

14 December 2017

Whitechapel Gallery Announces Winner of the 2017 NEON Curatorial Award

Whitechapel Gallery is pleased to announce **Caterina Avataneo** as the winner of the 2017 NEON Curatorial Award.

For the annual NEON Curatorial Award, emerging curators are invited by the Gallery to devise an exhibition proposal drawing from the D. Daskalopoulos Collection, which includes over 500 contemporary artworks by 220 leading international and Greek artists. For this year's Award proposals were submitted by aspiring curators from Greece, as well as students and alumni from the following Masters programmes: Curating the Contemporary, London Metropolitan University and Whitechapel Gallery; Curating the Art Museum, Courtauld Institute of Art; Curating Contemporary Art, Royal College of Art, and Curating, Goldsmiths College.

Caterina Avataneo received the award from Dimitris Daskalopoulos for her submission proposal, *And Yet They are Knocking at the Door*, at a ceremony held at the Whitechapel Gallery this evening, Thursday 14 December.

Avataneo's proposed exhibition, *And Yet They are Knocking at the Door*, takes its title of the same name from a short story (1942) by Italian author Dino Buzzati. Bringing together works from 13 artists from the D. Daskalopoulos Collection including Giovanni Anselmo; Mona Hatoum; Jenny Holzer; Cindy Sherman; Rebecca Warren and Rachel Whiteread, the exhibition addresses notions of human existential anxiety, death, paradox and fate.

The exhibition's proposed setting is The Hepworth Wakefield, where the show would make strategic use of the peculiarities of the space and its proximity to the river in order to evoke the sounds and setting of the story. By forging links between visual and literary works the show would aim to present a bilateral exchange of meanings and stimulate fresh interpretations of these materials in an immersive environment.

The hypothetical exhibition would be accompanied by a publication featuring contributing texts from Vincenzo Latronico, the D. Daskalopoulos Collection, The Hepworth Wakefield and the curator.

As part of Avataneo's imagined project, she has devised an extensive public programme including a series of readings, lectures and sound performances.

The judging panel for the 2017 NEON Curatorial Award are: **Ben Eastham**, Editor of *The White Review*; **Nadia Schneider Willen**, Collections Curator at Migros, Zurich; **Tina Sotiriadi**, independent curator, H+S Projects; chaired by **Dr. Nayia Yiakoumaki**, Curator Archive Gallery, Head of Curatorial Studies and Project Manager of NEON Curatorial Exchange & Award.

Of the winning proposal the judging panel commented: "Caterina Avataneo's proposal *And Yet They are Knocking at the Door* is poetic, innovative, and well articulated. Her departure point - Dino Buzzati's 1942 short story *Eppure battono alla porta (and yet they are knocking at the door)* - is evocative of the

Press Release

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social, political and environmental contemporary realities we face, while the selection of artists and the choice of The Hepworth Wakefield as venue are sensitive and precise. Avataneo brings together celebrated and lesser-known works in ways that would create a compelling exhibition.”

Elina Kountouri, Director of NEON said: “I am consistently impressed by the amount of thought, passion and originality presented to us by the participants of the NEON Curatorial Award. Now in its fifth year, the Award continues NEON and the Whitechapel’s commitment with developing cross cultural dialogue, and using contemporary culture as a powerful tool to educate and inspire. Caterina’s proposal struck a perfect balance between the visual and literary world, reaching out to ideas of continuity, mortality and memory.”

The NEON Curatorial Award was established in 2012 to champion curatorial excellence, and is part of an ongoing partnership between the Whitechapel Gallery and NEON, a non-profit organisation in Athens. Building links between emerging curators in London and across Greece, the prize celebrates the exchange of ideas and innovations in the presentation of contemporary art.

Having recently graduated in Curating at Whitechapel Gallery (MA, 2017), Avataneo develops and realises independent curatorial projects while also working at White Cube. Prior to this she worked at The Sunday Painter Gallery, Kunstraum and Whitechapel Gallery and with art organisations in Italy such as Norma Mangione Gallery and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. Recently curated projects include ‘Performing Objects’ at Kunstraum, London (2017), ‘One and Other’ at Zabudowicz Collection, London (2017), and a series of solo shows under the name ‘onepointfiveone’ at Window Space Gallery, London (2017, Feb.-July).

Notes for Editors

- The NEON Curatorial Award is open to curators across Greece and London, including current and alumni students from London Metropolitan University, The Courtauld Institute, Goldsmiths College and the Royal College of Art. The award builds on the Whitechapel Gallery’s local and international networks with academic departments of curatorial studies.
- Since the Curatorial Exchange/Award programme began in 2012, a total of 131 curators from Greece and London have participated to date.
- The NEON Curatorial Award is part of the NEON Curatorial Exchange, in which curators benefit from a four-day study trip to Athens and London, including guided tours of the Athenian and London art scene. The exchange is designed to open up networking and professional development opportunities for young curators. The programme is organised by the Whitechapel Gallery and has been devised and coordinated by Nayia Yiakoumaki, Curator and Head of Curatorial Studies at the Whitechapel Gallery and Project Manager of the NEON Curatorial Exchange and Award.
- Applications for next year’s award will open in summer 2018. www.whitechapelgallery.org/learn/neon-curatorial-exchange-programme
- NEON works to bring contemporary culture closer to everyone. As a non-profit organisation it aims to create new conversations and a larger, informed society around the arts. It aspires to change perceptions and introduce a culturally relevant and cosmopolitan activity in Greece. Founded by art collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, and under the Directorship of Elina Kountouri, NEON breaks with the convention of a permanent space as the home of activities for a collector and instead acts on a multi-locality of initiatives, spaces, civic and social contexts, where activities are developed and public accessibility is encouraged. This constitutes a diverse and open space within society, where information is disseminated and the relationship between the city, the arts and its inhabitants is reflected.

- For over a century Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Walid Raad. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, art courses, dining room and bookshop there is always something free to see. The Gallery is a touchstone for modern and contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.
- For further information on NEON please visit <http://neon.org.gr>
- For further information on the D.Daskalopoulos Collection please visit <http://ddcollection.org>

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