

# Xenofon Kavvadias

**"The Law is no less conceptual than Fine Art"**

**Lord Carlile of Berriew QC**

**Exhibition dates 5 May - 17 June 2011**

Gift 10 Vyner Street presents a solo exhibition by the prolific artist, Xenofon Kavvadias, fortuitously timed in light of recent world events.

Xenofon is interested in exploring the **'limits of acceptability and the margins of legality'** under the Counter Terrorism legislation, challenging contemporary notions of freedom of speech, censorship and accepted public knowledge thereof.



Following more than five years of extensive research and planning, Xenofon will present a wide range of documents and books containing disturbing contemporary ideologies. Many of these have been used as evidence in court to secure criminal convictions. Subjected to the obscurities of underground internet websites, the public is essentially exempt from what should be an ongoing debate, intimidating an informed electorate and seriously undermining our democratic political state. This exhibition will encourage viewers to critically engage with the displayed texts without fear of control or marginalization, reinstating the public right to challenge and oppose. A right that is constantly threatened when one considers recent events in the Middle East and Libya, the Wikileaks/Julian Assange controversy and Bradley Manning's prosecution.

**"Are thousands of UK households who possess these books breaking the counterterrorism law? Should they not be informed about it? Should they not be required to destroy the books? Is this a solution within the spirit of the Law? For if we ban a book, how far are we from forcing the owner to destroy it? For if we ask, or force the owner of a book to destroy it, how far are we from burning this book? I am convinced that in this country only a tiny minority is prepared to burn books. The last book I can recall being burned was a copy of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses in Bradford*."**

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Focussing mainly on literature and texts, Kavvadias will present CIA files and confidential manuals alongside Islamist books and other texts that one may claim **'glorify terrorism in the strict meaning of the word'**. Deuteronomy, and T.E. Lawrence's 'The Evolution of the Revolt' are classic examples. More recent examples caused problems due to the juxtaposition of these viewpoints - one man's terrorist versus another man's freedom fighter. For example, David Miliband had difficulties when he defended the practices of the African National Congress (ANC) against the Apartheid regime.

**"I am particularly interested in sections 57 and 58 of the TA. In these sections it is stated that;**

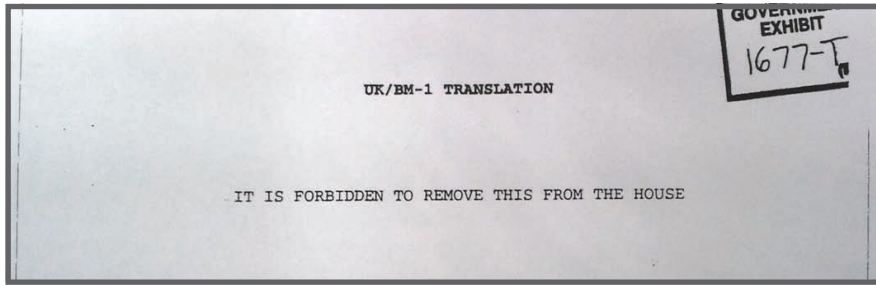
**"a person commits an offence if he collects or makes a record of information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism".**

**I am also interested in the 2006 Act where it is stated that;**

**"a person commits an offence if he publishes a statement in which he glorifies terrorism or is likely to be understood by members of the public as direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to the commission preparation or instigation of such acts or causes another to publish such a statement."**

**Xenofon Kavvadias**





**"My work deals with the limits of acceptability and the margins of legality, within the law, as an art and research project. I try to realise what can be seen, said or thought under contemporary legislation and situation. I am also interested in investigating the future of these books - could they exist outside an art project, or do they have to be destroyed?"**  
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This show is not centred on issues of faith, religion or party political debate, rather it is concerned with the exposing and questioning of what and why certain information is withheld from access and indeed may be deemed illegal to own, read or exhibit. Where are these lines drawn and who decides? Indeed should they be drawn at all? For, will they not change over time? One of the first books to be sensationally banned in several countries and defended in court by Penguin Books was D.H. Lawrence's 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' due to its explicit content (2 'fucks' and 12 'cunts') and the then socially unacceptable depiction of a relationship between an aristocratic woman and a working-class man. Would it have the same reaction if it were first published now?

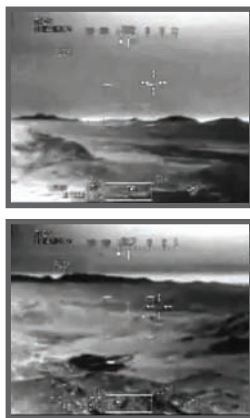
To this end, Xenofon has selected documents from a wide spectrum of contentious and opposing social, political and religious ideologies in order to provide an impartial and balanced viewpoint. During the course of the show, the most contentious books will be ceremoniously burned, each week, with the resultant ashes placed within handmade Murano 'Veronese' vases. The charred skeletons of the books void of their contents will be returned to their original place on the gallery walls. These vases were originally inspired by Paolo Caliari's painting 'The Annunciation' (c.1555). Subsequently referred to as Veronese, he was accused of blasphemy and tried by the Inquisition during which time he said;



**"Sometimes painters take liberties like poets or madmen."**

The urn's quality and elegance make it the perfect vehicle for 'Catharsis' and the ideal ultimate symbol for the concepts and motives behind this provoking installation.

Far from wishing to expose information that may put lives and/or liberty at risk, Kavvadias and Gift 10 VYNER ST aim to create a space of freedom and equality where visitors will encounter, without any didactic attitude or fear, part of what has been denied to them during the last decades due to terrorism and war. Additional installations incorporating both old and new media will also offer challenging perspectives of his oeuvre.



**"I believe that in the country where the Magna Carta was signed and Milton delivered the 'Aeropagitica', it is not impossible to differentiate between those who are against the values of 800 years of democratic tradition from those who cherish and believe in them. It is this strong belief that forces one to move outside of the comfort zone in order to defend these values and attempt to reclaim valuable ground that has been lost in a long standing war that the people of this country never really wanted to begin with."** Xenofon Kavvadias

**VIP Reception** 4 May 6-9pm **FirstThursdays** 5 May, 2 June 6-9pm  
**Exhibition dates** 5 May - 17 June 2011  
**Opening hours** Weds - Sun 12-6pm or by appointment

**IMPORTANT LEGAL NOTICE**

**THE CONTENT, VIEWS AND BELIEFS HELD WITHIN THESE BOOKS DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS AND VALUES OF, NOR ARE ENDORSED BY XENOFON KAVVADIAS OR GIFT 10 VYNER ST. FURTHERMORE WE ARE NOT DISPLAYING ANY INFORMATION OR LITERATURE THAT IS NOT ALREADY WIDELY AVAILABLE ONLINE. THIS IS A SERIES OF FINE ART INSTALLATIONS WHERE THE VIEWER CAN INTERACT WITH THE TEXTS UNDER STRICTLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. PLEASE ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR YOUR VISIT DUE TO CAPACITY RESTRICTIONS. NO PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED. MOBILE PHONES MUST BE SWITCHED OFF.**