



SWORD IN HAND

Thanassis Makris

EBE

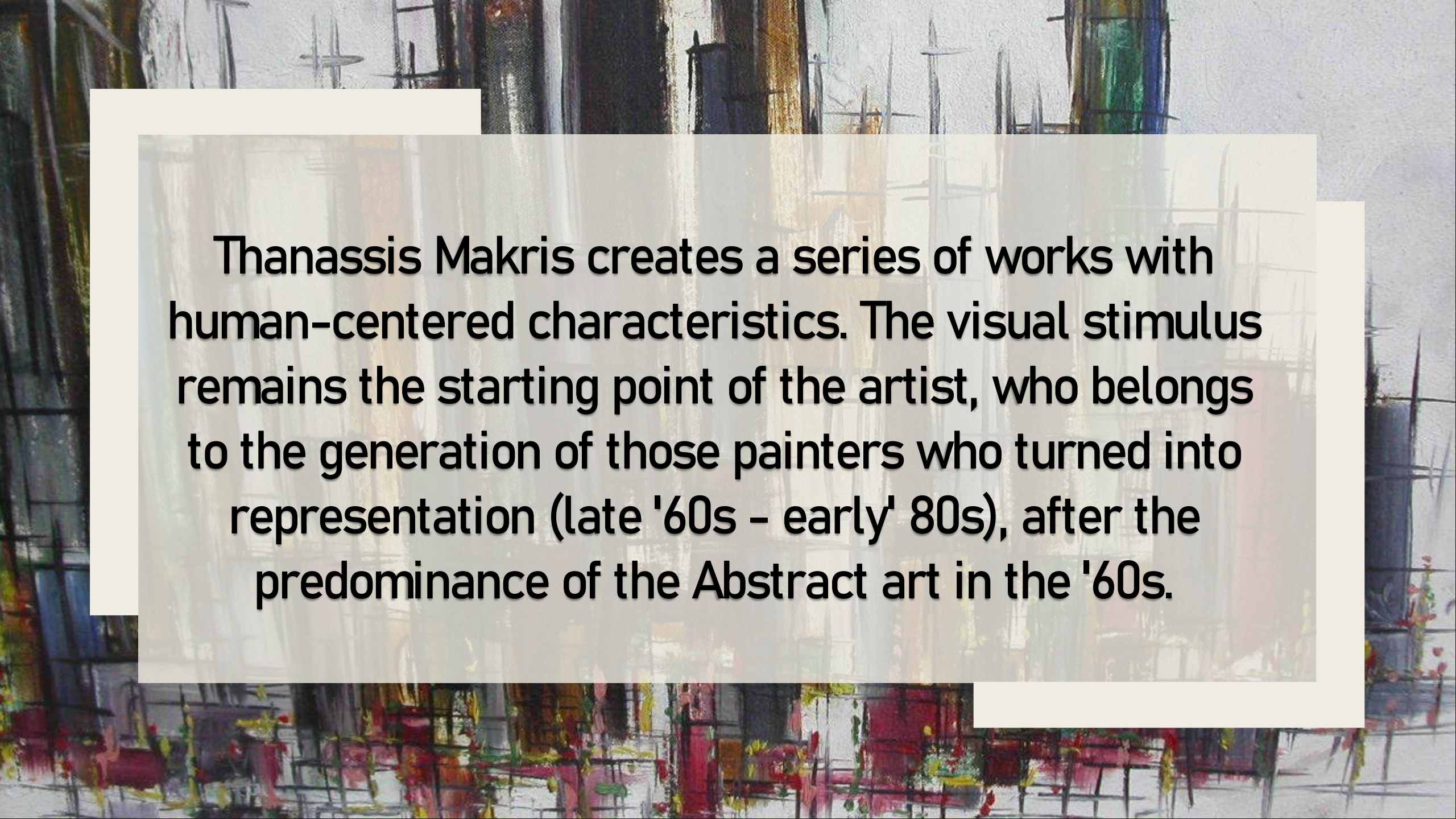
NLG

Thanassis Makris was born in Kalamata in 1955. Twenty years later, he came to Athens to study in Moralis' art studio, from where he graduated in 1980, winning a scholarship to Paris. He stayed in Paris for 3 years. He attended classes at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, while at the same time Paris' café has been the setting for many of his paintings. He returned to Greece in 1983 and the following year he presented his first personal exhibition at the Artistic Cultural Center Hora (Athens, 1984). Since then, he has participated in both several personal exhibitions and group exhibitions all over Greece.





Although he is well known for his oil paintings, Makris has showed particular interest in the art of design since he was a student. All these years the artist designed portraits and figures, landscapes and animals, using charcoal, pencil, ink, colored pencils and pastels.



Thanassis Makris creates a series of works with human-centered characteristics. The visual stimulus remains the starting point of the artist, who belongs to the generation of those painters who turned into representation (late '60s - early' 80s), after the predominance of the Abstract art in the '60s.

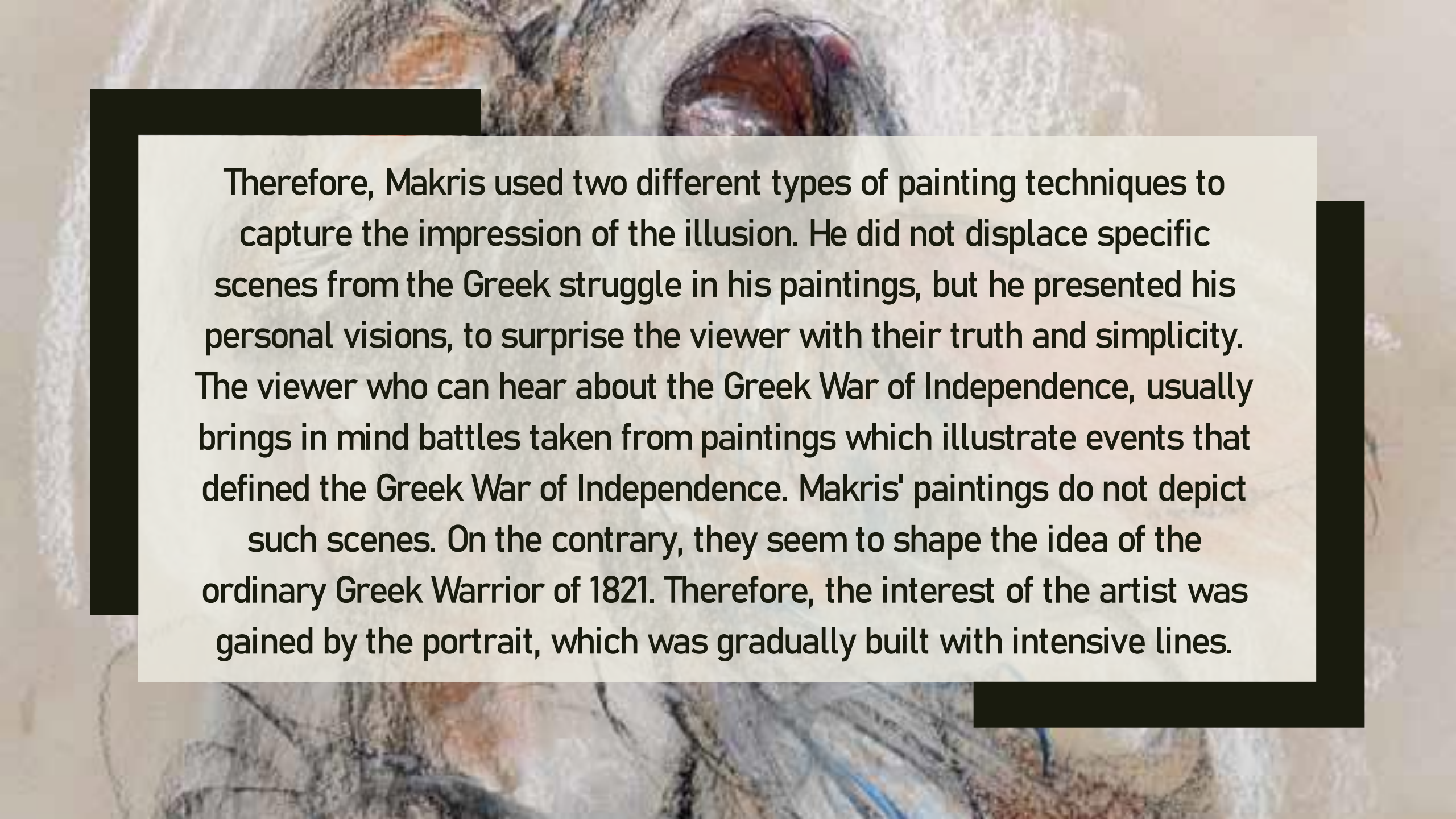


In 2016, due to the forthcoming completion of the 200 years since the Greek War of Independence of 1821, he began to design figures of Warriors inspired by his homeland, Kalamata. Three years later (2019) he turned to the people of his hometown, emphasizing in their expressions, attitudes and clothing. In this context, he created a series of designs with how the traditional Greek painter Theophilos imagined himself: "Sword in hand" as a warrior of the Greek War of Independence.



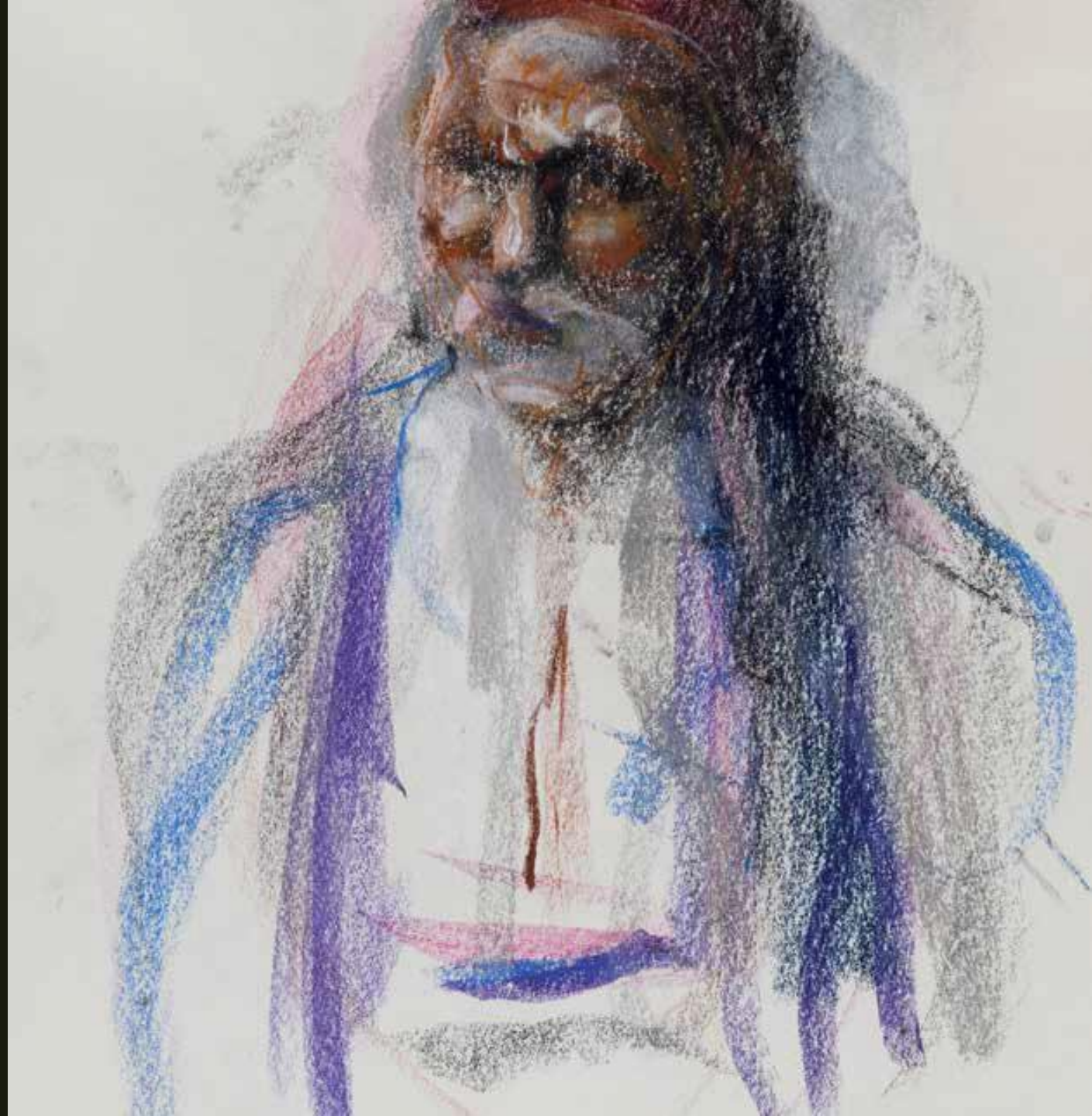
Makris chose to paint in pastel, in colored pencils and in ink. Pastel and colored pencils make the paintings shine with an intensely luminous color and rich velvety texture, as well as they give the possibility of sfumato technique: the fine shading that produces soft, imperceptible transitions between colors and tones.

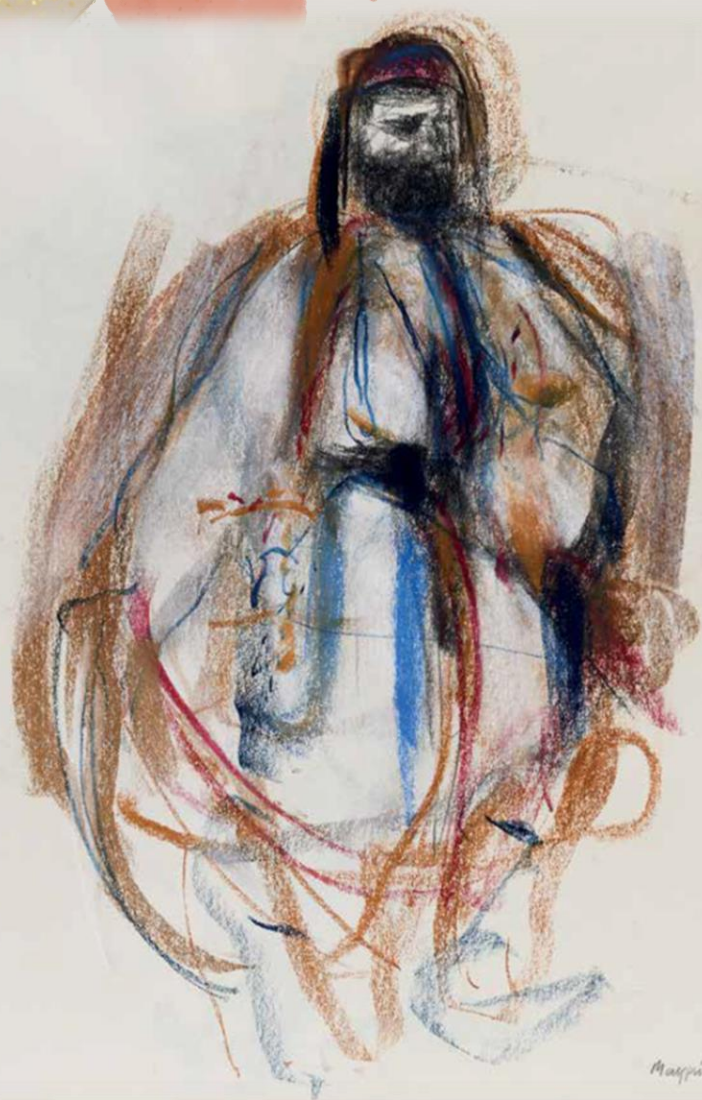
This impression is intensified by the absence of space, resulting that the person depicted is projected in an intangible and undefined environment wrapped in the aura of a dream. On the other hand, he chose to paint in ink, that gives both the precision to the design and the possibility of intense shading. In his paintings light and dark enhances the drama of the composition, while the figures were presented as if they came from a weird dream.



Therefore, Makris used two different types of painting techniques to capture the impression of the illusion. He did not displace specific scenes from the Greek struggle in his paintings, but he presented his personal visions, to surprise the viewer with their truth and simplicity. The viewer who can hear about the Greek War of Independence, usually brings in mind battles taken from paintings which illustrate events that defined the Greek War of Independence. Makris' paintings do not depict such scenes. On the contrary, they seem to shape the idea of the ordinary Greek Warrior of 1821. Therefore, the interest of the artist was gained by the portrait, which was gradually built with intensive lines.

In 2016, Makris, fascinated by the theme of the Greek War of Independence, started to sketch the Warriors that he exhibited in three series. The first and third series included paintings in pastel and colored pencils, most of which presented a full-length figure, dressed in "*foustanela*", the Greek traditional clothing. They are not well-known and recognizable heroes of the Greek War of Independence of 1821. They are just ordinary Greeks who fought for the liberation of their country and now stand in front of the viewer as if they are waiting for their response, their acceptance and finally their recognition.





The series of full body Warriors was completed by half-body figures with similar characteristics giving particular emphasis on the expressive elements of the face and clothing Makris in these designs used the line, as well as his brush, to express the characteristics of Impressionism.





The second series of Warriors by Makris has been designed in ink. In these designs, he emphasized on the figure's face, which emerges through the encounter and intersection of successive black lines that form volumes and shadows, while in some cases, the body remains merely an outline. It should be noted that Makris did not choose the emotional deformation of the faces of his Warriors, as it is usual in battle scenes. He did not present them during their struggle for liberation, the time of action and explosion, but in a state of introversion, calm and contemplation. Probably, the pursuit of the greatness of the soul was the reason why the artist showed that his Warriors are humble visions, transparent and intangible.

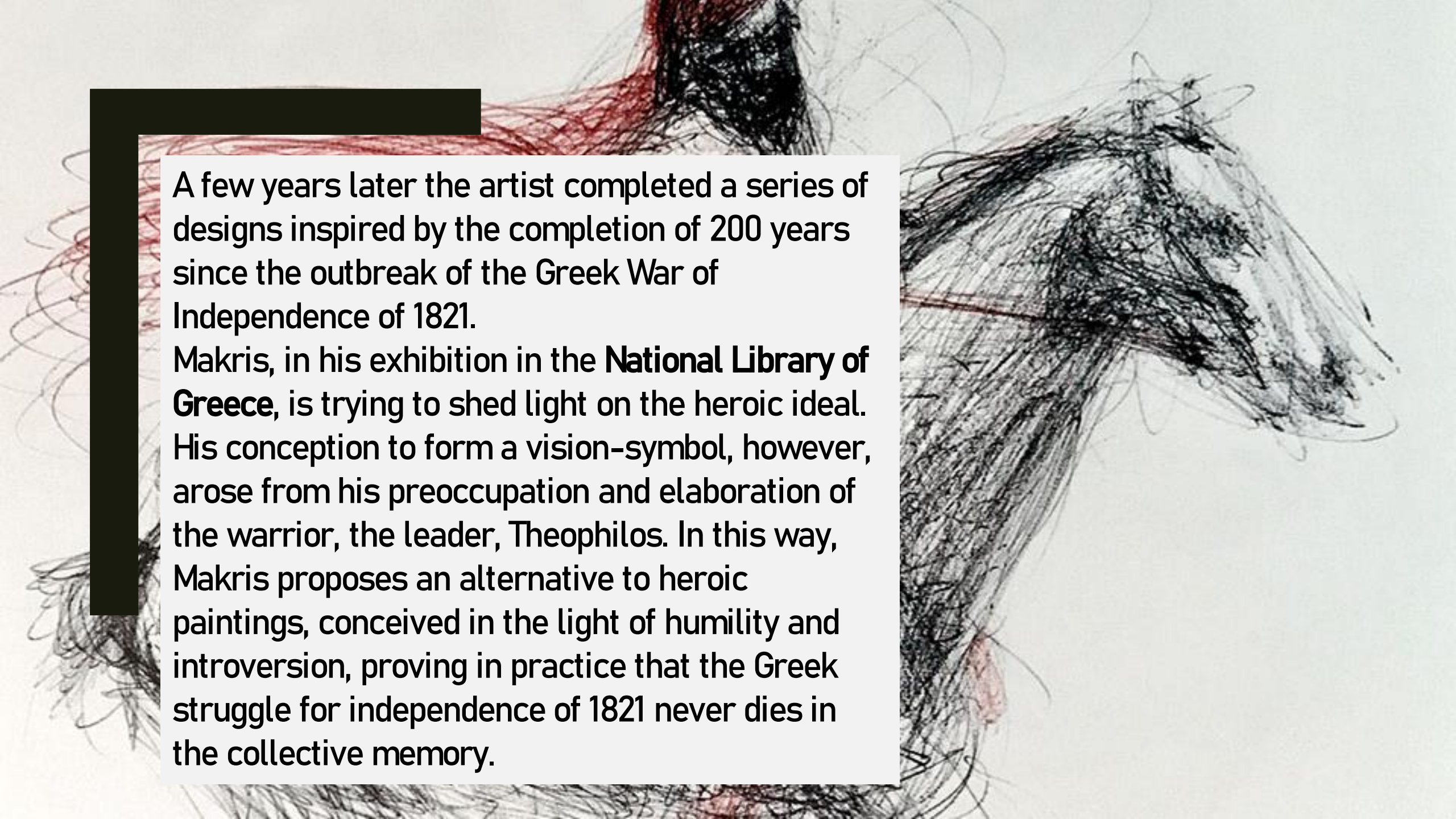
The Old Man of the Greek Revolution



Τέρας ην Ερωάστρας

Makris

The Old Man of the Greek Revolution deserves a special mention. Makris attributes in pastel and in ink the archetypal portrait of an old man in profile, who would have experienced a numerous of events of the Greek War of Independence. In these drawings the tragedy, the fatigue but also the dignity of the old man is evident. Makris succeeded not only in evolving his personal point of view through the strict monochrome lines but also in capturing the stoic look of the old man. The old man in the painting has experienced the freedom of his enslaved homeland, but death is near and he does not have the time to taste his freedom.



A few years later the artist completed a series of designs inspired by the completion of 200 years since the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence of 1821.

Makris, in his exhibition in the **National Library of Greece**, is trying to shed light on the heroic ideal. His conception to form a vision-symbol, however, arose from his preoccupation and elaboration of the warrior, the leader, Theophilos. In this way, Makris proposes an alternative to heroic paintings, conceived in the light of humility and introversion, proving in practice that the Greek struggle for independence of 1821 never dies in the collective memory.

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