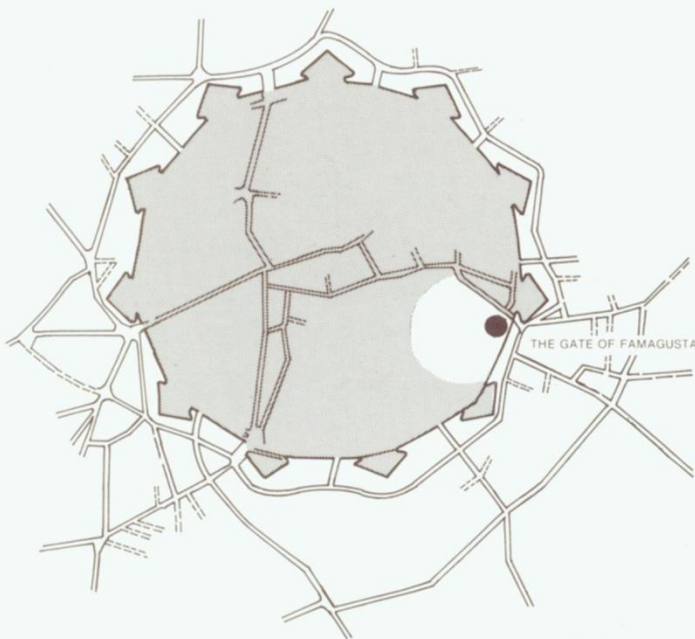
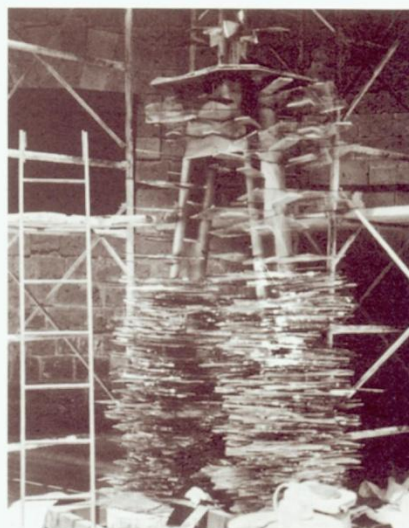




ΔΕΣΤΕ

**DESTE FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
DONATION TO THE CITY OF NICOSIA 1985**

Costas Varotsos "The Poet, 1983"



The DESTE Foundation

The DESTE Foundation is a non – profit institution which was created in 1984 for the promotion of contemporary art. Founder of the DESTE Foundation is Dakis Joannou. One of the fundamental purposes of the Foundation is to create a centre of exchange of ideas and action between artists and intellectuals from all over the world. This scope is more precisely defined by the specific interest to contribute to the creation of an international dialogue over the multiform aspects of contemporary culture. To this effect, the DESTE Foundation is planning a programme of activity which will seek to comprehend a wide range of today's artistic manifestations, intellectual orientations and the various modes of expression in everyday behaviour and communication. Various art disciplines from theatre, cinema to music, literature, poetry, architecture and design will, therefore, represent areas of congenial interest with the specific outlook on the visual arts adopted by the DESTE Foundation.

The DESTE Donation to the City of Nicosia

The sculpture by Costas Varotsos, titled "The Poet", which is donated to the City of Nicosia by the Deste Foundation, is one of the first works executed thanks to the Foundation's contribution. This sculpture represents both a remarkable example of the contemporary art production and it also stands as a creative statement made by the convergence of parallel cultural interests, represented, in this case, by the collaboration of public and private initiative. In this respect, this work can be considered as the realized extension of some of the fundamental purposes of the DESTE Foundation. Not only is the sculpture, now standing by the walls of Nicosia, near the Famagusta Gate, the product of an artist from Greece, but also is the creation of this sculpture the result of a close and creative collaboration between two cultural entities, that of Greece and Cyprus. The story of "The Poet" by Costas Varotsos starts with the organization of a show of contemporary greek art, which took place at the Gate of Famagusta, in December 1983, under the title "7 Greek Artists: A New Journey". The show was born on the initiative of Dakis Joannou and it was realized thanks to the willing and broad – minded attitude and support of the Municipality of Nicosia and of a considerable number of private sponsors: The Demetrios Z. Pierides Collection, the Bank of Cyprus, the Cyprus Airways, J & P Ltd., the Black Sea Shipping Company Ltd., the Athenaeum Intercontinental Hotel. The idea of this exhibition was to have the works conceived and executed in situ for the specific place of the Gate of Famagusta (The Cultural Centre of the Nicosia Municipality). As a result, all seven greek artists who participated in this exhibition realized big – scale installations, which revealed to a remarkable degree a deep involvement with the specific place. The encounter with Cyprus that each artist established in an individual and different way remained traced upon the works produced, which left an indelible memory in both the cypriot and greek artistic and cultural circles.

DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art,
14 Kolonaki Square, 10673 Athens, Greece Tel.(01)7228303

"The Poet" by Costas Varotsos

Costas Varotsos, prior to his final decision to execute this sculpture, was contemplating on two different projects for that particular exhibition.

As most of the participating artists did, he came to Nicosia on his own initiative a couple of months before the show.

Upon his return to Athens his decision was made irrevocably.

The gigantic man, made up of hundreds of sheets of sharp broken glass was to be the work to stand in the Famagusta Gate. 15 tons of glass have been used to construct this piece which is supported by an internal metal structure.

The title of the sculpture, "The Poet", was one of the initial elements which characterized the concept of the work. Costas Varotsos intended and achieved to create a work which would represent the power inherent in the artist's world. His intention was to portray the sharpness of one of the artist's most powerful instruments, the language. For Varotsos, this is meant in the sense of a versatile medium that can incessantly upset any given state of things, any commonly accepted concept. Language is the instrument that can cut through the world of established images at moments of intellectual and spiritual immobility. It is the mental implement that can destroy and attack while at the same time it can recompose, create and regenerate both the mind and the senses.

Not casually, therefore, he adopts for this work this specific material, the glass.

As a material it stands for a series of multiple meanings: fragility and aggressiveness; transparency and obstruction; light and volume.

So, Costas Varotsos proceeded to develop bound in one piece the image of force and pain by portraying the multiple qualities of one element, by multiplying the significance of one concept.

Multiple layers of a shattered and fragile material compose "The Poet". A man of all times and of all places. An image that both repels and allures the spectator. A creature that soars over one's head, looking down both in an aggressive and in a benign way. A constant companion of our dreams but also a re-emerging presence in reality.

The power of the shattered man is far greater, far more upsetting and menacing than any apparent, solid image of things.

"The Poet" accompanied Costas Varotsos's dreams throughout his life.

It took form and volume after his encounter with Cyprus.

Efi Strousa

Biographical Note

Costas Varotsos was born in Athens in 1955. He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome, where he lived and worked until 1982.

One man shows:
1979 Spazio - Oggetto, ISIA, Rome
Galleria Mauric Renaissance, Pescara

1981 Galleria 2000, Bologna

1982 Desmos Gallery, Athens

1983 Galleria Centrosei, Bari

He has participated in several group shows. He lives and works in Athens.

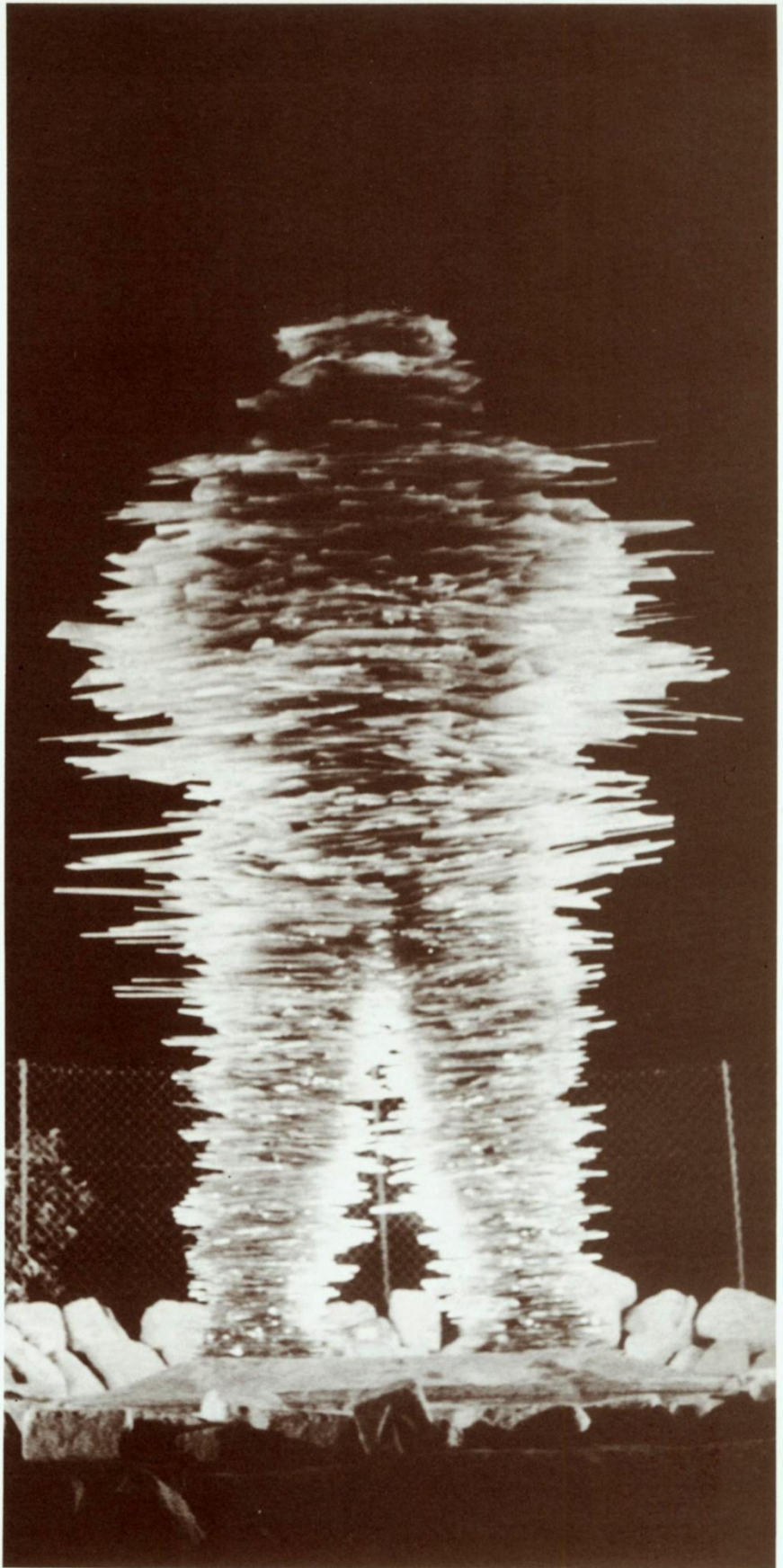
Left page: ● The poster of the show "7 Greek Artists: A New Journey" (1983), designed on a photo of the interior of the Gate of Famagusta

● Two phases during the construction of "The Poet" with Costas Varotsos at work

● "The Poet" at the Gate of Famagusta, December 1983

● Plan of the walls of Nicosia

Photos by Andreas Malekos



Costas Varotsos, "The Poet", 1983, glass and metal, height 6.50 m, Nicosia

