

KVNSTHALLE ATHENA

POLITICAL SPEECHES

Private Initiatives in Athens, Ways to a New Visual Reality

discussion – Friday, June 27, 20:00

***Redefining Sculpture* discussion – Thursday, July 10, 20:00**

On Friday, June 27th, at 20:00, Kunsthalle Athena, is pleased to host a discussion under the title *Private Initiatives in Athens, Ways to a New Visual Reality* with Athens Biennale, locus athens, Frown, Snehta, 3 137 and Total as part of its Political Speeches series

On Thursday, July 10th, at 20:00, the discussion *Redefining Sculpture* with Kostis Velonis and Socratis Socratous who participate in Kunsthalle Athena's current exhibition *This is Not My Beautiful House* will take place.

Accompanied by raki and beer in our unique terrace.

For more information please contact:

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Or visit our homepage www.kunsthalleathena.org or our press page: www.kunsthalleathena.org/press

***Private Initiatives in Athens, Ways to a New Visual Reality* discussion**

Friday, June 27, 20:00

Realising that various new independent art spaces have been established during the last years in Athens as private initiatives which aim to recreate the visual map of the city, Kunsthalle Athena -being a space like that itself- invites **Athens Biennale, locus athens, Frown, Snehta, 3 137** and **Total** to an open discussion and presentation.

All six spaces, despite their different identities and actions, share a common passion and knowledge about contemporary art and through their constant activities they try to fill the gap of the state insufficiency in supporting contemporary art. All of them – whether they are run by artists, or by curators – are non-commercial, non-profit institutions. Their purpose is not to turn art into a commodity but to discover new ways of display, distribution and presentation of art, to produce knowledge and also to create an informal but strong network of information and collaboration between artists, encouraging at the same time new participatory ways for the public.

By being constantly aware of local and international art tendencies, they invite other members of the international art community to think outside the box and be innovative regarding the ways in which contemporary art is dealt with, outside the legal norms and the market.

All participants will be presenting the special identity of their space, their goals, past exhibitions and events, achievements and problems that they have had to cope with, but most importantly they will express their thoughts on how they envision their future. An open discussion with the public will follow.

Kunsthalle Athena, being a private initiative as well, will transform for one night into a platform for exchange of ideas, information, concerns and complements, hot topics and anecdotes, in order to reflect on the options of maintaining private initiatives in Greece during this time of financial and humanitarian crisis. Through this discussion we would like to revitalise an atmosphere of “freshness” similar to the one that sparked our initial vision for a better future in contemporary art.

The schedule includes presentations accompanied by audiovisual material and perhaps a performative mood. The discussion will be initiated by Kunsthalle Athena and will continue with the main presentation of the **Athens Biennale** (30 min.) by the keynote speaker Poka-Yio. A round table with 10 min. presentations and discussion with **locus athens** (curatorial initiative), **Frown** (platform for culture collaborations – project space), **Snehta** (artist residency programme and space), **3 137** (artist-run space), **Totál** (project space) moderated by Klea Charitou will follow.

***Redefining Sculpture* discussion with Socratis Socratous and Kostis Velonis** **Thursday, July 10, 20:00**

Kunsthalle Athena invites Kostis Velonis and Socratis Socratous - participating artists in the exhibition *This is Not My Beautiful House*- to a discussion about their artistic work.

Both artists, choosing sculpture as their medium, make a critical comment upon contemporary reality and undertake a new approach on art.

Kostis Velonis' sculptures, most often made of wood, articulate narratives that link personal stories to the revisiting of historical events and material cultural facts, including the stage production of avant-garde theatre and working class history. His intention is to evoke contradictory ideas, using the simple materials of a failed builder.

Socratis Socratous' work refers to an osmosis of politics and art, even though it often has actual political ramifications. At the same time, it mirrors the limits reached by the artist. His installations are often a composition of a series of photographs and the issues that follow from them, together with the utility of ready-mades, while his sculptures appear to refer to a 'violated' sense of reality.

The two artists will analyse their work as well as the course of their artistic production, their influences and points of reference, the way their work relates to politics, history and contemporary sociopolitical circumstances. Furthermore, they will elaborate on how forms and materials converse with each other, composing a potentially new approach on the role and the significance of art today. Through this encounter, they will attempt to share their visions with the public, as well as the other elements which constitute their artistic universe.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE PARTICIPANTS OF POLITICAL SPEECHES 2014

Athens Biennale

The **Athens Biennale** functions within an international network of large-scale periodic contemporary art events. It emerged from the intense cultural activity that makes Athens one of the most interesting places for contemporary art, and it aims to be an agent of constant change and innovation, provide a context for creativity and dialogue and constitute a wide platform for the designation and the critical engagement of local artistic production, as well as a forum of discussion and exchange with the international scene.

The Athens Biennale is organised by the Athens Biennale Non-Profit Organisation, which was founded in November 2005 by Xenia Kalpaktsoglou (curator), Poka-Yio (visual artist), and Augustine Zenakos (journalist). Currently the Athens Biennale is co-directed by Xenia Kalpaktsoglou and Poka-Yio. (www.athensbiennale.org)

Poka-Yio is a visual artist and curator, living and working in Athens. He studied Fine Arts and Digital Media at the Athens School of Fine Arts. His works have been exhibited in Athens and abroad. Co-founder and co-director of the Athens Biennale of Contemporary Art, Poka-Yio is also member of the curatorial duo X&Y. Since 2002 he has been teaching at AKTO, Athens Art and Design College, while since 2009 he has been working for lovetofly, a company for innovative branding.

locus athens

locus athens is a non-profit contemporary arts organisation founded in 2004 by Maria-Thalia Carras and Sofia Tournikiotis. locus athens' main focus via its exhibitions, publications, talks, residencies and community projects is public space. locus athens has activated mosques, schools, ports, squares, museums and various other locations in Athens through its projects.

Maria-Thalia Carras and Olga Hatzidaki have as locus athens curated the project 'a gathering', a solo show by Christos Papoulias at Rebecca Camhi Gallery, as well as two residencies (Cevdet Ereğ & Jonathas de Andrade) and a talk (Jonathas de Andrade). They are currently working on two projects; *The Space Between* group exhibition and an arts community project commissioned by NEON. (www.locusathens.com)

Maria-Thalia Carras studied History of Art at the University of Cambridge and the Courtauld Institute in the UK. Returning to Athens she wrote for several magazines and newspapers, and was responsible for a series of documentaries on artists of key importance in the history of art in Greece. The series was aired on National Greek television. Since 2002 she was assistant curator to Christos M. Joachimides for the international contemporary art exhibition *Outlook*. In 2004 she co-founded locus athens, a non-profit arts organisation with a special interest on the correlation of contemporary art and public space.

Olga Hatzidaki studied History of Art at the Freie Universität (Berlin) and the Courtauld Institute of Art (London). On her return to Greece she was editorial assistant for the Athens Biennale (*Destroy*

Athens) and text writer for the Biennial catalogue. She worked for Zacharias Portalakis Private Collection (2007) and then became director of AMP gallery (2008-2011). Hatzidaki collaborates with the Biennial Foundation. She was general coordinator for the World Biennial Forum No 1 (Gwangju, 2012) as well as for its publication *Shifting Gravity*. Hatzidaki also is a curator for the Artist Pension Trust (APT) for Greece.

Frown

Frown was formed in 2010 in Athens by Angeliki Chatzi, Marianna Christofi, Maria Varela and Konstantinia Vafeiadou. Frown is a non-profit organisation based in the homonymous project space, which deals with the production of a broad range of artistic events of innovative character in the sectors of interactive media and performance art. Its objective lies in the familiarisation of the audience with the methods and practices of new art forms, hence, their integration in the artistic practices and their involvement with the artistic product through experience and interaction.

Frown works as platform for culture collaborations through open calls. The events that are incorporated in the programme are divided into three categories: performances (performance art, installation, dance performance, sound performances), workshops (technology, crafts, body) and artists' presentations.

(www.frowntails.com)

Maria Varela works with new media and designs workshops aiming to develop strategies of collective production. She is a co-founder of Frown and curates actions in relation to the practice and methodology of new technologies.

Mariana Christofi works in the media as an editor and communication manager. Her research interests deal with the investigation of the procedures for immaterial cultural production and also the creation of networks for knowledge exchange. She is a co-founder of Frown.

Snehta

Snehta was formed in 2012 in Athens with the purpose to bring international artists in contact with the Athenian art scene. The collective consists of Augoustos Veinoglou, Giorgos Veinoglou and Becky Campbell.

The artists are selected to live and work in Athens for two months in an apartment in Kypseli. Snehta – (Athens in reverse) is a metaphorical name suggesting a deeper 'reading' of the city. Snehta aims to expand artistic activity and research in the city, whilst supporting practices aiming on contemporary issues through an experimental and ingenuous approach. Snehta fosters new relationships and collaborations internally and beyond the confines of Athens.

(www.snehtaresidency.org)

Giorgos Veinoglou is educated as an economist, with studies in the UK and with working experience in product sales and marketing. Even though not an artist in practice, he has great interest in visual arts and creative advertising.

Becky Campbell is a Scottish artist and curator based in Athens. Following her Artist's Residency at Snehta in April-May 2012 she left Edinburgh to move to Athens, where she is developing curatorial and artistic projects.

3 137

3 137 is an artist run space in Athens founded in 2012 by three Greek artists. The space is used as a studio and opens its doors three to four times per year to organise exhibitions and events such as artist talks, presentations and performances.

3 137 is a meeting point for creation and collaboration. An independent initiative that promotes artistic practices and supports experimental ways of art production, curatorship and presentation.

(www.3137.gr)

Chrysanthi Koumianaki is a visual artist. She studied Fine Arts and Visual Communication in Giannena, Athens and London. For the last four years, she has been working and living in Athens. She has participated in various group exhibitions in Greece and Europe.

Kosmas Nikolaou is a visual artist. He studied Fine Arts and Architecture in Volos, Ioannina and Milan. He currently lives in Athens and has participated in exhibitions and workshops in the Balkans and around Europe.

Totál

Totál is a project space in Athens, Greece run by artist Zoë Paul as a platform for conversation between artists and hosts a maximum of three to four exhibitions and events per year hosting Greek and international artists to create a dialogue with the city.

(totalathens.hotglue.me)

Zoë Paul is a visual artist who lives and works in Athens. She studied Fine Arts at Camberwell College of Art before completing her MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art, London. She recently completed a residency at the Cité des Arts in Paris. Her works have been exhibited in Greece and abroad.

Socratis Socratous

Socratis Socratous was born in Cyprus. He lives and works in Athens. As an artist, he works with photography and installations. He has taken part in various group and solo shows. Recent ones include *Gestures in Time*, Qalandiya International - Art and Life in Palestine, in Jerusalem, *Mapping Cyprus Crusader, Traders and Explorers & Mapping Cyprus Contemporary Views*, at Bozar Expo, Centre for Fine Arts in Belgium, Adelaide International 2012: *Restless* at Anne and Gordon Samstag Museum of Art in South Australia, and *The Newspaper Show* at The Breeder Gallery in Athens. He has exhibited at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Benaki Museum, Museum of

Cycladic Art, DESTE Foundation, Kunsthalle Athena. In 2009 he represented Cyprus at the 53rd Venice Biennale with his work *Socratis Socratous / Rumours*.

Kostis Velonis

Kostis Velonis was born in 1968 in Athens where he lives and works. He received his Doctorate in architecture from the National Technical University of Athens University of Athens (N.T.U.A) in 2009. He undertook Cultural Studies (MRes) at the London Consortium (Birkbeck College, ICA, AA, Tate Gallery) and Visual Arts at the Paris VIII University (Maitrise, D.E.A). Velonis has participated in numerous exhibitions in Greece and abroad. His recent shows include 2014: *The Theater of the World* at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, *No Country for Young Men: Contemporary Greek Art in Times of Crisis* at BOZAR, Brussels, *The Future Lies Behind Us* at AD Gallery, Athens, *Tout Feu Tout Flamme* at Lefebvre & Fils, Paris, 2013: *The Gra(m)mary of Puppetry* at Monitor Gallery, Rome, *Direct Democracy* at MUMA/Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, *HELL AS PAVILION* at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2012: *The Promise of Happiness* at the Signal Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, *Newtopia. The State of Human Rights* at Mechelen Cultural Centre, Mechelen, *Melanchotopia* at Witte de With Contemporary Art Center, Rotterdam, 3rd Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art *A Rock and a Hard Place*, Thessaloniki, 2010: *Loneliness on Common Ground: How Can Society Do What Each Person Dreams* at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Athens, *Pastoral Dreams in the Days of Bankruptcy* at Dana Charkasi Gallery, Vienna, *How One Can Think Freely in the Shadow of a Temple* at Kunstverein Hamburg, Hamburg.

Political Speeches 2014 are part of

***This is Not My Beautiful House* exhibition**

Anastasia Ax, Apostolos Georgiou, Socratis Socratous and Kostis Velonis

Duration: May 16 – September 11, 2014 (closed in August)

Opening hours: Wednesday – Thursday 18:30 - 21:00, Saturday 12:00 - 15:00

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www.kunsthalleathena.org

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