

STATE OF CONCEPT ATHENS

PRESS RELEASE

a.O. - b.c.

An audiovisual diary

(*a.O. - b.c. = after Olympics - before crisis)

Opening 7 December: Talk with Elpida Karampa and Despoina Zefkili at 16:00 at Athens School of Fine Arts (Peiraos 256, Old Library) and at 20:00 – 23:00 at State of Concept (Tousa Mpotsari 19, Koukaki)

Exhibition dates: 7 December 2019 - 1 February 2020

With: Loukia Alavanou, Nadja Argyropoulou, Barking Dogs United (Nikos Arvanitis and Naomi Tereza Salmon), Bill Balaskas, Manolis Baboussis, Athens Biennial, Margarita Bofiliou, Mary and the Boy, Amateur Boyz, Voltnoi Brege, Berlin Brides, Kostas Christopoulos, Lydia Dambassina, Dora Economou, DESTE Foundation, Anastasia Douka, Drog A Tek, Erasers, Futura editions, Farida el Gazzar, Eva Giannakopoulou, Marina Gioti, Kyriaki Goni, Yota Ioannidou, Lakis & Akis Ionas / The Callas, Dionysis Kavallieratos, Eleni Kamma, Vlassis Kaniaris, Nikos Kanarelis, Irini Karayannopoulou, Elpida Karaba, Vasilis Karouk, Panos Kokkinias, Panos Koutras, Yorgos Lanthimos, Panayotis Loukas, Greece is for Lovers, Vardis Marinakis, Yolanda Markopoulou, Christoforos Marinos, Dimitris Merantzas, Margarita Myrogianni, Nikos Navridis, Nikos Nikolaidis, Orthologistes, Malvina Panagiotidi, Rallou Panagiotou, Maria Papadimitriou, Ilias Papailiakis, Leda Papakonstantinou, Eftyhis Patsourakis, Tassos Pavlopoulos, Natassa Poulantza, Theo Prodromidis, Kostas Roussakis, Nana Sachini, Kostas Sahpazis, Yorgos Sapountzis, Cristos Sarris, Fani Sofologi, Stixoima, Danae Stratou, Stefania Strouza, Thanasis Totsikas, Sofia Touboura, Nikos Tranos, Alexandros Tzannis, Syllas Tzoumerkias, Panos Tsagaris, Athina Rachel Tsangari, Jannis Varelas, Kostis Velonis, Vangelis Vlahos, Eirini Vourloumis, Tassos Vrettos, Poka-Yio, Despoina Zefkili, Mary Zygouri. a.o.

Fifteen years after the end of the 28th Olympic Games in Athens, Greece has not recovered from the crisis. Traveling back to 2004-2010, a re-visiting through the spectrum of culture reveals a lot about the climate then and now. In September 2004, following the success of the 28th Olympic Games hosted in Athens, Greece was slowly embarking on a - then invisible to the many - economic downturn. It led to the then Prime Minister George Papandreou to announce on April 23, 2010 (ironically the dark anniversary of the Junta dictatorship) that Greece is entering the International Monetary Fund support mechanism, the country entering a long path of austerity.

This exhibition sheds light on a five-year period of rich audio and visual cultural production in the interval between those two events. The prevailing global narrative on Greece at the end of the Olympics was a positive one: the cradle of European thinking, the mother of Western culture, succeeded in organising a highly celebrated aesthetically pleasing event that was viewed by millions all over the world. In just five years Greece would have a completely different profile of the front pages of international press, as a bankrupt country, not civilised enough, in a collapsed financial state due to corruption and over-spending of European grants for decades; a country that over-borrowed but was begging for more money. A country that wanted to deceive the economically stable Northern Europe, with Greeks portrayed as "lazy".

The exhibition attempts to first trace the footprints of this change over the past five years through examples of cultural production of the period, and to contour what kind of climate was prevailing in Athens by the end of the Olympics, but also to look for possible samples of utopian or dystopian representations for a future for Athens and Greece through the narrative of artists, filmmakers, musicians and designers.

The two main pillars on which the exhibition is based on are, to primarily raise the question of art and its relationship to the fetishistic narrative (of both foreign and Greek society) of contemporary Greece as a continuation of its ancient heritage as well as its reflection on the concept of Greekness, and furthermore to unearth the articulation of a new glossary that contoured the cultural production of the period. a.O. - b.c. aims to highlight the efforts traced in cultural production that formed the basis but also the introduction, to the current international interest in Athens in its post-documenta era.

From artistic collectives, curatorial initiatives and independent movements of filmmakers, to music groups with a newfound political discourse and experimentations through new media, cultural production in Athens between 2004-2010 was a nucleus for the redefinition of national identity, sociopolitical concerns, investigations and positioning but also a ground for a new discourse that described local cultural production in new terms in relation to its past but also the global international scene.

The exhibition serves as a sample presentation of a small section of hundreds of examples of initiatives and actions presented at that time, through the memories of the State of Concept curatorial team (Vicky Zioga, Electra Karatza, Maria Adela Konomi, Lydia Markaki and iLiana Fokianaki).

Catalogue Texts: George Tzirtzilakis, iLiana Fokianaki

Special thanks to Nadia Argyropoulou, Vangelis Vlachos, Ioanna Gerakides, Despina Zeukili, Elpida Karaba and Christoforos Marinos.

Opening times and dates:

December

Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA): Wednesday - Friday 12-4 p.m. (11-13 and 18-20 December)

State of Concept: Wednesday-Friday 4.30 - 8.30 p.m. , Saturday 12-5 p.m. (11-14 December, 18-21 December)

January-February

Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA): Wednesday - Friday 12-4 p.m. (15-17, 22-24 and 29-31 January)

State of Concept: Wednesday-Friday 4.30 - 8.30 p.m., Saturday 12-5 p.m. (15-18, 22-25, 29-31 January and 1st of February)

More information on the public program of the exhibition will be announced soon.

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