

NEON

PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 11 October 2017

CITY PROJECT 2017

'A Puppet Sun'- an installation by Kostis Velonis

Commissioned by NEON

Neoclassical Residence at Kaplanon 11, Athens

11 October 2017 – 14 January 2018

NEON presents Kostis Velonis's *A Puppet Sun*, at a historical neoclassical residence at Kaplanon 11, Athens for CITY PROJECT 2017. The exhibition is curated by Vassilis Oikonomopoulos, Assistant Curator, Collections International Art, Tate Modern. Velonis has conceived *A Puppet Sun*, his largest solo exhibition in Greece to date, especially for the site of Kaplanon 11, responding to its history, architecture and position in the heart of the city.

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. Now in its fourth year of CITY PROJECT, NEON has previously presented Aemilia Papaphilippou, Maria Loizidou and Zafos Xagoraris in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively.

The neoclassical residence of Kaplanon, constructed in 1891 is the last remaining buildings of its kind in Athens. It was first occupied by Pavlos Kountouriotis, an admiral who later became the first President of the Second Hellenic Republic. At the start of the twentieth century, the residence was acquired by the Zouzoula family, when the ground floor became the political office of Apostolos Zouzoulas. In a period of historical significance between the 1910s and the 1920s it served as the headquarters of the People's Party 'Laikon Komma'. During the same time, Eleni Zouzoula-Kanellopoulos, the first female author of children's books in Greece, established a literary salon in the residence. This became a central meeting point for literary figures, poets, painters and intellectuals that defined with their work the culture of the time in Athens. During the Metaxa regime, before the Second World War, it was transformed into a residence for female students 'O Oikos tis Foititrias'. Later, during the Nazi Occupation, the residence was sold by its owners only to be partially bought back in the post-war years, remaining however constantly a student residence until the early 1990s.

An important part of Greece's modern history is connected to the residence. In this extraordinary space, Kostis Velonis' work addresses the site's lived experience and memory, investigating the powerful historical, political, cultural intersections but also personal narratives that are present. *A Puppet Sun* reflects Velonis' desire to bring the multiple narratives of the residence back into existence. His choices of material are not only meant to represent history, politics, or social developments but simply for what they are as they become an opportunity to experiment with forms and examine the conceptual potentials of art.

In this unique context, Velonis' work weaves through parallel stories with 25 new works and creates new relations between site and artwork, but also time, space and memory.

Notes to editors

Kostis Velonis was born in Athens, where he lives and works. He has been awarded Degrees from London Consortium (Birkbeck College, ICA, AA), Université Paris 8 (D.E.A), and a PhD from the National Technical University of Athens. He is represented in museum collections, including the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Athens. Velonis has participated in multiple exhibitions and residencies internationally and in recent years has exhibited at: Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (2017); documenta 14, Fridericianum, Kassel (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (MHKA); Antwerp - National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST) (2017); Casa Maaud, Mexico (2016); Padiglione Arte Contemporanea, Milano (2016); Städtische Kunsthalle München, Munich (2015); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); Kunsthalle Athena, Athens (2014); Museo Tamayo, Mexico (2014); BOZAR, Brussels (2014) and MUMA, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne (2014).

Vassilis Oikonomopoulos is Assistant Curator, Collections International Art at Tate Modern. He works closely with Tate's Middle East and North Africa Acquisitions Committee, with a focus on formulating Tate's strategy in the region. At Tate Modern he has curated the retrospective exhibition *Alexander Calder: Performing Sculpture* and also organised the 2016 Hyundai Commission *Anywhen*, with French artist Philippe Parreno in the Turbine Hall. He regularly publishes and lectures on contemporary art and co-curated a retrospective of Fahrelnissa Zeid. Prior to Tate Vassilis Oikonomopoulos has held curatorial positions in galleries and organisations internationally.

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

Exhibition dates: 11 October 2017 – 14 January 2018

Opening Hours

Wednesday – Sunday, 12 to 8pm

Free Entrance

Press Enquiries

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