

NEON

PRESS RELEASE

21 November 2019

NEON Presents

Lynda Benglis: *In the Realm of the Senses*

Museum of Cycladic Art, Stathatos Mansion, Athens

22 November 2019 – 15 March 2020

Opening 21 November 2019, 7pm

Curated by David Anfam

NEON is pleased to present Lynda Benglis: *In the Realm of the Senses* at the Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens. The guest curator is the distinguished writer, critic and art historian, Dr. David Anfam.

Devoted to Lynda Benglis's highly original and prolific output in diverse media, this is the artist's first solo museum exhibition in a country that has played a major role in her life and vision: Greece. Spanning half a century from 1969 onwards, the select survey of thirty-six sculptures – amounting to a concise retrospective – will occupy the intimate spaces of the Stathatos Mansion, displaying a wide spectrum of Benglis's materials, imagery and ideas.

Among the media are wax, bronze, aluminium, marble, latex, ceramics and glass. The themes include "fallen paintings" (the iconic *Baby Contraband*), "knots", "lagniappes", "torsos", "pleats" and "fountains". Visual conversations arise between textures (liquid to waxy and metallic), colours (*San Marcos's* monochrome bronzy sheen versus the multi-hued papers made over wire) and orientation (horizontal flow opposing the totemic vertical beeswax pieces). The Mediterranean setting ensures that radiance and a lapidary sensuousness will pervade the whole. Likewise, the selection also stresses Benglis's many Greek allusions, especially to the country's ancient statuary – epitomized by how *Fancy Work* (1979) echoes the swirling drapery of the Winged Victory of Samothrace (c.220-190 BCE). Indeed, Greece has been a constant muse for Benglis's expansive imagination, which prizes the "frozen gesture".

In the Realm of the Senses celebrates a maverick artist who began as a female pioneer of Post-Minimalism in the late 1960s and still creates with exuberance in the twenty-first century. Describing Benglis's first wax reliefs as early as 1968, the New York gallerist and critic Klaus Kertess noted that "skin, pull, sensuousness" ranked among her primary concerns. Such intense corporeal sensations extend to the present – as Benglis's sculpture constantly shifts between fixity and movement, nature and flesh, with both grace and provocative boldness.

Notes to Editors

Since the 1960s **Lynda Benglis** (b. 1941, Lake Charles, Louisiana) has received widespread critical acclaim for her striking ideas projected into three dimensions. Her sculptures are simultaneously playful and visceral, organic and abstract. Benglis began her career on the cusp of Post-Minimalism, pushing the traditions of painting and sculpture into new territory. Her art encompasses diverse materials: from beeswax, latex and polyurethane foam to later innovative work with plaster, gold, vaporized metals, glass, ceramics and paper. Throughout, Benglis has maintained a fascination with process. Flowing forms, sensual surfaces, vivid hues and erotic elements pervade her abstract yet provocative treatment of the body and nature.

Selected institutional solo shows include: *Lynda Benglis: Face Off*, Kistefos-Museet, Jevnaker, Norway (2018); *Lynda Benglis: Bodies, Matter and Soul*, International Museum of the Baroque, Puebla (2016/2017); *Lynda Benglis*, Aspen Art Museum (2016); *Lynda Benglis: Water Sources*, Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY (2015); *Lynda Benglis*, The Hepworth Wakefield, West

Yorkshire (2015); *Lynda Benglis: Figures*, The SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah (2012) and a major traveling retrospective organized by the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2009). Selected public collections include: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Dallas Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Tate, London; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Hokkaido Museum of Art, Japan.

Among many awards, Benglis has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and two National Endowment for the Arts grants. This year *The New York Times* wrote that Benglis had “redefined sculpture in the 1960s”.

David Anfam is the Managing Director of Art Exploration Consultancy Ltd, London, as well as Senior Consulting Curator at the Clyfford Still Museum, Denver. Dr. Anfam’s books include *Abstract Expressionism* (Thames & Hudson, 1990); *Mark Rothko: The Works on Canvas – A Catalogue Raisonné* (Yale University Press, 1998) and *Anish Kapoor* (Phaidon Press, 2009). Since 1990 Anfam has contributed essays to more than 70 exhibition catalogues, including *Edward Hopper* (Tate Modern, 2004), *David Smith: A Centennial* (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2006) and *Pier Paolo Calzolari* (White Cube, London, 2018). Anfam has lectured internationally at such institutions as The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; and the Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Most recently, Anfam curated *Abstract Expressionism* (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2016–17) – the largest survey of its kind ever held in Europe.

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 culture has to stimulate, inspire and affect the individual and society at large. NEON collaborates with cultural institutions and supports the programs of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art. Every year, NEON presents an important international artist’s exhibition at the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens for which they invite a guest curator. NEON’s previous exhibition guest curators include Sam Thorne (Paul Chan, 2018), Douglas Fogle (Mike Kelley, 2017–2018) and Paolo Colombo (Mario Merz, 2015–2016).
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Museum of Cycladic Art, Stathatos Mansion

Vasilissis Sofias ave. & 1, Irodotou str., Athens 10674

Exhibition Opening

21 November 2019, 19:00

Exhibition Duration

22 November 2019 – 15 March 2020

Opening hours

Monday - Wednesday - Friday - Saturday: 10:00 – 17:00

Thursday: 10:00 – 20:00

Sunday: 11:00 – 17:00

Tuesday: closed

Free Guided tours

Wednesday: 12:00 – 13:00

Thursday: 18:30 – 19:30

(registration required via neon.org.gr)

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