

SOPHIA VARI

Biography, Bibliography, Exhibitions

Biography

Among the most important sculptresses in the contemporary art world, this charming lady was born in 1940 in Attica (Greece), in a village named Vari (origin of her pen name), from a Greek father and a Hungarian mother. She studied and worked abroad for many years, first in England, then mainly in France, where, at the age of sixteen, she started painting. Living in Paris, the artist is well acquainted with modern trends in sculpture, in particular Cubism and Surrealism.

Her creative talent produced works that are full of sensuality, dynamism and intelligence, also inspired by a wide variety of sources: sculpture from the Mayan, Egyptian, Olmec, and Cycladic traditions and from Greek antiquity to Baroque. As an accomplished sculptress, she is acutely aware of historical artistic tradition; she carries on a personal research on shapes and volumes, creating artworks that are able to harmonize the Renaissance heritage with the artistic Avant Garde of the 20th century.

Her sculpture, even in its most abstract, embraces the obvious beauty of the human form.

The artist asserts her desire: «To imbue shapes and colour, and even their very geometry, with human qualities, within a spatial context».

At the beginning of her artistic career, Sophia Vari was also an enthusiastic painter, especially during the years in Paris, when she was intensely fascinated by the sensuous shapes of the women in Rubens' paintings. In fact, the feminine subject frequently reappears both in her graphical and sculptural works. However, she felt the need for a different expression other than painting and in 1976 stated that, "painting is an illusion, a trompe l'oeil. I want to touch, I want the volume, I want to be able to walk around my work, I want to create into a space, to prove that what I created really does exist. Discovering these things, I began to feel my own existence".

In 1978 in Egypt, Sophia really felt the meaning of monumental sculpture. In the same year she divorced by her husband, a Greek industrialist. In 1979 she met the Colombian sculptor Fernando Botero, who later became her partner. After fifteen years working with marble and bronze,

“suddenly”, she writes “I started to miss colour. So, from 1994 I decided to devote my energies to some kind of assemblages on canvas. This allowed me to blend the delicacy of painting with design. I no longer created with volume, but with colour, preserving my sculptural awareness of shape”. Colour in any case, definitely plays an attractive role when combined with the harmony of sculpture. The fusion of these two artistic practices allows the artist to transfer colour on different surfaces, adapting them to the various tones.

An Ambassador of Greek culture, since 1985 she lives at least three months a year in Pietrasanta, in the part of Tuscany called Versilia, land of art and marble. Sophia Vari is deeply fascinated by Italian art traditions, especially by simple shapes and essential details particularly of Giotto and Piero della Francesca. On the one hand, Vari’s work also takes inspiration from the large, sensual, and often fantastic manierism-style sculptures of Giambologna; on the other hand, Donatello has a crucial influence on her new way of looking at the sources of sculpture – human form and erotic interaction. In the summer of 2003, an exhibition in Pietrasanta hosted many of her new monumental polychrome sculptures. On this occasion the main feature of her work is the return of colour, patterned and balanced in the sculptural form. The bronze casting done in Pietrasanta, together with the application of two-coloured varnishes, complete and enhance the patina effect. In doing so, Sophia Vari is inspired by the fascinating polychrome of ancient Greek statues and the sculptures of the Parthenon.

Sophia Vari was extremely successful in 2004, with three important retrospective exhibitions at the Benaki Museum in Athens, at the Olympic Games and at the National Art Gallery in Malaysia.

In the same year her monumental sculptures were exhibited in the Piazza Esedra by the Roman Municipal council.

In 2005 Spain hosted three solo exhibitions in Granada, Seville, Gerona, and an exhibition of her monumental sculptures was held in Paris, France, at Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

Lately the artist has expanded her creativity to the field of jewelry design, attracted by precious materials such as gold, silver, ivory and coral.

In 2007, the Contini Gallery of Art in Venice, Italy, held a personal exhibition of her sculptures, watercolors, oils and pastels.

In the summer of 2008 an important cultural event in Montecarlo was an exhibition with fifteen of Sophia’s monumental sculptures in the gardens of Piazza del Casino.

In 2012, the Contini Gallery of Art once again hosts an exhibition of Sophia' works, this time with a collection of her hand-created jewelry, sculptures and paintings.

(Gioielli-Sculture-Dipinti - Galleria Contini, Venice, Italy).

In 2013, a very important exhibition is held in Instabuk, Turkey at the Pera Museum.

In 2014 Sophia Vari exhibits on Andros Island in Greece at the Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation Museum of Art from June 29th through September 28th.

Sophia Vari used to live between Paris, Italy (Tuscany), Mexico and New York. The artist passed away on May 5th, 2023 in Montecarlo.

Bibliography

2014

Kyriakos Koutsomallis: Sophia Vari: The sensualism of a temperate post-cubist beauty, Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation Museum of Contemporary Art, "Sophia Vari", Skira, catalogo della mostra Sophia Vari, Louisa Guinness Gallery, London, United Kingdom

2013

Suna, Inan & Ipek Kirac, Marisa Oropesa, Marcel Paquet, Sophia Vari – Sculptures and paintings, Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey

2012

Luca Beatrice, Sophia Vari gioielli – sculture – dipinti, Galleria d'Arte Contini, Venice, Italy

2010

Laurence Mouillefarine, Bijoux Sculptés, Éditions de la Martinière, Paris, France

2007

Toni Toniato, Antonio Paolucci, Angelos Delivorrias, Sophia Vari, Galleria d'Arte Contini, Venice, Italy

2006

Justin Spring: Sophia Vari, Hardcover

2003

Paola Gribaudo e Alessandro Paladini: Sophia Vari a Pietrasanta, Chiesa di Sant'Agostino e Piazza del Duomo, 12 Luglio-21 Settembre 2003, Pietrasanta, Italy

2002

Antonio Paolucci: Sophia Vari, sculture monumentali: 29 giugno-25 agosto 2002, Sala d'arme di Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Italy

2001

AA.VV: Sophia Vari, April 25-June 19, 2001, Boca Raton Museum of art, Florida, USA

2000

Jacqueline de Behrens, Greece honours its child: acclaimed sculptor Sophia Vari, Daily Journal, Caracas, November 8

Gloria Luz Cano and Elsa Cristina Robayo: Sophia Vari en familia, Bogota, November 2000

1999

Pilar Calderon, Sophia Vari, Mujer, Bogota, September 1999, pp.18-23. Paola Gribaudo, Nohra Haime, Justin Spring: Sophia Vari, New York, USA

1998

Justin Spring (essay): Sophia Vari Polychrome Sculpture 9/17-10/17/98, Paperback

1995

Sophia Vari-Papers on canvas, New York, Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

Regina De Marcos, Sophia Vari Extraordinaria, Harper's Bazaar, Spain, January 1995

Pascal Bonafoux, J.Hyde and Robert Lorenzson, and H.C: Sophia Vari, Papers on Canvas, Hardcover

1994

Costanzo Costantini, Sophia Vari: Sophia Vari, dal 1 Giugno 1994, Galleria Il Gabbiano, Roma, Italy

Charles Hepworth (essay): Sophia Vari recent sculpture 10/20-11/19/1994, Paperback

1992

Silvia Santalmassi, Marco Di Capua, Sophia Vari: Sophia Vari, dal 28 Maggio 1992, Galleria d'arte Il Gabbiano, Roma, Italy

1991

Pascal Bonafoux and Sofia Imber: Sophia Vari, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Caracas, Caracas, Venezuela

Evonne E. Coutros: Sophia Vari's sculptures have a worldly flavor, Hellenic Times, New York, October 18 1991, p.6

A Voir: Sophia Vari, Le Figaro, May 21 1990, Paris, France

AA.VV.: Sophia Vari-Sculptures, marbres et bronzes, Paris, Galerie Eolia, exhibition catalogue

Pierre Brisset: Sophia Vari, L'Oeil, Paris, France

1988

Daniela Pasti, Sophia Vari: Sophia Vari, dal 29 Novembre, Galleria d'arte Il Gabbiano, Roma, Italy

1984

Pascal Bonafoux: Sophia Vari, l'evidence et les mythes, Fondation Veranneman, October 13-
december 12, 1984, Kruishoutem, Belgium

1983

Mario Antolin:Galeria Juana Mordo - Sophia Vari, Madrid. Pachi del Romero: Esculturas que
permaneceran, Madrid, Spain

1979

Manuela de Azevedo: A emocao na arte de Sophia Vari, Diario de noticias, Lisbona, Portugal

Exhibitions

2014

Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation Museum of Contemporary Art, "Sophia Vari", Andros-Chora,
Greece

Louisa Guinness Gallery, "Sophia Vari: Scale of Beauty", London, United Kingdom

2013

Pera Museum, "Sophia Vari ,Sculptures and Paintings", Istanbul, Turkey

2012

Nohra Haime Gallery, "Wearable Sculpture", New York, USA

Contini Art Gallery, "Sophia Vari: Gioielli, Sculture, Dipinti," Venice, Italy Palazzo della Borsa, "Le
Armoniche Evoluzioni della Forma," Genoa, Italy NH Galeria, "Acuarelas y Collages," Cartagena de
Indias, Colombia

2011

Monumental Sculptures, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia Galerie Pièce Unique, "I Love Greece",
Paris, France Paseo de la Castellana, "Forma y Color," Madrid, Spain Louisa Guinness Gallery,
London, United Kingdom

Nohra Haime Gallery, "Recent Sculptures and Watercolors," New York, NY, USA

2010

Artcurial, "Bijoux Sculptés," Paris, France

2009

Forum, Monterrey, Mexico

2008

Sculture monumentali a Monte Carlo – Giardini della Piazza del Casinò - Monte Carlo Temple of Confusius, Beijing, China

2007

Galleria d'Arte Contini, Venice, Italy

Ithaca Regained - Kouros Gallery, New York City, NY

Concert Hall, "Sophia Vari: Monumental Sculpture" Tenerife, Spain

2006

Piazza Moncalieri, Torino, Italia Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France

Galeria Ramis Barquet, Garza Garcia, Mexico

Signed & Dated: our 10th Anniversary Exhibition - Valentine Willie Fine Art - VWFA Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur

2005

La General, Casa de Risparmio, Granata, Spain La General, Santa Inès de Sevilla , Siviglia, Spain La General, Caixa de Gerona, Gerona, Spain Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

Sophia Vari à Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris, France

Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece

Art Karlsrub, Frank Pages Gallery, Baden-Baden, Germany Sculptures Monumentales, Piazza Esedra, Rome, Italy

Balai Seni Lukis Negara Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Sophia Vari

Jewels, Baccarat Museum, Paris , France

2003

Nevelson-Vari : a Dialogue, Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA . Jewels, Ambasciata Francese in Grecia, Athens, Greece

Jewels, Liliane Sicard ,Geneva, Switzerland

Bijoux, Pavillon des Antiquaires et des Beaux-Arts , Liliane Sicard, Paris, France Sophia Vari in Pietrasanta, Chiesa San Agostino e Piazza Duomo, Pietrasanta, Italy

2002

Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France

Sculptures Monumentales , Armeria di Palazzo Vecchio e Piazza della Signoria, Florence, Italy
Jewels, Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France

2001

Jewels, Liliane Sicard ,Geneva, Switzerland

Retrospective exhibition, Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida, USA

Sophia Vari : Sculptures Monumentales et Assemblages, Ludwig Museum, Komblentz, Germany

Sophia Vari : Open Air Monumental Sculptures, Liechtentaler Allee at Augustplatz, Baden-Baden, Germany

Recent Works, Frank Pages Gallery , Baden-Baden, Germany

Sophia Vari : Monumental Sculptures, rue de la Constitution, Geneva, Switzerland

Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

2000

Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA Sculpture, Korzia Place, Athens, Greece Palazzo Bricherasio, Turin, Italy

Fiera Artissima , Pièce Unique, Turin, Italy FIAC, Pièce Unique, Paris, France

Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France

1999

Polychrome Sculpture, Arij Gasiumasen Gallery, Palm Beach, USA Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France

Arts School « les Beaux Arts », Paris, France

1998

Sophia Vari : Sculptures Monumentales, Seventh Regiment Armory, New York, USA

Ulrich Art Museum, Wichita, Kansas, USA

Polychrome Sculpture, Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA Bijoux, Galleria Terzo Millennio, Milan, Italy

1997

Retrospective exhibition, Youngstown , Ohio, USA Assemblages on Canvas, Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

Sculptures and Assemblages, Frank Pages Gallery ,Baden-Baden, Germany Sculptures et

Assemblages su Tela, Studio d'Arte La Subbia, Pietrasanta, Italy

Jewels, Naïla de Monbrison, Paris, France

1996

Sculptures et Papiers sur Toile, Nohra Haime Gallery, Paris , France

1995

Fondation Verannemann, Kruishoutem, Belgium Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

1994

Galleria d'Arte Il Gabbiano, Rome, Italy Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

1992

Galleria d'Arte Il Gabbiano, Rome, Italy Sala Gaspar Galeria d'Art, Barcelona, Spain

1991

Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Caracas, Venezuela Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

Eolia Gallery, Paris, France

1989

Athens Gallery, Athens, Greece

1988

Fondation Verannemann, Kruishoutem, Belgium Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

Galleria d'Arte Il Gabbiano, Rome, Italy

1987

Alfred Wild Gallery, Bogota, Colombia Eolia Gallery, Paris, France

Galeria Thaeco, Cali, Colombia

1986

Eendt Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland Athens Gallery , Athens, Greece

1985

Nohra Haime Gallery , New York, USA

1984

Fondation Verannemann, Kruishoutem, Belgium

1983

Galeria Juana Mordo, Madrid, Spain

1981

Fondation Verannemann, Kruishoutem, Belgium

Aberbach Fine Art Gallery, New York, USA

1978-1979

Desmos Gallery , Alexandre Iolas, Athens, Greece

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian , Lisbon, Portugal

Coe Kerr Gallery, New York, USA

1975

Museu de Arte Moderna, Sao Paulo, Brasil

1974

Cardin Space, Paris, France

Mayor's Parlor of Gallier Hall, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Jasper Gallery, Houston, Texas, USA

1969

Woodstock Gallery, London, UK Schmacher, Monaco, Germany

Collective exhibitions

2011

"Art Basel", Galleria Tega, Basel, Switzerland Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY, USA

"The Art Show", The Armory, Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY, USA J & P Fine Art, Basel, Switzerland

Galleria d'Arte Contini, "Tribute to Artists", Venice, Italy Thomas Modern Gallery, "Family Ties", Munich, Germany "MIART", Galleria Tega, Milan, Italy

"Scope Basel", Galerie Frank Pages, Basel, Switzerland "Contemporary Istanbul", Galerie Frank Pages, Istanbul, Turkey

2010

"Arte Fiera 10", Galleria d'Arte Contini, Bologna, Italy "Art Paris", Galleria d'Arte Contini, Paris, France

"MIART", Galleria d'Arte Contini, Milan, Italy "Art Dubai", Galerie Pièce Unique, Dubai, UAE

"Scope Basel", Galerie Frank Pages, Basel - Switzerland

"Women Creators in the 20th Century", Museo de Bellas Artes of Granada and CEART Fuenlabrada, Madrid, Spain

"Art Basel", Galleria Tega, Basel, Switzerland

2008

“Art Paris”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Paris, France “MIART”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Milan, Italy

“Art Basel”, Galleria Tega, Basel, Switzerland

“Arte Fiera 08”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Bologna, Italy

“Project for a Collection from Mirò to Botero” Galleria Tega, Milan, Italy “Art Miami”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Miami, Miami, FL, USA

“Femininity in Art”, Bancaja Fundacion Caja Castellon, Castellon, Spain

“Women Creators in the 20th Century”, Edificio Botines de Gaudi Caja Espana, Leon et Espacio Cultural Caja Canarias, Santa Cruz de Tenerife et Centro Social Caixanova, Pontevedra, Spain “The Art Show”, The Armory, Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY, USA

2007

“Pathways of Greek Painting”, International House of Music, Mosca / Moscow “Expositions de Sculptures”, jardin de l’Hotel Baur au Lac, Zurigo Zurich International Blitz, Atrium Gallery, St. Louis, MO, USA

“Art Basel”, Galleria Tega, Basel, Switzerland

“Art Paris”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Paris, France

“Palm Beach”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Palm Beach, Miami, FL, USA “MIART”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Milan, Italy

“Art Miami”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Miami, FL, USA “Arte Fiera 07”, Galleria d’Arte Contini, Bologna, Italy “Art Dubai”, Galleria Tega, Dubai, UAE

2006

Signed & Dated: our 10th Anniversary Exhibition - Valentine Willie Fine Art - VWFA Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur

2005

Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, NY, USA Museo de Arte Moderno, Granada, Spain Museo de Arte Moderno, Sevilla, Spain Museo de Arte Moderno, Girona, Spain “FIAC”, Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris – France

2004

Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece Piazza della Repubblica, Rome, Italy

National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia “FIAC”, Galerie Pièce Unique, Paris, France

2003

Galerie Liliane Sicard, Geneva, Switzerland

Comune di Pietrasanta – Assessorato alla Cultura, Chiesa di San Agostino and Piazza del Duomo,
Italy “TEFAT”, Fondation Veranneman, Maastricht, The Netherlands

2001

Ludwig Museum, Kombletz, Germany

Frank Pages Gallery, Liechtentaler Allee à Augustaplatz, Baden-Baden, Germany

2000

Fiera Artissima – Pièce Unique, Palazzo Bricherasio, Turin, Italy

FIAC, Pièce Unique, Paris, France

“Art Brussel”, Galerie Pièce Unique, Brussels, Belgium

1999

Pièce Unique, Paris, France

Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France

1998

Ulrich Art Gallery, Wichita, USA Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

1997

Butler Art Institute, Youngstown, USA

Frank Pages Gallery, Baden-Baden, Germany

The Art Show – Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

1996

Salon de Mars Nohra Haime Gallery, Paris, France

1995

Fondation Verannemam, Kruishoutem, Belgium

1994

Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

1992

Sala Gaspar Galeria d'Arte, Barcelona, Spain

1991

Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Caracas, Venezuela

1988

Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

1987

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GALLERIA D'ARTE

Galeria Alfred Wild, Bogota, Colombia

1986

Galerie d'Eendt, Amsterdam, The Netherland

1985

Nohra Haime Gallery, New York, USA

1983

"Art Basel", Fondation Veranneman, Basel, Switzerland

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