

Unbound Christoforos Savva 1924–68

CHRISTOFOROS SAVVA: UNBOUND

The Hellenic Centre, London
7 December 2022 – 21 January 2023

Opening:
Tuesday, 6 December 2022, 19:00

The **Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Culture – Cultural Services** and the Hellenic Centre in London co-organise the exhibition *Christoforos Savva: Unbound* in London, curated by Marina Christodoulidou.

The exhibition *Christoforos Savva: Unbound* centres on the years Savva spent in post-war London (1946-54) and the ways in which the city shaped his approach to his practice and a life wholly dedicated to art. This was an ebullient decade in the art-world, marked by the emergence of various seminal artists and movements. During this period, Savva studied at the Heatherley School of Fine Art (1947-54), and together with a group of fellow students he formed the artists' collective 'Pimlico Group' (named after Pimlico Street where the school and a number of art hotspots, including the Tate Gallery, were located). Among others, the collective produced the iconic Pimlico Group sketchbook, as well as a series of works from the road trip of Savva and his fellow artist and friend Roddy Maude-Roxby to Cyprus, in the summer of 1954.

The show also presents a comprehensive collection of works the artist created following his return to Cyprus in 1960, offering a glimpse into his signature body of work, and includes works as diverse in style as paintings and pin reliefs, or yfasmatographies and cement reliefs. Through this sequencing, the exhibition aims to highlight the ingenious coexistence of media and genres and the inimitable range of themes and references that appear in the artist's work. This exhibition is a continuation of the research around Savva's work and legacy as a fundamental figure in the history of Cypriot art, given his groundbreaking contributions and highly influential role in the local art scene from the fifties and sixties to the present.

Christoforos Savva: Unbound is the last iteration of a three-fold project which started in 2019 with a large-scale survey show of Christoforos Savva at the new State Gallery of Contemporary Art – SPEL in Nicosia, and continued with his posthumous exhibition in the Cyprus Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale. This third manifestation in London keeps 'unbounding' the manifold research carried out to date around Savva. At the core of this ongoing survey lies the need to revisit Savva's work from a contemporary perspective, while also to unravel – and acknowledge – Cypriot modernism as yet another distinct chapter in the world history of 20th-century art, against the backdrop of the island's dramatic transition from colonialism to Independence.

The exhibition will be accompanied by the homonymous publication *Christoforos Savva: Unbound*, the latest addition to a series of publications produced during this line of research. The book will provide a historical retrospective of Savva's years in London, while also documenting recent finds of the artist's works, including a number of cement reliefs rediscovered in 2021 at Perroquet nightclub in the secluded city of Varosha, in occupied Famagusta.

The exhibition will be inaugurated on 6 December at 19:00 by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Dr Yiannis Toumazis, in the presence of the Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus to the UK, Mr Odysseas Odysseos. The exhibition is placed under the auspices of the High Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus in the UK, Mr Andreas S. Kakouris.

Christoforos Savva (1924-1968, Marathovounos) lived and worked in Nicosia. After serving in the Cypriot Regiment of the British Army during World War II, he moved to London for studies at Saint Martin's School of Art and the Central School of Art, before enrolling at Heatherley School of Art where he studied until 1953. During the next two years he spent time in Cyprus, where he presented his first solo exhibitions and became involved in the local artistic milieu, while also being one of the founders of the Pancyprian Union of Art Votaries. In 1956, he returned to London and later moved to Paris for further studies at the Académie Montparnasse, under André Lhote. The end of the decade found Savva settling in Nicosia where he quickly established himself as one of the leading artists in a vibrant art scene, both through his own art practice and through the activities of "Apophysis" [Decision] Gallery, Nicosia. "Apophysis" which he founded in 1960 in collaboration with Welsh artist Glyn Hughes, was the first independent cultural centre of the newly founded Republic of Cyprus. As a space where creative synergy and exchange could take place, the gallery was soon to become the epicentre of intellectual and cultural activity on the island, hosting numerous exhibitions, lectures, plays and film screenings. In 1968, Savva was one of the six artists selected to represent Cyprus in its inaugural Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Just a few weeks after the opening, he died suddenly in Sheffield, UK.

EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

Saturday 14 January 2023

15:00 Book launch of Christoforos Savva: Unbound and discussion with Roddy Maude-Roxby & Marina Christodoulidou

Saturday 21 January 2023

12:00 Guided tour by art theorist, Ioulita Toumazi

THE HELLENIC CENTRE

16-18 Paddington Street,
Marylebone,
London W1U 5AS (UK)

Opening hours

Monday—Saturday:

11:00—17:00

Thursday: 11:00—20:00

info@helleniccentre.org

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