

10 December 2015

Whitechapel Gallery Announces Winners of the 2015 NEON Curatorial Award

Whitechapel Gallery is pleased to announce **Joseph Constable** and **Rebecca Edwards** as the winners of the 2015 NEON Curatorial Award. This is the first year in which two winning curators have been selected.

The award was established in 2012 to champion curatorial excellence, and is part of an ongoing partnership between the Whitechapel Gallery and NEON, a non-profit organisation in Athens. Building links between emerging curators in London and across Greece, the prize celebrates the exchange of ideas and innovations in the presentation of contemporary art.

Curators were invited by the Gallery to devise an exhibition proposal drawing from the D.Daskalopoulos Collection, which includes over 500 artworks by 170 international and Greek artists. The Award received the highest number of proposals to date, submitted by aspiring curators from Greece, as well as students and alumni from the following Masters programmes: *Curating the Contemporary*, London Metropolitan University and Whitechapel Gallery; *Curating the Art Museum*, Courtauld Institute of Art; *Curating Contemporary Art*, Royal College of Art, and *Curating*, Goldsmiths College.

The two best submissions received the award at a ceremony at the Whitechapel Gallery this evening, Thursday 10 December.

The judging panel for the 2015 NEON Curatorial Award consisted of three curators: **Nicolas de Oliveira**, London Metropolitan University, **Ingrid Swenson**, PEER, London and **Grant Watson**, Royal College of Arts, and was moderated by **Nayia Yiakoumaki**, Whitechapel Gallery.

Joseph Constable was selected for his proposal *The Labours* – a title taken from a photograph from British artist Helen Chadwick, which depicts the artist's naked body lifting a life-sized columnar representation of herself. In response to the contemporary context of Athens and its drive for creative self-organisation, this group show, including works by Joseph Beuys, José Damasceno and Pierre Huyghe amongst others, will explore how artists and artworks can create the conditions of rupture necessary for new modes of subjectivity. Constable proposed the empty spaces of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST) in Athens as the setting for *The Labours* – a symbolically appropriate venue currently in a state of flux 'where internal labour becomes an abstracted, performed bureaucracy.'

Of Joseph Constable's winning proposal the judging panel commented: 'Joseph's proposal presents a poignant commentary on the Greek crisis but is also concerned with the broader issue of art's relation to capital more broadly. He has considered an evocative venue, the closed or rather unopened, Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens and he refers to theorists' ideas that are very relevant to Greece at the moment, promising a very ambitious public programme to further unfold the concepts of the exhibition.'

Joseph Constable is a graduate of the Curating Contemporary Art MA programme at the RCA and currently works as Programme Curator at l'étrangère Gallery, London and Projects Assistant to producer and curator Jacqui Davies.

Rebecca Edwards was chosen for her proposal *The Ear And the Eye* – a two part exhibition to be shown simultaneously in London and Athens. The UK exhibition (presented at ANDOR in East London) will be comprised of a multichannel sound installation physically representing composer Alex Tyrrell's album *Memories We Made in The Computer Age*, whilst *Stop Counting*, an installation by Karla Black

Press Release

Whitechapel Gallery
77–82 Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

T +44 (0)20 7522 7888
F +44 (0)20 7539 3340

whitechapelgallery.org

Whitechapel Gallery Trustee Limited is a private limited company, registered in England and Wales, registered company no. 4093862 and the corporate trustee of Whitechapel Gallery, registered charity no. 312162. VAT no. 863 586 582.

will be displayed at State of Concept gallery in Athens. A dialogue will be created between both installations through the use of live recordings and projections in real time of the corresponding artworks in the two cities. The physical and the non-physical will 'be in a state of synchronicity' through technology. The exhibition will 'confront the idea of spaces' and what this means for art and the contemporary.

Of Rebecca Edwards' proposal the judging panel commented: 'Rebecca's proposal successfully considers the relationship between artwork, location and experience. She proposes a material translation; the melding of sight and sound, through a simple, yet transformative process. Rather than opting for the traditional exhibition format her proposal results in a curatorial presentation of a new relationship or constellation which makes it stand out from many others.'

Rebecca Edwards is an independent curator and writer based in London. An Alumnus of The Cass, London Metropolitan University, Edwards recent curated exhibitions include: *MWMITCA*, Lewisham ArtHouse, (2015), *A Statue Is Present: Stories of Melancholy and Raving Madness*, Royal College of Psychiatrists, London (2015) and *A Sense of Things*: co-curated group show, Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2014).

Elina Kountouri, Director of NEON said: 'We look forward to continuing this important cultural dialogue between Greece and the UK through our renewed partnership with the Whitechapel on the Curatorial Exchange and Award.'

Notes for Editors

- The NEON Curatorial Award is open to curators across Greece and London, including current and alumni students from London Metropolitan University, The Courtauld Institute, Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art. The award builds on the Whitechapel Gallery's local and international networks with academic departments of curatorial studies.
- Since the Curatorial Exchange/Award programme began in 2012, a total of 88 curators from Greece and London have participated to date.
- The NEON Curatorial Award is part of the NEON Curatorial Exchange, in which curators benefit from a four-day study trip to Athens and London, including guided tours of the Athenian and London art scene. The exchange is designed to open up networking and professional development opportunities for young curators. The programme is organised by the Whitechapel Gallery and has been devised and coordinated by Nayia Yiakoumaki, Curator at the Whitechapel Gallery and Project Manager of the NEON Curatorial Exchange and Award.
- The judges for the 2015 NEON Curatorial Award are: Nico de Oliveira, Course Leader on MA Curating the Contemporary, London Metropolitan University; Ingrid Swenson, Director of PEER, London; Grant Watson, Tutor of Curatorial Theory at Royal College of Art, MA Curating Contemporary Art. The panel is chaired by Nayia Yiakoumaki, Curator Archive Gallery & NEON Curatorial Exchange/Award Project Manager, Whitechapel Gallery
- Applications for next year's award will open in summer 2016.
- NEON works to bring contemporary culture closer to everyone. As a non-profit organisation it aims to create new conversations and a larger, informed society around the arts. It aspires to change perceptions and introduce a culturally relevant and cosmopolitan activity in Greece. Founded by art collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, and under the Directorship of Elina Kountouri, NEON breaks with the convention of a permanent space as the home of activities for a collector and instead acts on a multi-locality of initiatives, spaces, civic and social contexts, where activities are developed and public accessibility is encouraged. This constitutes a diverse and open space within society, where information is disseminated and the relationship between the city, the arts and its inhabitants is reflected.

- For over a century Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Walid Raad. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, art courses, dining room and bookshop there is always something free to see. The Gallery is a touchstone for modern and contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.
- For further information on NEON please visit <http://neon.org.gr>
- For further information on the D.Daskalopoulos Collection please visit <http://ddcollection.org>

Press Information

Melissa Emery at SUTTON
+44 (0)207 183 3577
melissa@suttonpr.com

Jenny Lea at Whitechapel Gallery
+44 (0)20 7522 7880
JennyLea@whitechapelgallery.org

NEON