

(1961), 'The Lamp' (1965), 'The Welcome Offering' (1965), 'Conversation' (1967) have that total self-containment that only the finest works of art have.

By the late Sixties, however, Vasiliou was painting prolifically in many styles: the Eretria landscapes, as bright as his Aigina period but cooler and more lyrical; his pop-art paintings and collages (the first examples pre-dating the coining of that word), a late off-shoot of his humorous pictures of the late Fifties 'Cinema Amyrillis' (1969); and his 'cloud' pictures, a much

later transformation of his pre-war *fauve*-style 'A Walk' (1965).

In the early Seventies there was a new synthesis in his Eretria 'End of Season' works, the subject being litter on a beach, the precise Surrealism of the objects now set into immense and tranquil sky and seascapes, culminating in the three 'In Memory of the Poet' (George Seferis) series (1971).

In his latest works he has turned this monumentality to still-life subjects of which 'Cartons of Plenty' (1969) is the prototype and 'A Song for Chardin' (1974) a good subsequent example.

An exhibition of 150 works painted over the last fifty years has the right to be called a 'retrospective' of an artist's career, but in this case it must be modified to 'an artist's career so far'.

Right now he seems to be experimenting in new, very daring, rather acid colours set in wide but flatter spaces. In fifty years of prolific surprises it is impossible to foresee in which direction he will now go. The artist will probably agree, as he still does not know, and does not wish to know, if he is himself — or his brother.

—S.E.

At the Galleries

THE NEW 'season' got off to a dramatic start at the Iolas-Zoumboulakis Gallery with a grand exhibition in October of recent works by the Chilean-born painter, Matta. Along with other middle Surrealists, Matta, like Max Ernst, has fully developed as a painter. The impact of this show is in the immediacy of the problems with which the paintings deal — revolution, violence, savage repression, and their poetic effect on the intuition of the artist. The Surrealists' doubts about the apparent reality of what we see is successfully fused with the 'stream of consciousness' fluidity of Action Painting. Rapidly conceived, poised figurations contort against volatile backgrounds that interrupt the surface by means of colour value. A maze of interacting elements is created by the interplay of masses of colour and linear forms which force the eye and the psyche into that realm of experience, the unconscious stream of pure thought, that Surrealism aims to penetrate. Form *per se* becomes unimportant and insignificant; the totality of visual experience is the entrance into the inner void of the mind. Matta is strong witness to the liberating effects that Action Painting, the splashing and dribbling of paint on canvas based on the assumption that the Unconscious will take over, had on many of the Surrealists. They reduced form to an almost primal state of fluidity conceived in terms of relativity but beyond the grasp of values. There is no 'amoral' element in the work of artists such as Matta; they approach the root of experience where the essential unity, beyond phenomenological appearances and values, is important. At death, it is said, the soul passes between two great, flaming, palm trees that burn away the relativity of the

pain and happiness, the suffering and joy, encountered in life. It is to such a state of pure repose, one that provides the 'space' in which the horrors of our age are acted out, that Matta's paintings allude. The show will continue in November.

● The small show of paintings and tapestries by Theodore Stamos, at the Athens Gallery in October, confirmed that living in Greece has had an effect on this well-known, Greek-American artist who moved here about five years ago. In his more recent paintings, colour as implied texture has been a recurrent element. Although in many paintings where colour is the dominant element it seems to flow out of the painting, in Stamos's it is the surfaces which draw one's attention. The eye is thwarted in its attempt to comprehend and contain what it sees and the visual experience is stunned and diluted so that one is forced to perceive with preconceptions or conceptual values. The implied textures are those of pure pigment which subtly soothe the initial shock of visual dislocation.

Several large paintings have been reproduced in tapestries. The colours, the strong perpendiculars, and the verticals are dominant and recognizable but the subtlety is lost, and the surface of the tapestry itself intervenes. Stamos's use of paint as pigment and colour has had almost the quality of quicksilver, despite the opacity. The tapestries to a great degree maintain the form but nothing of the vibrant life of his paintings.

● Considering the recent explosion of new galleries in Athens, the appearance of yet another might give rise to second thoughts. The new Kreonides Gallery, which opened in mid-October, has

begun its career by drawing to it the work of serious and promising painters. Although the exhibition of twenty-eight representative young painters lacked homogeneity, to be expected in a group show, the calibre and achievement of the paintings tended to provide a unity. Especially striking were Rallis's two temperas which were in sharp contrast to a fine portrait head, also in tempera, by Philip Tarlow, and a strangely eloquent landscape by Michael Giorgas. It is difficult to reconcile this medium's long neglect in Greece — despite its well rooted tradition in Byzantine and Folk painting — with the fact that it lends itself so well to capturing the tones and sharpness of Greece. Kreonides's gallery is establishing a connection with young, relatively unknown painters from Crete where a 'renaissance' seems to be underway. Besides Manousakis and Fanourakis, whose works are already known in Athens and were included in the show, there are a number of other promising young Cretan artists. The consistency of quality in their works augurs well for future developments on the island where many of them prefer to live. Kreonides is providing an opportunity for the public to see their work.

● The current show at the Hellenic-American Union includes comfortable watercolours and less comfortable encaustics by Elaine Farley. The watercolours explore with some expertise the gamut of the Greek 'bag': the old woman in black, the village coffee shop, the church on the hill, and the inlet on the coast. The subjects, although prosaic, are well expressed in a controlled use of the media. The encaustics are more interesting in total effect but reflect certain drawbacks of

