

NEON

PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 16 September 2019

NEON CITY PROJECT 2019

Panos Kokkinias: Stock Images

Commissioned by NEON

4 Sofokleous St., Athens | 3rd Floor

16 September – 3 November 2019

NEON reopens a former office space in the center of Athens to present a new perspective of the city and the people who reside within it, through a photography exhibition of Panos Kokkinias. *Stock Images*, is the first photography exhibition to be commissioned for **NEON CITY PROJECT**, the annual site specific contemporary art initiative, and is curated by Shoair Mavlian, Director of Photoworks.

CITY PROJECT is an initiative for public art and the city, conceived and commissioned annually by NEON to a Greek artist. NEON aims to activate public and historical places through contemporary art, contributing to the interaction of art, society and the city. NEON's previous City Projects include Aemilia Papaphilippou at the Ancient Agora of Athens (2014), Maria Loizidou at the Kerameikos Archaeological Site and Museum (2015), Zafos Xagoraris at a parking space in Athens behind the historic Athinaion theatre (2016), Kostis Velonis at a historical residence at 11 Kaplanon Street (2017) and Andreas Lolis at the British School at Athens (2018).

Stock Images presents different viewpoints of the city installed within the fabric of the city itself. This contemporary portrait of Athens is presented in an abandoned and disused office space, which has been left largely unchanged since it was last used a decade ago. The area in which it is located has also transformed over time. Often referred to as the 'commercial triangle' due to the area's longstanding relationship with the financial and commercial sector, this part of the city is known for hosting the head offices of several banks, a variety of small businesses, and until recently the Stock Exchange. As is so often the case, change is often abrupt and unpredictable, and the offices, in their current state of disrepair, remind us how quickly things can change, how time takes its toll, and how the modern urban metropolis simultaneously represents optimism for the future as well as failure, fragility and decay.

The exhibition

In *Stock Images* Panos Kokkinias constructs a version of contemporary Athens presenting a visual study of an urban environment and an attempt to capture the essence of our time. More than 20 images, captured in the years leading up to the summer of 2019 will be on display together for the first time to reveal a collective portrait of Athens, reflecting on both the realities and fictions of contemporary urban life.

Kokkinias is best known for his large-scale photographic tableaux. However within this new body of work Kokkinias presents three different photographic approaches, each one exposing a different view of the city: large-scale tableaux revealing mini narratives of the city; portraits observing everyday life, and incidental snapshots or stock images which are ever present but often overlooked.

Urban architecture and modern life is central to the project - observing the way we live and work, the way we move around the city, the environment and our interactions (or lack of interactions) within it. The economy of the city, mass production and consumption, noise and the fast-paced reality is cleverly juxtaposed with an overwhelming feeling of solitude. Capturing individuals, suspended in contemplation within an environment which is often chaotic.

As Shoair Mavlian, exhibition curator remarks, *"the exhibition presents the city from a variety of vantage points. From above, highlighting the expansive skyline, the view most commonly seen on tourist advertisements, and from below, exposing what's beneath the underpass, or through the windows into the domestic space bridging the gap between public and private worlds. Embracing the voyeuristic nature inherent in photography, each image offers and reveals a new perspective of the city both visually and metaphorically"*.

Notes to Editors

Panos Kokkinias was born in 1965 in Athens where he lives and works. He studied photography at the School of Visual Arts in New York, at Yale University (MFA) and Derby University (PhD) with grants from Yale University, Alexander Onassis Foundation and the Greek State Scholarships Foundation. His monograph *Here We Are* was published in the US with a grant from Stavros Niarchos Foundation. His work has been published internationally, among other in *Vitamin Ph: New Perspectives in Photography*, Phaidon Press. Kokkinias has exhibited worldwide in solo and group exhibitions, including Athens, Paris, Brussels, Rome, Madrid, Munich, New York, Singapore, Beijing and Kassel. Solo shows include *Replay* at Pallas Theater, Athens, Greece (2016) and Bozar Centre for Fine Art, Brussels (2012). His photographs are included in public and corporate collections in Europe and the US. He recently became Associate Professor of Photography at the Athens School of Fine Arts.

Shoair Mavlian is Director of Photoworks and curated the 2018 Brighton Photo Biennial *A New Europe*. From 2011 - 2018 she was Assistant Curator, Photography and International Art at Tate Modern, London, where she curated the major exhibitions *Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art* (2018), *The Radical Eye: Modernist Photography from the Sir Elton John Collection* (2016), *Conflict, Time, Photography* (2014). While at Tate Modern she also researched acquisitions and curated displays from the permanent collection including *Dayanita Singh* (2017), *Lynn Cohen and Taryn Simon* (2017), and *Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen* (2016). Recent independent projects include the exhibition *Don McCullin: Looking Beyond the Edge* (Les Rencontres d'Arles, 2016) and the publication *Ursula Schulz-Dornburg: The Land In Between* (Mack 2018). She lives and works in London.

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.

Exhibition Information

NEON City Project 2019 | New Commission | Panos Kokkinias

Curator | Shoair Mavlian, Director, Photoworks

Opening | 16 September 2019, 19:00

Exhibition Dates | 16 September - 3 November 2019

Sofokleous 4, Athens | 3rd Floor

Opening Hours

Wed – Fri: 12.00 - 20.00

Sat: 11.00 - 20.00

Sun: 10.00 - 18.00

Mon - Tue: Closed

Free Entrance

International Press Enquiries

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