



**Title:** An Alternative Virtual Odyssey

**Topic:** Art

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**Abstract.** Stefanos Zannis is an Athenian painter who has been painting for over 20 years Homer's *Odyssey* but with a twist: delving into verses of the original poem who many would find obscure. This ancient poem has always been a quintessential symbol of the journey of life that we all go through, complete with the monsters we face and the longing for a spiritual home, or end goal, symbolised by Odysseus island home, Ithaka. We take inspiration from Stefanos's work on this epic poem to create an 'alternative virtual Odyssey' in multimedia form, an artistic reinterpretation of the poem that throws light on unheroic but important and emotionally loaded aspects of this journey.

This virtual Odyssey takes place in a navigable virtual gallery of Stefanos's works which are projected on multimedia sculptures created with the *Timaeus* art studio. Sculptures are customized with media including images, videos, music, and narration, can be hollow and translucent, illuminated, and navigated either externally or internally. These become curved spaces or 'worlds' where projected episodes of the *Odyssey* can be experienced in three dimensions. *Timaeus* is thus a medium for creating spaces appropriate for experiencing the elements of this alternative Odyssey. Apart from Stefanos's paintings, we integrate relevant poetry by Greek poets Konstantinos Kavafis and Alexandros Vanaryiotis.

In the picture, one can see a virtual sculpture illustrating how Stefanos imagined Circe in one of his paintings. In Greek mythology, Circe is a bad and dangerous woman, goddess of magic, an enchantress and sorceress. When Odysseus shipwrecks on her island of Aeaea, she transforms his crew into swine and forces him to live with her. In the world's literary tradition, Circe is mostly depicted as the archetype of the predatory female who is a big threat to men and masculinity. However, in his much quieter *Odyssey*, Stefanos shows a charming view of the sorceress weaving a fine red fabric in her loom.

There is something really endearing and attractive in observing a person work with calm, devotion and fine skill on something that they really love doing. The painting shows another side of Circe which might explain better why Odysseus stayed with her. Perhaps he was rather charmed by her talent, her elegance, and her devotion to her artful work. Perhaps human relations are much more subtle than a desire for control.



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**Key words:** *Timaeus*, Virtual Sculpture, *Odyssey*, Circe

'Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey. Without her you would not have set out' – Kavafis