

PRESS RELEASE

Vaso Katraki: Hurtful Bodies

20.3 - 3.5.2025

The **Roma Gallery** is honoured to present the exhibition **Vaso Katraki: Hurtful Bodies**, curated by Alia Tsagkari and dedicated to the late work of the eminent Greek engraver. Through a selection of engraved stones, works on paper created by her unique technique, the exhibition highlights Katraki's rendering of the human body as a thematic, symbolic, and political field. Her compositions, distinguished by their robust, elongated figures and Doric simplicity, articulate a bold reflection on historical time, the human condition, and the body as a bearer of collective memory and consciousness.

Katraki's Body-Centric Visual Language

In her later works, the human body is not merely a subject of representation but emerges as an ideological and formal field that redefines the anthropomorphic myth. Her figures, stripped of descriptive or decorative details, attain an archetypal presence, embedded within an unbroken spatial core where depth does not function as a void but as an organic continuation of matter. The latter, a fundamental element in Katraki's practice, is not a passive substrate for engraving but is instead integrated into the genealogy of form, yielding to the imperatives of visual expression. Within this framework, stone—specifically sandstone—is engraved with firm, expansive gestures, transferring onto cotton paper forms that oscillate between sculptural solidity and painterly inscription.

The corporeality of these stone engravings embodies the hurtful state of human existence, positioned at the threshold between the rigidity of death and the tension of being. Katraki's anthropocentric visual language does not seek rhetorical embellishment; rather, it foregrounds rough, fragmented bodies that transcend the individual and inscribe themselves into collective memory.

The Political Dimension of the Body

In the late works of Katraki, the human body assumes a distinct political weight. In the renowned *Situation* series, the mutilated body engages in dialogue with barbed wire, in a stark visual mediation of violence and confinement. The figures, entrapped

within an oppressive space, rupture the viewer's gaze, subverting the state-sanctioned rhetoric of "cleansing" imposed by the Greek Military Junta. Here, bodily distortion is neither an experiment in modernist formalism nor an exercise in fragmentation, but rather a visceral necessity.

Animal and Human: The Animistic Relationship of Form

Katraki's subject matter extends beyond the human figure to include animal forms, adopting an animistic approach that explores the self-referential nature of existence. Horses, with their robust, accentuated curves and forceful engravings, maintain an archaic rigidity. The way they are inscribed onto the surface of the stone underscores corporeality as a catalytic force that extends beyond human experience.

Form and Space: The Inscription of Matter

In Katraki's work, space is not a neutral background that accommodates forms; rather, it functions as an integral component of composition, amplifying the power of her work. The empty depth is not treated as absence but as a vital plane in which form attains its full presence. Through the technique of sandstone engraving, the artist embeds materiality into her visual narrative, transforming the act of incision into a dialectical process between matter and corporeal representation.

Opening: 20 March, 2025 | Roma Gallery

Title: *Vaso Katraki: Hurtful Bodies*

Curator: Alia Tsagkari

Duration: 20 March – 3 May 2025

Address: Roma 5, Athens 106 73

Opening hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 11.00 – 20.00,

Wednesday, Saturday: 11.00 – 16.00, Sunday, Monday: closed

Entrance: Free