were made in Hydra, and some in the UK, while the paintings were created in Greece, Canada and the UK, where he had worked the previous summer.

Maybank writes that in Hydra, Loizides’ women friends, who had heard about his collages (for which he preferred using “ready-made” pieces of paper out of magazines, instead of painting them himself), used to leave on his doorstep old issues of *Vogue*, for which he was grateful. At the same time, “he was also intrigued that all the abundant colours of the world of fashion, than which nothing changes more quickly, were transformed in his *arrangements* into patterns radiant with stillness”.²⁰ Of greater interest is Maybank’s reference to the various experimentations by Loizides (especially during his temporary stay in London in 1969), out of which arose the completed character of his works. With regard to the paintings, Loizides began using acrylic in place of oil, in which he was originally trained. As far as the collages are concerned, for a while “he explored the possibility of the planes of colour *overflowing* into the white surround, thereby strengthening the sense of flatness, of a collage which one might lift at any of its outer limits and peel the whole of it from the empty white canvas it was not integral to, but was only *by chance* resting against”.²¹ However, he abandoned this idea, just as he gave up the making of “relief” collages, which he the painted over, thus introducing the third dimension into the flatness of the painting [figs. 23a-b].²² I believe that, most possibly, such experiments did not last because the end results emphasised the “materiality” of the work, more than he would have liked: “abstraction” in Loizides’ oeuvre is always closer to the “spirituality” and to the intentions of early abstract artists, such as Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian, rather than to the focus on the material’s presence and the overall “autonomy” or “self-reference” of the artwork, as a “self-sufficient” object in (real) space. Such concepts were established with Pablo Picasso’s

¹⁸ M. Loizides, “Notes by the artist on the work” [1970]. Reprinted (as “Notes by Marios Loizides on the *Arrangements for Contemplation*”), in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., p. 119.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Maybank, in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., p. 15.

²¹ Ibid., p. 16. Emphasis, in the original.

²² Ibid., pp. 17-18.

and George Braque's cubist collages, and were reinforced within various art currents in the second half of the 20th century.

The "second cycle" of the *Arrangements* was shown in 1975 (25 April-14 May), at the Galerie L'Angle Aigu in Brussels. Maybank comments that the exhibition received "an intensely sympathetic response", and that many of the works (both paintings and collages) ended up in private collections in Belgium [figs. 25, 26, 27, 28].²³ Loizides' spiritual interests, and perhaps his tendency to use musical terms in the cataloguing of his production,²⁴ possibly explain the overwhelmingly "philological" style of the note by Greek curator and art critic Tonis Spiteris, which was included in the exhibition's leaflet: "[His] imagery focuses on the suggestion of a melodious ensemble of musical compositions. He thus traces, via space and time and according to the wanderings of his visions, the ritualistic rhythms that govern our universe. His simple and austere vocabulary, which is right for meditation, unfolds its range into the architecture of simplified geometric shapes and into discreet relations of the surfaces, and into superimposed, transparent nuances of colour. [A] game of visual counterpoints that result not in great symphonic ensembles, but in intimate sonatas, in small multi-rhythmic pieces".²⁵ On the occasion of the exhibition, art critic Maurits Bilcke, in a text in the Flemish newspaper *Spectator* of Brussels, described Loizides' work, as "the art of pure emotive plasticity ('la plastique pure sentimentale')". He added that Loizides' canvases "are brought close to the atmosphere of musical harmonies [...], however remain always plastic and rhythmic. They are also a 'Universe of Time and Space', [... in which] the 'Apollonian element' is here at its very best, [as] the work of a poet-visionary of a Universe in which serenity wins, and [which] is a most welcome contrast to the confusions, the noise and the speed of our times".²⁶ Some other pieces in Belgian newspapers were in similar vein, while the press releases of the Greek Embassy in Brussels underlined the "Greekness" in Loizides' works: "[H]e completely recreates the Greek essence with the warmest expression. [...] The forms of his imagination, though

²³ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁴ Ibid. Loizides' wider interest in music could well be seen as another parallel element to Wassily Kandinsky, who analysed his work (particularly, the colour scales) via musical terms.

²⁵ From the text by Tonis Spiteris, originally published in French, in the brochure for the exhibition at the Galerie L'Angle Aigu in Brussels, in 1975. It was also published in Greek, in the catalogue for Loizides' exhibition at the Acropolis Gallery, in 1977. Here, my translation from the French text.

²⁶ From the typed text, in English translation from Flemish, in M. Loizides' file [photocopy no. 5], Archive of the State Gallery. It was also included, in a Greek translation, in the catalogue of the 1977 Acropolis Gallery exhibition, as well as in different English and Greek translations, in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., pp. 124-25.

as we said, aesthetically retain fully their ancestral origin in Greece, and even though his palette achieves a poetic composition of the sky, the earth, the sea and the architecture of the islands, the visions of Greece are here recreated with a certain faithfulness [?], which largely transcends the anecdotal, in favour of contemplation, of sensitivity and of the intellect”.²⁷

Loizides’ next exhibition was organised by the Ministry of Education of Cyprus in 1977, at the Acropolis Gallery in Nicosia. It included the “third cycle” of *Arrangements for Contemplation* [figs. 29, 30, 31²⁸], along with samples from the first two “cycles” – according to the artist’s classification of his work, at the time. Among the texts in the show’s catalogue, there is one by Maybank, written in the same year, which refers to another kind of “Greekness” in Loizides’ art: “Each picture is painted on a white surround, just like a Byzantine icon is painted in a style and with a certain symbolism that is always controlled, because neither work is completely of this world. Both of them, in their own way and through the spirit of their time, strive to give expression to the Inexpressible, in forms that simultaneously satisfy the intellect and challenge the soul”.²⁹

In the same catalogue, Loizides included two excerpts (in Greek translation), from texts by Edmond Székely and Brian Keeble, which, he stresses, “coincide fully with thoughts and revelations that came to me while working, as well as with my own beliefs with regard to Art’s proper place in man’s life [...]”.³⁰ The first quote mentions: “[...] After the outdated, 19th century views of Classicism, Naturalism, Realism and Positivism, we have at least ended up realising that Art is not necessarily a reflection of the sensory world, but it may well be also the expression of a completely different world perception, and it can be fully independent of the world of the senses. Art thus becomes a means of knowing the universe and our existence, alongside Religion and Philosophy”.³¹ Here we have a precise indication of Loizides’ position in and on modern

²⁷ Excerpt from a critique by Alain Viray in *La Dernière Heure* newspaper, as quoted [in Greek] in a typed text by Katerina Nikolarea, Press and Information Office of the Greek Embassy in Brussels, May 1975 [photocopy no. 6, M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery]. It is attached with a text by the ambassador I. A. Drakoulis, which also includes excerpts from articles in Belgian publications, such as the one by Viray, which stresses the expressive rendering of the “Greek atmosphere” in Loizides’ work.

²⁸ Nos. 10, 4 and 6, in the list of works of the exhibition [photocopy in M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery].

²⁹ From a text [in Greek] by Roger Maybank, in the catalogue of the exhibition “Marios Loizides: *Arrangements for Contemplation*”, November 18-30, 1977, Acropolis Gallery, Nicosia.

³⁰ From the catalogue of the Acropolis Gallery exhibition, op. cit.

³¹ From Edmond Székely’s book, *Man, Art and World Conception* [1947], as quoted [in Greek] in “Marios G. Loizides on his work”, op. cit. Székely (c. 1900-79) was a philosopher, a scholar specialising

art: he followed the “historical” tradition of modernism, which did away with the artwork’s “dependence” on the visual and tangible reality, as well as with any of its “obligations” to such reality. At the same time, however, it retained, reinforced even, the “relation” of art with some “higher” or more essential – spiritual or metaphysical – truth and reality.³² The on-going, fundamental interest by Loizides in the spiritual-metaphysical element, both in art and in life in general, emerges also in the second excerpt from the catalogue of the 1977 exhibition: it stresses that the contemporary cultural “crisis” is due to culture’s “inability to render the experience of life as a sacrament”. It concludes: “The chaos borne and manifested by contemporary civilization may well be directly due to the absence of such essential principles, as the expression of metaphysical Truth... Only when there is the possibility of finding some point of contact between the two levels of existence, of the Absolute and the Accidental, can the inherent capabilities of human nature unify into a whole and harmonise through their multitude and variance...”.³³

In a rare case of a commentary on Loizides’ art by a Cypriot, the painter Solomos Frangoulides wrote, in relation to his younger colleague’s 1977 exhibition: “What I find impressive and alluring in the work of Marios Loizides, is the purity and the slow, reverently attentive approach to the aim, which is complete harmony. [...] There is only the use of material, the outmost attention to colour. Clear tones, clarity of form. [...] In general, his creation searches for the ecstasy in the spiritual beyond. His stimulus is a chance phenomenon, [at which] he accidentally glanced in the course of his journey on earth”.³⁴

Almost all of the works shown in Nicosia were also included in a new exhibition at Galerie L’Angle Aigu in Brussels, in early 1978, for which there were once again favourable commentaries in Belgian publications. In a letter to Greek art critic

in ancient texts, and co-founder of the International Biogenic Society, which promotes a “natural” lifestyle. His writings integrate scientific theories with elements from “alternative” approaches to philosophy and religion (announcing New Ages views of recent times).

³² This version of modernism (which is encountered in the work of early “abstract” artists – like Kandinsky, Mondrian, Kasimir Malevich –, as well as in later ones, such as Mark Rothko and others among the Abstract Expressionists), essentially retained an element of romanticism in its outlook towards art. This was abolished in the 1960s and afterwards, both with the emphasis on the material “presence” of the artwork within late modernism, as well as within post-modernism’s anti-modernist agenda.

³³ From Brian Keeble’s article “On the Nature of Symbols” [1976], as quoted [in Greek] in “Marios G. Loizides on his work”, op. cit. Keeble is a writer, who promotes a holistic approach to civilization (such as was man’s course in the centuries before the Renaissance), according to which, everyday life, the arts, philosophy, spirituality and religion [ought to] constitute a unified whole.

³⁴ S. Frangoulides, “Two exhibitions: M. Loizides and Ch. Dikaïos” [in Greek], *Haravghi* newspaper, 27/11/1977 [photocopy no. 11, M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery].

Alexandros Xydis the following year, Loizides referred to a “new, fourth cycle” of *Arrangements*, on which he was working at the time. Moreover, along with various critiques for the 1978 exhibition, he attached a copy of a letter by (self-defined “retired art critic”, and “student and author of Chinese art and philosophy”) Comte Philippe d’Arschot. Loizides noted that the latter’s letter, “is of great importance to me, because this man saw on his own the direction that I have for years felt inside me, to be the most worthwhile and important one, for the Existence and the Survival of my Art [...]”.³⁵ D’Arschot included references to the “archaic”, to Heraclitus and to “order and harmony”, as well as to Eastern religious arts, and he described Loizides’ pictures as “hierophanic experiences”.³⁶ A short text by D’Arschot was included in the brochure of Loizides’ next exhibition, at the Galerie Claude Jongen in Brussels, in the autumn of 1980,³⁷ which was to be the last showing of his work in Belgium.

In the above-mentioned letter to Xydis, Loizides wrote of the “slow and attentive” technique with which he worked – “some ten-twelve large canvases are made every two years”. He was equally careful whenever he tried a new method or medium, like when he became interested in producing some of his pictures in silkscreen, in order for them to be more affordable to the public. According to Maybank, Loizides first had the idea to print some of the *Arrangements* in this way, around the time of his Nicosia exhibition in 1977. He was hesitant, however, having doubts about the printed quality of the colour tones and the shading. It was only after he met Georgios Kotsaitis, “a silkscreen craftsman of genius”, that he decided to proceed. He made two original works (in a smaller than usual size), based on which, two hundred silkscreen prints were made – one hundred for each original [figs. 32, 33]. The first group was shown at Loizides’ exhibition at Miranda Gallery in Hydra, in the summer of 1983.³⁸ A note in the press mentioned that the exhibition included the “fifth cycle of his work” (apparently, a new group of *Arrangements*).³⁹

³⁵ Copies of the two letters are in M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery [photocopies nos. 19 and 20].

³⁶ D’Arschot’s letter [in English; photocopy no. 19, M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery].

³⁷ The text, in French, was first published a little earlier in *Jalons et actualités des Arts* magazine, no. 65 (September-October 1980). It has been included (in Greek and English translations) in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., pp. 128-29.

³⁸ Maybank, in *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., pp. 19, 21. The silkscreen prints from both works were presented the following year, in his exhibition at Medusa Gallery (Athens).

³⁹ See reprint of information from the Athenian press, in “Manos [sic] Loizides: ‘Everything starts from light...’” [in Greek], *Simerini* newspaper, 27/07/1983 [photocopy no. 25, M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery].

In the same summer, he had his first participation in an exhibition in Athens, at Hymettos, along with other Cypriot artists living in Greece. The following year, he organised his first solo show in the Greek capital, at Medusa Gallery. He presented works from *Arrangements for Contemplation*, spanning from 1970 to 1983 [fig. 34].⁴⁰ Most of them were already owned by private collectors (while two works came from public collections), thus they were not for sale. Apparently, Loizides wanted to include, in the first extensive showing of his work in Athens, a wide range of his creation. There were also silkscreen prints from both of the groups he had made, while in the bilingual (English-French) booklet of the exhibition, there were most of the texts that had been written on his oeuvre, from 1975 to 1983. This exhibition brought a wider recognition for his work, both in Greece (there had been a second participation in a group show in Athens, the year before), as well as in Cyprus – he had already been included in the “Contemporary Cypriot Artists” exhibition at Académie Diplomatique Internationale in Paris (1983), while at the time of the exhibition, several Cypriot newspapers carried articles on his life and work.⁴¹

The recognition and the success in Athens, however, though partly welcomed by Loizides, were of a socialite nature that suited neither his character nor his interests.⁴² Equally not to his taste was the transformation of Hydra during the twenty-odd years he had lived there, from a half ruined island – home to former sponge divers and to a few artists – to a “restored”, socialite place for the rich, and a popular tourism destination. He therefore sold his house there, and in the years 1985-88, he lived and worked near Kalloni village in Peloponnesus, along with his life partner, Roger Maybank. His love of nature found an outlet in his preoccupation with the olive grove they bought, while his artistic output at this time consisted mostly of collages.⁴³

⁴⁰ See exhibition booklet, “M. Loizides: *Arrangements for contemplation*” (Medusa Gallery, 26/03-14/04/1984) [M. Loizides’ file, Archive of the State Gallery].

⁴¹ See publications in Cypriot newspapers, summer 1984, op. cit. [see note 4 in present text]. In 1983, he had been included in the book *Cypriot Artists*, by Chr. Andreou Publications (Nicosia).

⁴² Maybank wrote to me (in an e-mail communication on September 27, 2008) that Loizides’ success in Athens became part of the city’s socialite scene (“like coffee at Zonar’s – [in Greek:] ‘my dear, have you seen Loizides’ works? You must go [see them]!’”). This was unlike the more substantial contact he had with visitors to his exhibitions in London and Brussels.

⁴³ The latest works included in the monograph *Marios Loizides: 1928-1988*, op. cit., are some collages, dated 1983-85 and 1984-85 (see pp. 176-80). According to Maybank (e-mail, 27/09/08, op. cit.), until the completion of their house (which Loizides had designed together with an architect), they rented two smaller spaces, one of which served as a studio; it was not big enough for the large canvases, but it was fine for creating collages.

His life in the beautiful surroundings of Peloponnesus did not last long, however; he died in November 1988, at the age of sixty. In 2002, a large retrospective of his work was organised at the State Gallery of Contemporary Cypriot Art in Nicosia, on the initiative and with the input of Maybank.⁴⁴ It was homage to a man who had been deeply preoccupied with spiritual concerns, which were integrated into his creation that, for the most part, was of the highest aesthetic calibre. “Painting, like all other arts must be in the service of the spirit, or it is meaningless and divorced from life”.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The exhibition included one hundred and fifty works. Apart from one (from the State Collection of Contemporary Cypriot Art), they all came from private collections abroad, lent on the initiative of Maybank. Afterwards, he donated a number of Loizides’ works to the State Collection.

⁴⁵ M. Loizides, “Notes by the artist on the work”, op. cit.