

**Painting is my need to express
my-self. I make my own space
and am set free.**

MARIA FILOPOULOU

I paint to express myself, and to create a sense of personal freedom and space. I observe the visible, and present my own reality. Despite the constraints of the canvas, which allow me only two dimensions to work with, I am still able to create horizons that open up spaces, full of enchantment. I lose myself in the adventure of painting, among the ideas and pathways that my imagination summons up for me. The adventure is self-knowledge, and I am always hungry to know more, and to paint more.

My compositions enable me to liberate myself from the enclosed space, providing me with the wide perspective that I need for my work. I inhabit the space I create and it becomes a secure refuge.

The feeling of security gives me the vital sense of freedom to look at everything calmly and objectively, to experience vertigo, movement and even rebellion. I can subvert the established image and give birth to a totally new one.

The subjects I paint are invariably derived from my own experiences. I don't wish to describe the space, but to convey my feelings about it. And that applies to every space, whether it is windows - such as a studio in Paris; my house; the steps to my studio in Athens; greenhouses full of tomatoes; the sea and my travels; swimmers or the depths of the ocean.

My current work features swimmers. Beneath the water they are in an enclosed but unrestricted space: on the surface of the sea, exploring the depths of the ocean floor, the shore or the rocks that create the enclosure. My swimmers all experience absolute freedom. Their nakedness emphasises that sense of freedom and enhances their movements, which are unrestricted, unrestrained and graceful. They have become an element of their watery environment. It seems to me that the brilliant light combines with the reflections on their bodies, with the bubbles and the sand at the sea floor. The light transforms everything into a dream world. [...]

The colours and the strong light are aspects of my preoccupations. When I paint, I ignore the edges of the canvas extending beyond it onto the wall or the floor. I have an obsession for fitting everything into the work, even myself. I want to feel that I am in the picture, an actual part of it. This for me is a truly liberating experience.

The unique qualities of freedom, and the freedom associated with rhythm and breathing are contrasts that provide my painting with a source of energy. Each piece of work is a new adventure with an ending that cannot be anticipated.