

## Press Release

### Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice

#### Christos Bokoros – Chronis Botsoglou “illuminated shadows” Paintings from the Sotiris Felios Collection

June 4th- July 15th 2011

The Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice and “The other... Arcadia” Foundation are inaugurating, Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, a joint Christos Bokoros - Chronis Botsoglou exhibition bearing the title “illuminated shadows” presenting paintings from the Sotiris Felios Collection.

A total of 20 paintings by the two abovementioned great contemporary Greek figurative painters are traveling to the Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice. They will actually be on display in the historical Sala del Capitolo, where to date the Greek community of Venice, the first -for that matter- established outside the confines of Greece, still holds its meetings.

Beloved figures from the netherworld came back to the canvas of Chronis Botsoglou (as part of his emblematic composition called “ $\square$ ekyia”), along with flames, altar breads and painted imprints on wood, i. e. objects and symbols typical of the unique artistic language of Christos Bokoros, are all giving a taste of modern Greek painting, timing being anything but random: this is a time when the image of Greece has been heavily tarnished worldwide due to the financial crisis, as well as a time when everyone’s eyes are on the greatest event of the art world, the Venice Biennale.

“The paintings of Christos Bokoros and Chronis Botsoglou are intertwined as to their spiritual origins and testimony they bear despite the fact that the two artists are opting for entirely different paths”, says art critic Nikos Xydakis summing up the very essence of “illuminated shadows”.

And he goes on to add: “They bear witness to the survival of a painting tradition within the area of the Mediterranean which is not reproducing the tangible reality but rather the invisible aspect of things, the hidden substance. Through such paintings that synthesize the quasi-arbitrary, as it seems at first glance, co-existence of the two modern Greek painters, the spirit of ancient Greek painting is nonetheless preserved in manifold ways and by means of a steady hand as well as through the material testimony of late antiquity paintings, the long tradition of byzantine painting and its theoretical foundations during the time of Iconomachy”.

It is a fortunate coincidence that “illuminated shadows” is to be hosted during the Biennale at exactly the time when Diochanti shall be the official representative for Greece at the pavilion of the Giardini, thus allowing international audiences to find out for themselves that Greece is ever present and active in the art world.

This is, moreover, the second time the Sotiris Felios Collection makes an appearance abroad, after a successful exhibition held at the Sismanoglio Megaro in Istanbul in November 2010.

A 112-page-long volume in English accompanies “illuminated shadows”. It consists of texts authored by Greek and Italian experts such as Chryssa Maltezou (Director of Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice) Nikos Karapidakis (Medieval History Professor at the Ionian University and President of the Ephorate for the Archives of the Greek State), Marina Lambraki-Plaka (Director of the National Gallery of Greece), Nikos Xydakis (Editor-in-chief of ‘Kathimerini’ newspaper and art critic), Giuliano Serafini –art historian, Italo Tomassoni- art critic, as well as collector Sotiris Felios. The exhibition’s official publication also quotes a discussion the two artists had regarding “illuminated shadows”.

*Felios Collection began in the early 90s and now comprises more than 650 works of art, mostly paintings by contemporary Greek figurative painters. The Collection’s artists include Yannis Moralis, Chronis Botsoglou, Christos Bokoros, Giorgos Rorris, Tassos Mantzavinos, Edouard Sacaillan, Stephanos Daskalakis, Kostas Papanikolaou, Achilleas Papakostas, Vassilis Papanikolaou, Emmanouil Bitsakis.*

*Part of the Collection has been exhibited at the Benaki Museum (Athens 2002 & 2009), the Famagusta Gate (Cyprus 2003), the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art (Thessaloniki, 2003), the Sismanoglio Megaro (Istanbul, 2010), while some artworks have been lent to museums for retrospective and collective exhibitions.*

Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice

Castello 3412, 30122 Venezia

Mon-Sun 10am -18 pm

Free admission

Should you wish to receive more information, please contact Ms Fanio Michalopoulou- collection curator, either by phone (+30 6947078344) or e-mail (info@felioscollection.gr)

Links:

<http://www.istitutoellenico.org>

<http://www.felioscollection.gr>