

PRESS RELEASE  
Athens, 31 May 2018

## Exhibition

### *Constellations in the dirt*

**Ano Kouphonisi, Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection  
(former elementary school)**

**20 June – 2 September 2018**

**Curated by: Fanis Kafantaris, Irene Kalliga**

NEON Organization, in collaboration with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades presents the group exhibition of contemporary art *Constellations in the dirt*, on the site of the presently formed Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection (former elementary school of Kouphonisi).

NEON collaborates with institutional bodies of culture and activates historical sites in artistic actions that creatively connect the archaeological past with contemporary culture. Through this collaboration, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades realizes an opening to contemporary art, underlining the timelessness of the creative process and the necessity for a dialogue between the “established” past and the contemporary artistic expression.

The exhibition will take place in the building of the former elementary school of the island, which has been granted by the Municipality of Kouphonisi to the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades in order to host the Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection.

Centered around the archaeological load of the Small Cyclades, Kouphonisia and Keros island complex – an arid land, but at the same time a “fertile” archaeological ground - the exhibition’s curatorial approach focuses on the ‘archaeological find’ and its position in the respective present.

What happens when the products of a civilization are converted into “findings” and appear as fragments? What defines then, the archaeologists’ process of composing anew a picture based on these findings?

Which would be the position of the “present antiquity” in the future? Through which route are findings translated from undefined fragments of material into recognizable objects and how does the interpretation of the archaeologist affect the view of the spectator?

The exhibition *Constellations in the dirt* includes visual works, sculptures, small installations and soundworks from the following nine artists: Hypercomf, Thalia Ioannidou, Konstantinos Kotsis, Theo Michael, Malvina Panagiotidi, Vasilis Papageorgiou, Kostas Roussakis, Kostas Sahpazis and Vangelis Vlahos.

The archaeological environment of the area functions as motivation for visual creation in two new commissions by NEON to artists Malvina Panagiotidi and Kostas Roussakis. At the same time, the exhibition opens up to the external landscape of Kouphonisia, inviting the visitors to explore and discover spots of archaeological interest.

The exhibition includes the film *Triumph Over Time* by archaeologist Oscar Broneer, filmed in 1947 for the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and highlights the archaeological landscape of Greece right after the war.

The exhibition is curated by Fanis Kafantaris and Irene Kalliga.

Co-ordination of the exhibition for the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades: Stefanos Keramidas.

#### **Parallel events taking place as part of the exhibition:**

14 July 2018 at 8pm

*Pina Bounce: Trumpetancy*. Sonic performance by Thalia Ioannidou

Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection (former elementary school)

27 June– 1 July 2018 | 7-9pm

Educational workshop for children aged 6-12 by Christianna Economou.

Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection (former elementary school)

For more information visit [neon.org.gr](http://neon.org.gr)

#### **Exhibition Information:**

Ano Kouphonisi, Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection (former elementary school)

20 June – 2 September 2018

Opening hours:

Wednesday to Sunday

10am – 2pm &

7 – 11pm (guided tour included)

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank the Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades – Municipality of Kouphonisia and the President of the Municipality Mr. Antonis Kovaio for his significant help in the realization of this exhibition.

#### **Notes to editors**

The **Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades** constitutes a Directorate of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports. It is responsible for all the material remains that have been brought to light or are preserved in the territory of the island complex of the Cyclades. These evidences of human presence date back to Early Prehistory and continue until the establishment of the Modern Greek State, in AD 1830. Such a broad chronological context incorporates many different expressions of the cultural heritage of the area: archaeological sites, monuments, castles, traditional settlements and of course a whole world of movable finds and relics that are selectively presented in the Ephorate's museums and collections.

During the recent years, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades has developed an extensive action plan aiming to manage the voluminous cultural capital under its responsibility. The protection and the thorough documentation of the archaeological, architectural, and historical data of the monuments are the primary, essential act of this initiative. Having successfully attracted important donations and having ensured funding through competitive European Programs, the Ephorate is working

towards the conservation, restoration, and promotion of important archaeological sites and monuments. Furthermore, the work of the Ephorate is also very much focused on communicating its work, engaging with the local community, keeping an active presence in international scientific and museological fora, and implementing new ways of expression. In line with these efforts, this summer the Ephorate opens up towards the world of contemporary art, wishing to underline the revitalizing force of the form and timeless inspiration, and the need for a dialogue between the “established” past and the contemporary artistic expression.

The **Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection** will be presented in the former elementary school of Kouphonisia, whose building was recently handed over to the Ephorate by the Municipality of Kouphonisia. This transfer manifests the unequivocal intention of the local community to connect with the archaeological wealth of the island complex that constitutes of Pano and Kato Kouphonisi, Keros and the islet of Daskalio. Honoring the wish of the local community, the Ephorate is already preparing the necessary museum plans that will not only highlight, through interactive and attractive ways, aspects of an important civilization that thrived during the early Cycladic Period (3rd millennium BC) but also will reconstruct an image of the islands during the ancient and byzantine times.

While the aforementioned project of the Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection is in progress, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades, in collaboration with NEON Organization, present this summer an inaugural exhibition of contemporary art which draws inspiration from the archaeological wealth of the islands and creatively reflects the cultural capital of the place and its people.

**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.

**Fanis Kafantaris** studied at the School of Architecture of National Technical University of Athens, where he completed an advanced post-graduate degree (Mphl) in Theory of Architecture and the field of Design-Space-Culture. He works as an architect and he is a PhD candidate at NTU of Athens. He has actively participated in research on urban environment and design and his works, individually or collectively, have been presented in group exhibitions of architecture and visual arts. In 2017 he joined the team of NEON Organization.

**Irene Kalliga** studied History of Art in the UK, holding a postgraduate degree from UCL with a specialization in post-war and contemporary art. Since 2014 she works in NEON Organization as Exhibitions Coordinator and Production Manager and has coordinated productions of exhibitions such as *The Theater of Disappearance* (2017), *AS ONE* (2016) and *Terrapolis* (2015). Prior to joining NEON, she worked at Whitechapel Gallery and Christie's auction house, London.

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