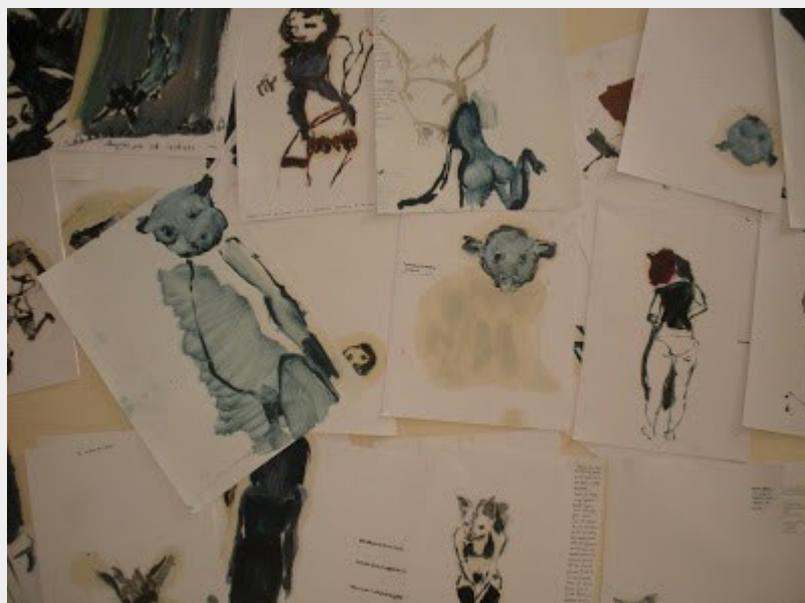


1/9/12

## Painter of the month

BY LIDA KAZANTZAKI



The painter of September is **Vasso Tzouti**. She was born in Piraeus, Greece. She studied theatre at the Kapodistrian University of Athens (1997 – 2001) and painting in the workshop of Yannis Psychopedis at the Athens School of Fine Arts (2007 – 2012), while in the spring of 2011 she attended art classes at Université Paris 8 in Paris after being granted a scholarship by the Hellenic State Scholarships Foundation.

In 2001, she started her collaboration with the Yannis Tsarouchis Foundation aiming at the research and recording of the painter's work. In 2004, she worked as assistant set designer to Chloe Obolensky for Samuel Beckett's "Happy Days" (directed by A. Kokkinou, M. Gementzaki).

Since 2005, she has been collaborating with the Benaki Museum and particularly with the department of educational programs; she gave a series of seminars for adults on "Exercising Creative Expression" within the framework of the "Lifelong Learning" program (2005-2007). She has attended seminars of theatrical play, art therapy and photography theory taught by Lakis Kouretzis, Clio Makri and Plato Rivellis among others.

In 2010, she collaborated with the artist Ric Carvalho on "The Cricket Project", a study on respiration and its relation to the sounds of nature. The same year, she became part of the theatrical group "Theatre of Panic". She participated in an exhibition at NOSOTROS under the theme of migration. In 2011, she organized artistic performances at the Louvre and at Université Paris 8 in relation to her research "In tangible contact with the Greek tradition".

She has participated in several group exhibitions including “Fire at Olympia” at Melina Cultural Center of Athens (2008), A3 at the Athens School of Fine Arts (2009), “Exiles” at The House of Cyprus in Athens (2010), “With lime and sea” at The House of Cyprus in Athens and “In train” at The Train at Rouf railway carriage theatre in Athens (2011), “The Death of the Creator” at Beton 7 theatre and “Flags – Placards- Banners” at Michael Cacoyannis Foundation in Athens (2012).

Vasso Tzouti creates mainly with the means of the pioneering representatives of modern art – Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, Nolde and Modigliani. The tangible, big or small smears of paint and the impetuous brush work seal her visual language. Her forms and their plasticity define her space. Feelings are expressed through the colour contrasts, as well as through the contradiction between distortion and the linear depiction of particular characteristics.

She creates girly bodies which encapsulate, through the simplicity of their flat and non-dramatized display, the directness of their innocence and their unmediated candour. It is the directness of the child that “nails you up”, without shame, ruthlessly; and which is often, equally ruthlessly, nullified by the pretentious adult pose this child strikes according to the dictates of fashion.

She creates womanly bodies which seem to incarnate all human passions when assimilated in the flowing background where they are depicted; but also womanly bodies which strip through their posture and wear – when dominating in space – the everlasting submission to imposed sexual and social stereotypes.

She makes faces like tragic masks which scream in agony with their eyes wide open and their mouths firmly shut; faces which demonstrate their despair through their wiped out or vulgarly smudged on their edges stares and lips.

Vasso Tzouti attempts, through her emotionally charged figures, to bring to light the individual and collective, painful, sad, narcissistic and centuries-long enduring female nature.