

Mikres Afrodites

("Little Aphrodites")

Greece : 1963 : dir. Nicos Koundouros :

: ? min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

Kleopatra Rota [d]; *Vangelis Joannides*

Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω	□	≠	Z	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Remember Hyakinthos, remember Iolaos, remember Ganymedes

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

Films & Filming – September 1963 –
comment from the Berlin Film Festival:

“Nicos Koundouros, a wild young director from Athens, brought with him **"MIKRES AFRODITES"** ("Little Aphrodites"), a nymphettes and shepherds tale of copulation in ancient Greece, introducing in Kleopatra Rota a wistful Hellenic Lolita. The photography was conscientiously arty but nevertheless at times stunningly beautiful. A plaintive score for pipes was completely at variance with the film's primitive eroticism and brutality and served to emphasise the director's failure to create a film idyll, which – according to the

press book – he had been striving to do. Often quite embarrassing was Koundouros' predilection for legs of all shapes and sizes, bare, clad, wet, dry, pale or bronzed, shot from all possible angles...

“How were the prizes selected at this festival? From a hat perhaps. In any case all the gold and silver bears found an owner. The winners and the motivation here listed make amusing reading. Silver Bear – Best Direction: Nicos Koundouros "for '**MIKRES AFRODITES**' for the delicate and poetic handling of its theme"... ”

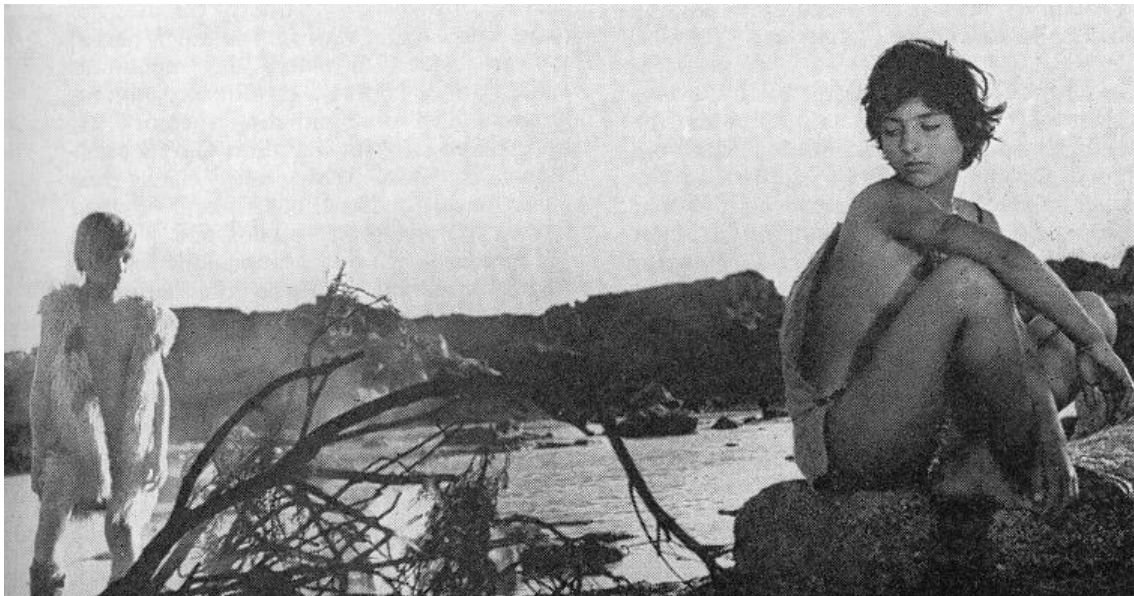
The Moving Picture Boy entry on Vangelis Joannides:

“In classical times, an apparently all-female fishing village is stumbled on by a group of shepherds down from the mountains. The youngest shepherd boy, Skymnos, is fascinated by a teenage girl called Chloe. At the end, seeing her seduced by another, he drowns himself.

Nikos Koundouros's "**LITTLE APHRODITES**" won many festival awards, and with its evocation of the pastoral world of Longus and Theocritus was seen as unassailably poetic. To some, with its interminable mooching over rocks, its symbolic dead pelican and gloomy bouts of heavy breathing, it seemed a load of classical rubbish.

Young Joannides' luminous study in puppy love [*sic*], however – "Skymnos" more or less means "puppy" – is hard to forget."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]



Hellenic pastoral idyll? Or self-consciously arty skin-flic? It's all Greek to me.

Source: Films & Filming Sept 63

No further information currently available. The two children in the second still are not identified, but the shepherd boy on the right is presumably *shepherd girl* Kleopatra Rota. Modern Greeks have always inclined toward indignant revisionism where the erotic antics of their ancestors is concerned, something of a problem for them with all that statuary to explain away. So of course the shepherd *girl* (perhaps there were such creatures – it seems unlikely) is very skimpily clad, while the shepherd *boy* is draped to the knees in a shag carpet. One doesn't need to be an expert on classical customs and sensibilities to realise it would probably have been the other way round. But then the plot as outlined above is hardly more sophisticated than a group of astronauts crash landing on a planet inhabited entirely by women, that old favourite of lowbrow SF yarns.

It's easy to see how a piece of basic rustic pornography might try to pass itself off as a lyrical poem on the simplicity of past times – less easy perhaps to see how a jury of film critics might be taken in by it. No-one was fooled, for example, by Tinto Brass' grotesque "**CALIGULA**" (80), and some not by "**FELLINI SATYRICON**" (70) either, both of which lavished inordinate screen time on "reconstructing" the general debauchery of imperial Rome. But whereas a cheaper and bawdier "**SATYRICON**", rushed out ahead of Fellini's by Gianluigi Polidoro, incurred prosecution for its casting of a 14-year old as the slave boy Giton, and whereas Mai Zetterling's directorial debut "**NATTLEK**" (66) created a similar scandal for portraying a young boy as witness to his mother's nocturnal orgies, the presence of a young girl in this film (and presumably not in a spectator role) seems to have passed without much comment. It's a double standard we're well used to.

However, since the few films set in ancient Greece are typically either tales of battle – "**THE 300 SPARTANS**" - or fantastic myth – "**JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**" – it is perhaps refreshing to see a film that promises neither. Minotaurs and Thermopylae may all be very well in their way, but the average Greek in those times spent more of his life chasing shepherd lasses. Or shepherd lads (oops!). Nothing else is known of Joannides or Rota.

See subject index under **BOY MEETS GIRL, DEATH / DYING CHILDREN, HISTORY, OSCAR WINNERS / AWARD WINNERS** and **SEX & SEXUALITY**.