

ΣΚΟΥΦΑΥΤΟΠΩΝ ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟ

ΑΠΟΚΟΜΜΑ

7-26 Μαρτίου 1994

ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ

A WEALTH OF DETAIL

The graphics of Lambros Orphanos, now on display in a retrospective at the Yakinthos Gallery, represent a different approach to printmaking from that of Käthe Kollwitz: genre scenes are Orphanos' favorite theme, and he typically articulates the commonplace activities of his surroundings in the highly detailed medium of engraving.

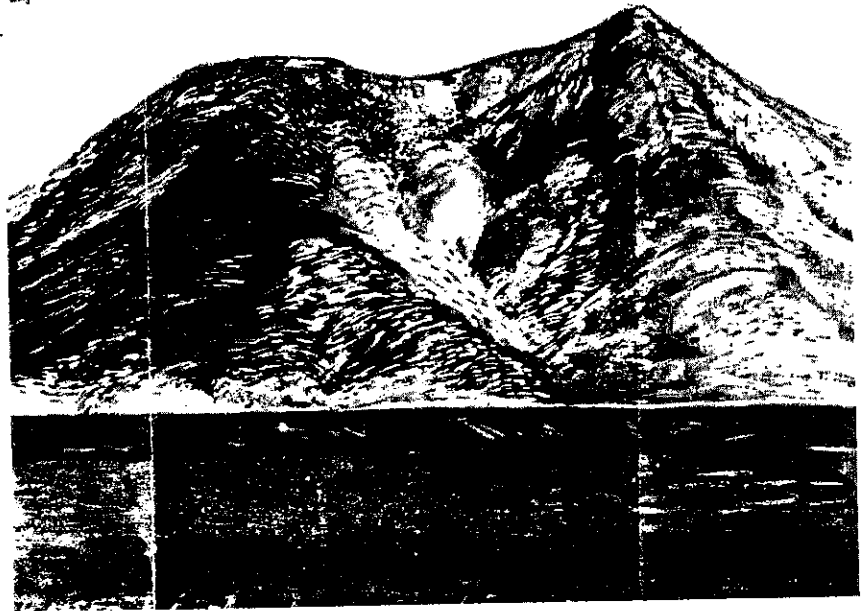
People (especially the French) and their foibles have been the focus of the artist's attention for the last forty years. He describes charming circus performers. Intriguing shopkeepers. Lonely women of the street. "The Bird Shop" nostalgically depicts an elderly woman surrounded by wall-to-wall bird cages. The artist's sharp burin engraves with precision the steel cages enclosing the woman's wares: birds, parrots, roosters, even squirrels and monkeys.

Orphanos' circus engravings present views of Carnival in Nice: clowns and figures covered by grotesque animal masks cavorting in wild abandon; the melancholy of a shooting gallery at the end of the day, empty and quiet; the fortune-teller Mme Marthe standing beside her wagon, soliciting customers.

Also of interest are two Greek genre scenes. "The Musicians" shows a row of *bouzouki* players and a woman singer at the height of their *tsakir kefi*. "Souvenir



Lambros Orphanos' engraving
"The Bird Shop"



An island scene by Alekos Levides

from Trikala" is a woodcut of a couple posing in their Sunday best for a photographer. The man is standing, mustache and oily hair in place, while his wife sits primly holding a bouquet of flowers.

While studying at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, Orphanos specialized in the printing of stamps and banknotes, and upon his return to Greece was employed by the National Bank in this capacity. The stamps and banknotes he designed (some still in circulation today) underscore his mastery of miniature engraving. Only with a magnifying glass can one ascertain the myriad strokes that constitute the smooth, alabaster surface seen by the naked eye.

Orphanos has participated in many group exhibitions all over the world but has had only two one-person shows. This exhibition offers a unique opportunity to become acquainted with the work of one of Greece's finest printmakers.

Yakinthos Gallery
Zirini 33, Kilissia
March 10—April 10

LANDSCAPES OF THE MIND

The theme of Alekos Levides' exhibition, *Topon Grafai*, may be translated as *Descriptions of the Landscape*. Levides depicts the countryside of Athens and the islands. Although he paints on site, the imagery is not always faithfully documented. Instead, he infuses it with associations from the past, striving for a conceptual (rather than merely perceptual) rendering of landscape before him.

Levides paints on wood panels with

tempera and egg in the manner of Byzantine iconographers. His palette is dominated by striking earth colors: lush greens, warm reds and browns convey the essential qualities of the landscape and endow it with a compelling grandeur. The mountain views are especially picturesque — rolling, sensuous hills, rocky and bare, alive with texture.

Levides introduces other "memories" into his painting via allusions to specific artists. At times a preternatural stillness reminiscent of de Chirico permeates and enhances the landscape with a veil of poetry and magic. Elsewhere an azure sky recalls the lighting effects and spirituality of El Greco.

The countryside's patterns are depicted vividly in aerial views of sparkling white houses set among rows of leafy trees. Subtle modulations of color, particularly green, evoke a silent, tranquil atmosphere. Levides has a special affinity for palm trees. They enhance a simple hut with strength and beauty, or stand alone by the shore, sand settling round their trunks in tactic, swirling rhythms.

Levides studied art with Malamos and Kontopoulos. A man of many talents, he has also worked as an architect and stage designer, the latter mainly in Paris. The frescoes he designed for a performance of *Antigone* have become a permanent fixture at the Nea Skini Theatre; they are cleverly incorporated into each new production. At present Levides is translating a text by Pliny the Elder on Ancient Greek painting, and the book will be on sale by April.

Gallery Skoufa
Skoufa 4, Kolonaki
March 3-26