

NEON

PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 28 September 2017

CITY PROJECT 2017

NEON commissions Kostis Velonis the installation 'A Puppet Sun'
Neoclassical Residence at Kaplanon 11, Athens
11 October 2017 – 14 January 2018

A historical neoclassical residence in the center of Athens is activated by NEON for the initiative CITY PROJECT 2017. Velonis employs this historical site in order to reconstitute its history and significance in public, while simultaneously addressing new and unexpected relations between space and works of art that develop in such a distinct environment. The exhibition is curated by Vassilis Oikonomopoulos, Assistant Curator, Collections International Art, Tate Modern, London.

In the context of the initiative CITY PROJECT, NEON commissions annually an artist to create a work of art exhibited in a public space for a specific period of time. Through this initiative, NEON aims to the presentation of contemporary art in public and historical sites, contributing to the interaction between art, society and the urban environment. The initiative is implemented for the last four years, with commissions to Zafos Xagoraris for his installation at a parking lot in the centre of Athens in 2016, Maria Loizidou at Kerameikos Archaeological site and Museum in 2015 and Aemilia Papaphilippou at the Ancient Agora of Athens in 2014.

This new commission by NEON is the largest in scale individual presentation of Kostis Veloni's work till the day. In 'A Puppet Sun' Velonis develops an exhibition defined by new forms of relationships between space and the work of art, inventing an experimental form that corresponds to the unique site of the residence at Kaplanon 11.

The residence offers an incomparable historical context, taking up an exceptional place in the social and political life of Greece throughout 20th century. The residence was first occupied by Pavlos Kountouriotis, an admiral who later became the first President of the Second Hellenic Republic. Subsequently, it was utilised as literary salon and private residence of important personalities of the Greek 20th century history. Throughout the crucial decades of 1910 and 1920 it housed the headquarters of the People's Party "Laikon Komma". During the same period, Eleni Zouzoula-Kanellopoulos, the first female author of children's books in Greece, established a literary salon in the residence. This became a central meeting point for literary figures, poets, painters and intellectuals that defined with their work the culture of the time in Athens.

During the Metaxa regime just before World War II, the residence was converted into a boarding house for young female students, "O Oikos tis Foititrias".

The development of *A Puppet Sun* reflects Velonis' desire to bring the multiple narratives of the residence back into existence, and spark a dialogue between concepts related to everyday life, privacy and politics.

Exploring a symbiotic relationship with the site, Velonis embarks on a commission that encompasses a remarkable range of different media. He reveals the contradictions and coexistence of cultural aesthetics and ideological narratives, by combining the comic with the tragic, as well as social, political and psychoanalytical elements and influences that are central features to both the history of the residence, as well as his own work.

Kostis Velonis 'A Puppet Sun'

11/10/2017 – 14/01/2018

OPENING: 11 October 2017, 7pm

Historical Residence at Kaplanon 11, Kolonaki

Free Entrance

OPENING HOURS: Wednesday – Sunday 12.00 – 20.00

For more info, visit neon.org.gr

Notes to editors

NEON is a nonprofit organization that works to bring contemporary culture closer to everyone. It is committed to broadening the appreciation, understanding, and creation of contemporary art in Greece and to the firm belief that this is a key tool for growth and development.

NEON, founded in 2013 by collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, breaks with the convention that limits the contemporary art foundation of a collector to a single place. NEON's space is the city. It acts on a multitude of initiatives, spaces, and civic and social contexts. It seeks to expose the ability contemporary art has to stimulate, inspire, and affect the individual and society at large. NEON constructively collaborates with cultural institutions and supports the programs of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art.

Kostis Velonis was born in Athens, where he lives and works. He has been awarded degrees from London Consortium (Birkbeck College, ICA, AA), Université Paris 8 (D.E.A), and a PhD from the National Technical University of Athens. He is represented in museum collections, including the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Athens. Velonis has participated in multiple exhibitions and residencies internationally and in recent years has exhibited at: Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (2017); documenta 14, Fridericianum, Kassel (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA); Antwerp – National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST) (2017); Casa Maauad, Mexico (2016); Padiglione Arte Contemporanea, Milano (2016); Städtische Kunsthalle München, Munich (2015); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); Kunsthalle Athena, Athens (2014); Museo Tamayo, Mexico (2014); BOZAR, Brussels (2014) and MUMA, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne (2014).

Vassilis Oikonomopoulos is Assistant Curator, Collections International Art at Tate Modern. He works closely with Tate's Middle East and North Africa Acquisitions Committee, with a focus on formulating Tate's strategy in the region. At Tate Modern he has curated the retrospective exhibition *Alexander Calder: Performing Sculpture* and also organised the 2016 Hyundai Commission *Anywhen*, with French artist Philippe Parreno in the Turbine Hall. He regularly publishes and lectures on contemporary art and is currently working on a retrospective of *Fahrelnissa Zeid* set to open in June 2017. Prior to Tate Vassilis has held curatorial positions in galleries and organisations internationally.

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