

CHANGE NOTHING

Daniel Tuomey, Michalis Charalambous, Petter Yxell

Curated by Panos Giannikopoulos within the framework of Snehta Residency

Snehta, I. Drosopoulou 47, Kypseli
Dimotiki Agora Kypselis, Fokionos Negri, Kypseli
Fokionos Negri, Kypseli



Opening: Thursday 19th July 7-8pm at Dimotiki Agora Kypselis and 8-10pm at Snehta

Open: Friday 20th / Thursday 26th / Friday 27th July 5-8pm

Tours: Friday 20th / Friday 27th July 7pm, starting at Snehta, I. Drosopoulou 47, Kypseli

Snehta inaugurates its first public art residency program, Snehta Fokionos Residency, with the exhibition *CHANGE NOTHING*. The exhibition title seems to work as a cynical imperative. It first comes across as a call to inaction, as a political withdrawal, but the inherent irony urges for the meaning to be reversed.

Its vague signification reflects the general frustration and confusion with the use of public space as the ground to claim change. Contemplating on the idea of public and publicness, it raises questions on the processes of change, stagnation, and most importantly on the desire yearning for change that revivifies the political imagination. The wry intent of the title is anchored in the area where the two-month research of the participants took place, Fokionos Negri in Kypseli. Fokionos, having undergone important changes in its social fabric, bears the projections of the fantasies of past prosperity -with a national and class framing- and exoticizations of the present-day life of the neighbourhood.

With public space getting gradually privatised and the private going hyper-public, a sentiment of exhaustion bewilderment and inaction is prevailing; instead of seeking other ways to reorganise the public body towards a -not yet here-, a less harsh futurity, we hold on to the problematic politics of the past. On the same ground, the use of public space seems to subside as well.

So how does art stand in all this? How does public art get into the game? A walk around the city brings forward very specific public art pieces: male hero statues guarding national identity; monumental visualisations of wet dreams of excellence, success, objectification of the female body.

The exhibition *CHANGE NOTHING* brings together three artists who address these complex issues of public space through performative actions and interventions. Through displacement and disorientation and using the space of the Municipal Agora, the pedestrian area of Fokionos Negri street, the SNEHTA gallery space and also nearby balconies, they respond to and revisit the involvement of art in the public sphere. Their work, embodying various forms - performance, ceramics, video, sculpture, installation and photography - demonstrates attempts to bring forward the voids and silences but also the poetic absurdities and the erotics of public space. With discreet and playful gestures they are trying to expand the notions of the public sphere and unfold its potentiality, opposing the dominant, the heroic and the monumental.

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Daniel Tuomey (b.1989, Ireland), taking the role of the city visitor, is developing a character that acknowledges and destabilizes the exoticizing gaze. He takes the position of a street salesman gone private with merchandise drawn from the most recent architecture, hawking modernism as an antiquity. In his performative, installation and sound works there is a concern with the public/private as external/internal, and the transgressive and uncertain moments of revelation or vulnerability that reveal or maybe even constitute this divide. He uses the balcony as a reference structure, drawing from its formal variations but common functionality. As an alternative to the monumental, macho endurance of a stone statue, he proposes the flexibility and transience of music or cloth, introducing them to the public in a subtle yet dynamic way.

Michalis Charalambous (b.1987, Cyprus) presents a ceramic vessel installation, combining shapes reminiscent of modernist structures and/or microorganisms ready to spread. These ceramics either demarcated or scattered in

semi-public space work both as representations of a sense of lack, of absence but also as objects of desire. Lust and absence are bound together. With holes and penetrating iron bars, they bring forward the importance of modernism - that frames the public space of the exhibition area - and its ideas but also its failures. To paraphrase William Pope L's Hole Theory, Lack is where it's at. To engage via these containers is not to know them once and for all. Lack is an ongoing interaction.

Petter Yxell (b.1982, Sweden), from a post-anthropocentric perspective, expands the notion of polis, including environment and non-hierarchical networks of relations. He plays with the perceptions of private-public, natural-constructed, placing sculptures of domestic objects into the public space and elements of the public sphere and the outdoor environment into the gallery. His work invokes relations of power in its inversions of them. Yxell explores the conflicts of subjectivity, otherness, heterogeneity, and the human status with its vulnerable limits. He poses questions in the processes of acknowledging subjectivity in specific forms of life. Looking into the fauna and flora of his research area he highlights these forms of life that are present but considered either invasive or simply overlooked. By recognising that an inventive cohabitation is constantly happening, whether it is acknowledged or opposed, one can start to expand the notion of architecture, the notion of the public, the notion of urban space, to account for and include more. In that inclusion, that decentering and that expanded solidarity, lies exciting possibilities for the new.

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