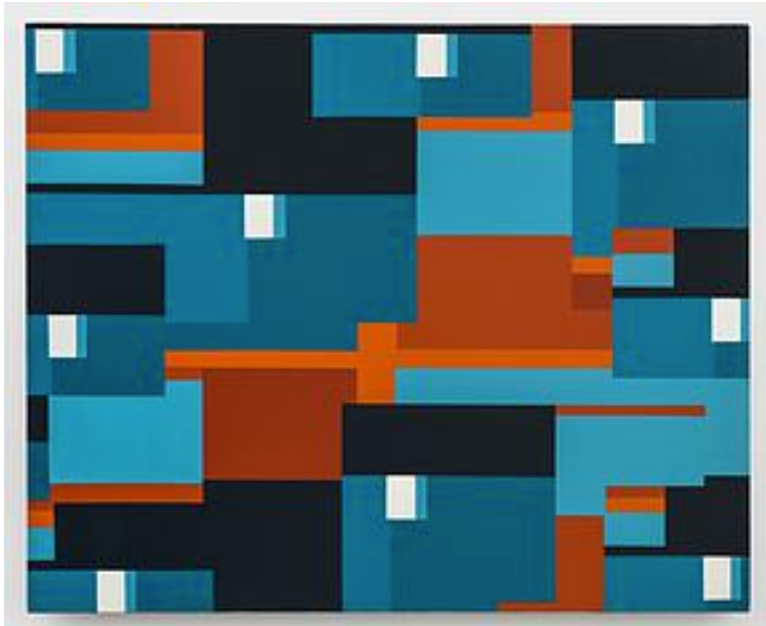


NEOILLUSION

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**Nassos Daphnis Estate to be Represented
by Richard Taittinger Gallery**

By Mani De Osu



12-89 by Nassos Daphnis

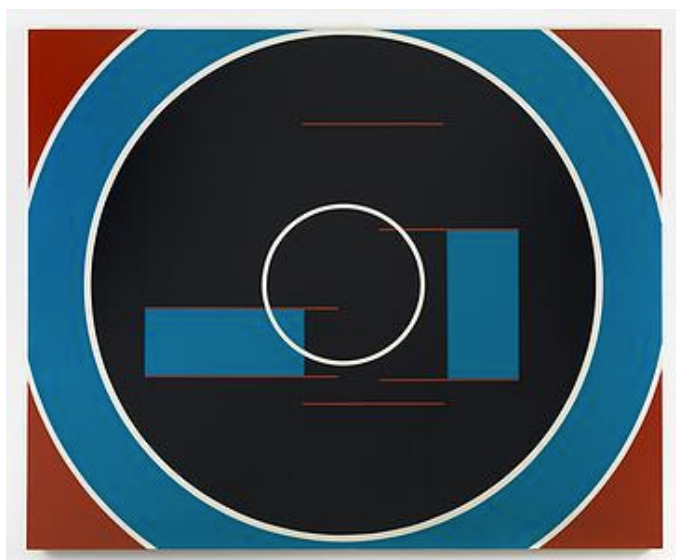
Artnews broke the story of Richard Taittinger taking on the representation of Greek-American painter Nassos Daphnis on August 7th, but the story runs much deeper than the news shares. Speaking to Richard in the office of his six month old gallery on the Lower East Side, he shared why he chose Daphnis and just what the artist means to the world of contemporary art. "He was a pioneer of the 21st century," says Taittinger, and his aim is to establish the Daphnis legacy as something to be regarded as an integral key to understanding our times. Nassos Daphnis' work is decidedly intellectually based in the fundament of spirit and while he is complicit as an abstract imagist in the hard edge, geometric abstraction and neoplasticism schools, his methods and intent lie in a spiritual and philosophical realm beyond that of his contemporaries. Like Warhol, Johns, Stella, Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein and the like, Daphnis was also represented by Leo Castelli for the better part of four decades. His work was shown shoulder to shoulder with the modern masters as a part of 30 group exhibitions as well as having 17 solo shows, and yet his name and work are less recognized than his counterparts. Richard Taittinger is intent on reviving the interest and generating new introductions to younger generations of art lovers.

When Richard is asked, "Why Daphnis?" He smiles and says, "I believe in destiny." He had by chance come to rent Daphnis' former studio in SoHo for a pop up exhibition in preparation for opening his own gallery. Living in SoHo at the time, and following the nature of his

being, he found Nassos' former studio to be with a certain magnetism, despite the fact that it had no lights, and no floor. He did not have any knowledge of the space prior to seeking it out, but came to find himself in dealings with Daphnis' son, Dimitri. Recognizing likenesses in each other, the two struck a deal that Richard would put in the lights and Dimitri would put in the floor. This was the beginning of one of those storied friendships that happen on no apparent occasion, and blossoms into lore. Richard was impressed by the fact that Dimitri and his sister, Artemis, had cared for their father for a decade while his health deteriorated, and after his death, "like the most beloved son and daughter"RT wanted to pay their highest respects to his legacy as an artist. They decided to keep his work together as an estate, that it might stand the test of time as a complete body, rather than remnants blowing from here to there. When the siblings



began looking for the estate's representation, they of course considered older, established galleries, but "decided to go for the outsider," says Richard cheerfully. Richard and Dimitri had met in 2009, just one year before Nassos passed away, and over the course of the coming years, the flower that bloomed was one of mutual respect for legacy and a desire "to bring [Daphnis] BACK where he belongs."RT The recognition that had been experienced when first they met, unfolded in the continuation of similarities that we call character. "It was for the pure love of art," Richard says that Artemis and Dimitri treated their father's work so vigilantly. They are the lone descendants, and the only assistants Daphnis would ever work with over the course of his 60 year career. Daphnis was the type of artist that truly lived for the art, not the profit — to share the discoveries of his seeking, to add his tale to the mythology of which artists are the contemporary authors. Ended only by his waning health, Nassos would work 15 hours a day, moving 8 foot canvases by himself, tirelessly expressing his unique perspective "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time [its] form and pressure." - Shakespeare There is a statement made of those who practice and those who appreciate this type of hard work, this type of art that comes only through love of the creation. It is this love that has been lost in the commodification of art, and it is the most valuable trait that has been traded for the casual numbers of acquisition's aspiration. Those who are willing to stand for it, no matter what the market says, these are the ones who are truly invested, and this is what Richard, Dimitri and Artemis have come together to uphold.



Genesis 7-87 by Nassos Daphnis.

To inaugurate the holding of Nassos Daphnis' estate, the Richard Taittinger Gallery will be exhibiting a series of unseen works created from 1987-1992. Opening September 16th, Pixel Fields is a play on words that coins the focus of Daphnis' work at that time. Pixel in reference to the introduction of the Atari ST by his son Dimitri that opened him to a new vision of human existence, and Fields for the color plane theory in which he worked. After years of only working with primary colors, Daphnis was blown away by the 64 colors that the Atari boasted. He saw an immediate connection of his own style of universal comprehension to the function and future importance of computers. The significance of timing is not lost on Richard, who reminds that the last exhibition Nassos Daphnis had at the Castelli Gallery was in 1995, 20 years ago. "Now, 20 years later, it's us," he says with a humble grin, as we are full stride in the digital age. Taittinger's ambition is sincerely rooted in his love of art and the want to share the beauty of life that it reveals. "This [is a] wonderful source of dialogue... with the pixel generation" he continues, reiterating one of his main intentions behind bringing back Daphnis to center stage.



While Taittinger is willing to accept certain modus operandi of the art world, he also knows that "if you are just a follower, there is nothing to do in New York... Leo Castelli was not following the others, he was establishing his own way. You can't follow in New York."RT So the notion of not taking on an estate so recently after the artist has passed away was not acceptable; the old ways of going about presenting an artist's work are untimely; and the corporate energy that has come to surround art in general, Richard finds to be entirely unbecoming. But before having a retrospective of Daphnis' work, "Let's first show that he was a pioneer of the 21st century."RT This decision comes from a deep listening of the moment that will always tell what is the right thing to do. And this is the vein that Richard is tapped into, the spirit of the age, that has granted him such success in his ventures thus far. Coupled with a charming personality, it is not hard to see a bright future. And though he shares already similar traits in vision with the great Leo Castelli, he is well on the course of forging his own way. When you enter the Richard Taittinger Gallery at 154 Ludlow St., you are met by a warm space no matter the exhibition, and

whenever you see Richard, he is busily ensuring everything is taken care of and in its right place, making sure that everyone has what they need. His is a breath of fresh air in a time when a spirited resuscitation of the art world couldn't be more sorely needed. Time will tell what other bold steps Richard will come up with to fulfill his mission of creating a platform for the exchange of ideas and for public involvement with the arts, but for now, take a frolic in the Pixel Fields of Nassos Daphnis.



3-89 by Nassos Daphnis