

Despina Myriokefalitaki's Paper Geometries

By Dr. Thalia Vrachopoulos

It is like an exquisite spider web, this world, but I don't get trapped, writes Jalal al-Din Rumi; and it is those Sufi words that find a lucid echo in the paper works of Despina Myriokefalitaki, who, inspired by the poet in her new series titled *Strolleroptera*, develops a scrupulous practice of cutting and puncturing paper, generating intricate lace-like surfaces that oscillate between drawing, two-dimensional sculpture and textile. The title itself (an autoschediastic nod to the biological order Lepidoptera) underscores a constant process of transformation, which, through the meticulous discipline of hand-cutting, the structural density of paper evolves into a diaphanous lattice, effectively weaving a miraculous weave of silk-paper, whose formal structure emerges from the iterative modulation of a single geometric motif. Originating in the fleeting images of the insect's biomorphic structure, the series systematically transcends its organic morphology to manifest itself in the abstract rigidity of networks, informed equally by personal memory and the ancestral heritage of an inherited vernacular of crochet and embroidery traditions passed down through the women of the artist's family.

In this respect, Myriokefalitaki's practice may be genealogically and conceptually aligned with a lineage of twentieth-century women modernists who expanded the languages of abstraction. Her entangled constructions recall the suspended and looping geometries of Ruth Asawa, recently the subject of a major retrospective at Museum of Modern Art, as well as the tensile linearities of Gego or the rigorously interchangeable investigations of Kazuko Miyamoto. Yet while these precedents operate primarily through wire, thread, or spatial drawing, Myriokefalitaki rearticulates analogous formal problematics through the seemingly fragile yet structurally resolute medium of paper. Her fastidious handling of paper's surface also invites comparison with the refined traditions of Japanese paper practice, particularly those associated with origami masters such as Akira Yoshizawa, translated here by Myriokefalitaki into a two-dimensional nexus. Nonetheless, it is precisely in her transposition of these international modernist and craft lineages into the idiom of Greek Whitework embroidery that her work achieves its novel uniqueness. By translating the logic of textile ornament into the cut and perforated plane of paper, Myriokefalitaki not only preserves, but actually revitalizes this Eastern European folk tradition, situating it within a contemporary abstract discourse that is at once rooted in localized cultural inheritance and articulated through a global visual syntax. Her work titled *Strolleroptera – What you seek is seeking you (Rumi)*, in which the artist elaborates a compositional system implicitly derived from the bilateral symmetry and structural delicacy of lepidopteran wings, here realized through hand-cut paper whose pierced surface quietly modulates depth and light. The work unfolds through a convoluted interplay of incision and repetition, generating a field of dynamic geometries that oscillate between organic proliferation and disciplined abstraction. Rather than functioning as mere formal exercise, this process assumes the character of a sustained reflection,

wherein the recurring expansion of pattern recalls the mystical visions of Rumi, whose verse is inscribed within the work itself in a spherical rhythm out of the endless web and threads, forming an etherial grid where the tension of each hand-cut filament serves as a physical manifestation of spiritual interconnectedness.

In this way, Myriokefalitaki's paper constructions are orchestrated invitations to a mode of visionary meditation. Within the *Strolleroptera series*, the punctured titles function as quasi-mantric devices; concise verbal anchors that orient and stabilize the viewer's attention, focusing the mind into a singular phrase as a stable axis of noetic contemplation. This linguistic concentration is mirrored by the production of the works; sophisticatedly cut, layered, and perforated sheets of paper that give rise to dense and web-like configurations of filaments and embroidered schemas, whose geometric precision unravels eternally with an organic vitality. The eye is drawn, almost magnetically, into these complex filigrees, where replication and variation generate a psychotropic optical vibration. At times, the introduction of acrylic color within the depth of the ground destabilizes the surface like in *Cyano + 2*, producing a shifting interplay between foreground and recess that gently disorients perception. This process effectively drugs the gaze, immersing it in a state of sustained attention, wherein the composition appears to expand and unwind beyond its material boundaries. Myriokefalitaki's *Strolleroptera Series* may be read thus as a Daedalic constellation of microcosmic diagrams; minuscule cosmographs in which the looping relation of part to whole evokes the hermetic axiom *as above, so below*, unspooling a subtle web that maps the recursive architecture of the infinity.