RINGSTONES, secret charme

Artists don’t make objects. Artists make mythologies. -- Anish Kapoor

I returned after an absence of many years to the art of engraving after seeing the collection of signets in the Numismatic Museum. I felt the need to create a series of works inspired by these objects. Signets are tiny symbols of power, jewels signifying identity, authenticity and ownership. Gemstones with engraved scenes that were used as seals. Well-known works of fine craftsmanship from the age-old art of seal-engraving.

I admit that through this approach to the signets, an approach which was one of art and history at the same time, I longed to experience a visual act of transformation. To manage, armed with my own truth and this alone, to present another reading of the subjects I had chosen.

For the sake of this project and with a degree of reverence I delved into my sources to explore and process and then bring to view these small but aesthetically precious objects of glyptic art, in which the history of our land is indeed revealed and recorded. We owe this, of course, to the unparalleled talent of the ancient craftsmen who fashioned them.

I enlisted engraving techniques such as etching and aquatint. I printed on fine, hand-made paper, stitched together prints, combined painting, writing and whatever else I thought necessary to serve my purposes and the desired outcome. Following Dimitris Mytaras’ maxim that “art can be interpreted only with art, as a pianist interprets a musical composition,” I believe I have achieved a narrative of a more contemporary and personal nature. But while art obeys its creator, the work is only complete when it meets the eye of the viewer…

Maria Kompatsiari
Visual Artist