

J.M.E. TOOK  
Director of British Council



### “BIRDS OF OUR COUNTRY”

Birds are probably the most frequently illustrated animals in the history of art, from earliest wall paintings to the present day. The bright colors of many of them, their song, their beauty and their movement bring them constantly to our notice. In modern times European bird artists have been predominantly Dutch (a good example can be seen in a small Brueghel in the National Gallery), British and American. Britain has produced a wealth of famous names, among the greatest being Gould, Edward Lear, Thorburn and Tunicliffe. America offers perhaps the greatest of all, Audubon.

To the European scene now comes Olga Anastasiadou and offers the first contemporary bird pictures painted by a Greek, which I myself have seen. She makes a very honorable and sensitive contribution. Those of us who are ornithologists (and even try to draw or paint birds!) know that a bird, like a human subject, has its own “personality” and characteristics which mark it from others. Look at the curve of the neck of the Purple Heron, the tilt of the head of the Jay, the bill and head of the Shoveler. Look also at the colors of the Oriole, of the blue on the Jay’s wing. These are traps for an artist but Mrs. Anastasiadou has got them right: the brilliance of life correctly conveyed to our eye.

But above all it is the sensitive treatment of the plumage (uncluttered by fussy backgrounds) which distinguishes Mrs. Anastasiadou’s work and gives it a haunting quality of eighteenth century English and Dutch work in this game. Yet her style is exclusively of her own. It is a style of representational integrity fused with an impressionist sensitivity of fluid brushwork and light. The artist’s birds, like her landscapes, are works of beauty. Greece has an abundance of both subjects. Olga Anastasiadou’s responsive brush reminds us that their existence should be protected.

«Galerie Ζυγός»  
Athens 1980