

*Drawing in Water - the metaphysics of disappearance*, alludes to the impossibility of trying to leave a mark behind as one dips a finger into a pool of water scribing an ark, the water is at first disrupted but soon settles to leave no lasting trace. Our personal, cultural ephemerality, coupled with geopolitical instability, is seen as a metaphor for our contemporary transient condition, which are cues that have informed today's world.

The works are a response to the past 15 years of travel throughout Greece, Asia Minor and on into the Middle East. While traveling throughout these regions, it is almost impossible not to see the multi layered biographical signifiers of culture, power, wealth, religion and their impact upon the landscape via monuments, cities and religious structures. Landscape, like people have a biography, these interventions onto the landscape though weathered, ancient or constructed, until recently appear and are encountered as much a part of the landscape as the mountains, valleys and rivers. Events like the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha's in Afghanistan and vandalism of Palmyra in Syria, have undeniably shifted our appreciation, comprehension and cultural experience of landscape. These destructive events have profoundly impacted ways of experiencing the world and how very transience cultural icons can be.

Imagine the Acropolis in Athens without the Parthenon, imagine it as just a rocky outcrop. Imagine that in 1687 the Venetian bombardment of the Ottoman ammunition dump levelled the site. What would the implications have been? 'Drawing in Water' suite of works metaphorically maps the liquid nature of history, culture and our fleeting existence, water is seen as archeologically elastic space revealing and obscuring.

The image making process makes reference to the Byzantine concept of "Acheiropoieta" - put simply Acheiropoieta - that "*made without the intervention of the human hand*", the Byzantine Image/Icon is said to spring miraculously into existence, (predicting photography by many centuries). The Byzantine Icon is said to stand outside time and space, notions of the every day, the mundane, like perspective, above, below, up and down are all suspended. The imagery is seen to be created by light rather than something lit by a light source.

The *Drawing in Water* works oscillate from grand panoramic cultural historical sweeping narratives to the very personal outcomes visited upon the individual with little or no ability but to react and attempt to survive. Like the story of Georgio P. Theodorou.

Georgio P. Theodorou, is a character in Louis de Bernières novel *Birds Without Wings*. Theodorou recalls his wonderfully rich life and his country, apologising for his incoherence as he slowly drowns, he wishes us farewell, as he sinks to the bottom of the harbour in Smyrna on the 13th of September 1922. The drifting gold pigment, perfume bottles, detritus and amulets (Τάματα) are manifestations of his memories, recalling his life as it passes before his eyes, all his possessions, his dreams and that of his Asia Minor countrymen that thrived for generations in Smyrna, now settle on the harbour floor, while the city above burns to the ground. He curses the British and Greek Prime Ministers, Lyon George and Eleftherios Venizelos, with their dam prodigiously over endowed Megáli Idéa, (Great Idea) and those irredentist, those romantics, wishing to re-establish Byzantium and Constantinople as the rightful capital of Greece. The impact of these sweeping panoramic historic visions payout upon the individual, helplessly caught up in the tide of history. The recently drowned, rest at the bottom of the harbour, they have all vanished, the harbour waters soon settle, there is no lasting trace.

Siting in The Museum Hotel Antakya in Turkey (Antioch in Greek) there is 840 sq metre rippling mosaic said to be the world's largest, it has been distorted by earth quakes over time, it has taken on

the form of a small rippling ocean, with little chips of mosaic floating on its undulating surface. Antioch was the site of the first church established by St Paul. Antioch was and is the gateway into Syria and the Middle East. In my travel there during the most recent Syrian War it was possible to witness داعش, Dā'ish Isis fighters travel a short distance over the hill from Aleppo in Syria, receive medical attention in Turkey and wander back refreshed to the war just over the hill.

And so that dam prodigiously over endowed Megáli Idéa is back, but now in reverse order, this time, it is the turn of that Neo Ottoman irredentist, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan the current Turkish Prime Minister wishing to re-establish the glory of the Ottoman Empire, flipping backward from 2021 to 1821. Is the fluid cyclical nature of history set to wash over the landscape once again?