



Elias Kafouros: Push Buttons

Athens, March 31 2021— Dio Horia Gallery is excited to announce Elias Kafouros' solo exhibition titled **Push Buttons**. The exhibition is opening on April 16 at Dio Horia Athens and will be on view till May 15, 2021. The exhibition **Push Buttons** marks a distinct point of departure and further deepening of Kafouros' ongoing practice.

Drawing from such disparate and wide-ranging points of reference as film, online culture, Renaissance painting, or Buddhist meditation mandalas, **Elias Kafouros** (b. 1978, Athens, Greece) weaves dizzyingly complex and prodigiously oversaturated compositions that are unmistakably idiosyncratic and instantly recognizable. Kafouros' phantasmagorical tableaux roil with density of vernacular characters and elements derived from the inescapable cacophony of our ever-expanding quotidian media landscape, inspiring comparison to the obscenely frolicking characters of Medieval illuminated manuscripts and the canvases of Pieter Bruegel. The latter's *Twelve Proverbs*, a composition of twelve scenes of moral feebleness arranged in a grid of consecutive monocular inserts, did-indeed, serve as a direct point of reference for *Push Buttons*.

The exhibition's title comes from the space of contemplation and unavoidable acknowledging of the unique, and uniquely technologized, conditions we all have found ourselves in, in the year 2021. Not reactionary or tendentious, the thematic terrain it addresses is presented as an inevitable continuation of the artist's ongoing rumination on the specific aspects of the endlessly lateralizing informational landscape of our lives and its affective impact on the mental topography of modern subjects. **Push Button** – as both a command, a temptation, a lever of control, and a point of immediate access – is, Kafouros writes, "about the asymmetric forces exerting each other against the flipping backdrops of the physical world and digital space, forging shapes through which our inevitably augmented perception processes, exposes itself". It is, equally, an allusion to the notion of *pushing one another's buttons*, a deliberate provocation that the colloquial meaning of the phrase would suggest, as well as the way the tech industry structures its omni-pervasive presence in daily life around just this type of trigger dynamic, constantly pinging, prodding, and overwhelming with irresistible oversaturation of input. In addressing this condition, all the pieces in this show embed an exacerbated reflection of that very mechanism into their own composition.

As with the artist's earlier work, the paintings on view in the exhibition are best seen as instances of experiential art. While their medium may present at first glance as traditional paint on flat canvas, the true impact of these works reveals itself within the cognitive space of their perceiver, the utterly hypnotizing effect of the deliberate density of their virtuosic composition; unfolding gradually as a deeply personal processual revelation, rather than in simple terms of seeing and acknowledging a singular image. These canvases present a quasi-sculptural space that creates an environment for the viewer's eye to move around in a direct parallel to the way a body may move around in exploring an architecturally marvellous interior, creating singularly personal mental narratives and co-creating anew with each approach. It is for this reason that owners of Kafouros' works often remark that their canvases appear to keep unfolding and disclosing themselves over the span of time with every reencounter and contemplation upon their surface. That is the effect of the paintings' direct inspiration in the tradition of Buddhist mandalas – circular works of repeating patterns expressly composed for the purposes of meditation and mental absorption beyond the confines of the ego-sphere. Geometry here is not a detail but a focal point.



This new body of work presents an expanding departure for Kafouros in terms of its technical style. Deviating from the customarily flawless technical virtuosity of his earlier works, Kafouros has consciously decided to employ a more raw and exuberantly coloured technique in the express service to biting immediacy of impact. While still presented as exercises in technical virtuosity, these works employ the sheer astounding density of their composition to blur the lines between abstraction and figuration in an authentically original manner. "I don't wish to be didactic", Kafouros notes, "It is very important for me to keep things open. Neither this nor that. Keep things open while being specific".

In the practice that follows in the footsteps of political and social satire of Philip Guston, Pablo Picasso, Francisco Goya, and Peter Saul, Kafouros continues to chart an idiosyncratic oeuvre that justly measures up to that ancestry while endlessly extending and deepening its legacy for a profoundly complex practice that is uniquely his own.

Elias Kafouros was born 1978 in Athens, Greece, where he currently works and lives. He received a BFA in Painting from the Athens School of Fine Arts in 2004, and has studied Animation at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Kafouros' work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions including *Description Fails* at K-art, Athens; *High on Definition* at Volta 7, Basel, Switzerland; *A thesis on the shelf* at AD Gallery, Athens; *The image is unsustainable* at Françoise Heitsch Gallery, Munich, Germany; *Incognito* at Dio Horia, Mykonos, among others. Kafouros has been commissioned by Hèrmes to create a series of designs for the legendary Hèrmes silk scarves. In 2013, he was the recipient of the Fulbright Foundation Grant.



— Exhibition info

Elias Kafouros: Push Buttons
Solo show
Dio Horia Project Space, Athens
April 16 – May 15, 2021

Dio Horia Project Space Athens
Mantzouraki 16, 11524, Athens, Greece
Hours:
Monday - Friday, 10:00 - 19:00
Saturday, 11:00 - 15:00
Tel: +30 2106714827

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— Upcoming

Chris Akordalitis: Fragile Gods
Solo show
Dio Horia Project Space, Athens
May 18 – June 13, 2021

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