

PRESS RELEASE

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NEON CITY PROJECT 2020

The Athens & Epidaurus Festival and NEON present the first ever exhibition of contemporary art at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus

Dionisis Kavallieratos: *Disoriented dance / Mised planet*

Curated by Polina Kosmadaki, Art Historian & Curator, Benaki Museum, Athens

Commissioned by NEON

Odeon of Herodes Atticus, Athens

5 June – 3 July 2020

NEON and the Athens & Epidaurus Festival present the first ever exhibition of contemporary art to be staged at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus – the ancient venue situated below the Acropolis with a newly commissioned site-specific installation by Greek artist Dionisis Kavallieratos.

The new partnership with the Athens Festival comes amidst a challenging period for society and allows NEON to contribute to re-establishing the city's cultural activities and to reconnecting with artists and the public.

The project is part of City Project 2020, the initiative for public art and the city, conceived and commissioned annually by NEON to a Greek artist. Each year, NEON collaborates with cultural institutions to activate public and historical places to constructively interact through contemporary art.

The exhibition will take place in accordance with the health authorities' advice on social distancing, prioritising health and safety.

Dionisis Kavallieratos works essentially and systematically as a sculptor. His art describes a harsh and disrupted world of amusing conventions, theatrical absurdity and indifference infused with doses of irony, sarcasm and self-reflexion.

Staged in the pre-eminent Odeon of Herodes Atticus theatre and curated by Polina Kosmadaki, Art Historian and Curator at the Benaki Museum, Athens, the exhibition *Disoriented dance / Mised Planet* is an in-situ installation of a circular dance of statues. *Dance* by Dionisis Kavallieratos is directly connected to the types, rituals and kinesiology of Ancient Greek drama. Starting with the religious, physical and socio-political connotations of the ritual circular dance, Kavallieratos comments on the importance of community, companionship, friendship, laughter, gestures and physical expression.

The world-renowned Odeon of Herodes Atticus dominates the western end of the south slope of the Acropolis. The construction of the monument during the 2nd century AD was sponsored by Tiberius Claudius Herod Atticus, in memory of his wife Aspasia Annia Regilla. It hosted mainly musical festivals, seating up to 5,000 spectators. The monument was restored during 1952-1953 using marble from the Dionysus area, and since 1957 it has been the stage for artistic festivals of music, performances of ancient Greek drama, and more. It is the Athens & Epidaurus Festival's oldest and main performance venue, which, over the years has welcomed some of the world's greatest stars, boasting names such as Luciano Pavarotti, Frank Sinatra, Nana Mouskouri, Liza Minnelli and Maria Callas among those who have performed there.

With **City Project**, 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), Andreas Lolis at the British School at Athens (2018) and Panos Kokkinias at a former office space in 4 Sofokleous Street (2019).

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Athens & Epidaurus Festival is the foremost public cultural organisation in Greece and one of the oldest active festivals in Europe. Spanning 65 years, the Festival has welcomed some of the greatest music, dance and theatre artists of the international and local scene, attracting large audiences from around the world.

Up to the year 2005, the Festival was held exclusively at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens and the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus. In the summer of 2006, five brand-new theatre stages were launched at the Peiraios 260 industrial venue which has since emerged as a major springboard for contemporary art. Furthermore, artistic productions and site-specific performances are presented in other venues all over the Attica region, under the banner of the Festival.

Nowadays, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus focuses on music, with special emphasis on celebrated orchestras and famous soloists, while the Peiraios 260 venue highlights the latest trends in theatre and dance, inviting internationally acclaimed, avant-garde creative teams, and commissioning new works by talented Greek artists.

The Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus features primarily ancient tragedies and comedies by established Greek and international directors. Meanwhile, the Little Theatre of Ancient Epidaurus, whose reins were gradually handed over to the Athens & Epidaurus Festival by the Friends of Music Society in the early 2000s, focuses on experimental music and musical/theatrical performances.

Under its current Artistic Director Katerina Evangelatos, the Athens & Epidaurus Festival aims to expand its international scope through co-productions with world-renowned theatre and dance companies, as well as showcasing Greek artists, supporting artistic research in the area of performing arts, and connecting research with audience development.

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.

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