

‘Nurseries of the unconscious. Desiring-productions and group fantasies’

A site-specific project in four chapters and an epilogue

Artists: **Hera Büyüктаşcian, Viktorija Rybakova, Augustus Veinoglou, Kostis Velonis.**

Curated by **Christian Oxenius and Nikolas Ventourakis**



Yellow Brick presents ‘Nurseries of the unconscious. Desiring-productions and group fantasies’, the second episode of ***A Hollow Place***.

In this unique project, four internationally acclaimed artists are given the opportunity to inhabit, through their work, a natural cave and reflect on the role given to this space within our contemporary imaginary. Their interventions will populate the space individually and for a day only, creating a sense of an itinerant community sharing a place without claiming any ownership over it. Through their sensitivity, they

will highlight its physical elements of protection as well as constraint, its potentials as temporary home, refuge or place of contemplation. Their works, however, will not raise any claims over the space as their own, leaving no trace of their passing, thus underlining the ephemerality of our presence and actions, contrasting the natural space hosting the event.

For this edition, the works will then be presented as a collective exhibition, hosted by Yellow Brick for an entire week, where the artists will have the occasion to unfold additional reflections on their topics.

The curators initiated *A Hollow Place* as a reflection on the fractured relationship between us and our natural environment, caused by rapid urban development, a society driven by consumption and increasingly separated by specialised spaces. The schism produced by the incremental set of limits and thresholds between human condition and natural spaces, led us to eventually relegate its imagery to the margins, viewing it only as something that needs protection from our inherent greed. By framing it as fundamentally “other”, however, we lost the ability to recognise it as something crucial in the understanding of our own motives, in our own way of thinking. It is something that even in the case of caves, hollow spaces underneath the surface, forms our subconscious and directs our actions and desires.

Once the reign of dreams, monsters, the evil, as well as magical worlds, caves and the underground have disappeared from our common imaginary, more than other aspects of the natural world. These spaces have become “non-places” we only experience through underground trains we use to avoid the traffic of our congested metropolises, a hiding place for all the vital infrastructure made of tubes, cables and canals we do not want to see on the surface.

In its second edition, *A Hollow Place* examines the role of the subterranean as an “other place”, a heterotopia, of the unconscious. An interior space in which desires, conflicts, hopes, dreams, futures and presents all collide, shaping the way we act, react to external stimuli and create new social bonds. It is the space in which our inner being is formed and thus our societies and cultures take their forms. In order to develop this thought, the image of the nursery, a place we experience through multiple perspectives as new-borns and adults, serves as the departure point for the artists’ interventions. Through their works, the four invited artists will unearth aspects that link our sub- or even un-conscious thinking to dreams and hopes about ‘future us’. In a similar fashion, we collectively build fantasies around the idea of a nursery and the new life we associate to it. However, the questions raised by their sensitivity remind us of the hard structures that rule our bodies in society. Structures we sometimes hardly notice, and less so reflect upon, but that constrain our interaction with the world. The same ones we face for the very first time as new-borns in the cradles, separating us for the first time from the familiar and placing us in a sterile and machinic environment.

The space of Yellow Brick thus functions, similarly to the nursery in the last image, as the white cube where the gestures conceived in the cave are transferred to, and acquire the status of ‘Art Work’ as a product of the accepted societal canon. Similarly to a new-born placed in the nursery, they undergo a ‘process of becoming’ as dictated by the biopolitics of culture.

*: The cave can be reached only through a narrow path and the entrance has a rather low ceiling height, which visitors will need to navigate. The size of the cave itself limits the audience to 4-5 people at the time.

Program

15th May 2019 – Augustus Veinoglou

Augustus Veinoglou is an artist, creative director and art educator. Veinoglou's work is concerned with ideas of entrapment, sanctity and melancholy as the means of instigating desire, imagination and sensuality within poetically designed space. Veinoglou's immersive installation work stems from the re-appropriation of energy, material and architectural elements that describe the transitory state of situations and spaces. He is the founder of Snehta residency in Athens. He studied Sculpture at the University of Edinburgh and Art therapy at Queen Margaret University. He has been a member of the board of the ESW Edinburgh Sculpture Laboratory (ESW) - 2014-2016 and recently had his individual exhibition at the Erika Gallery with works inspired by the metro system and other underground spaces in Athens. He has participated in residencies such as: Dordtyard, Holland, 2015, Colm Cillie, Convocation residence, Rassey & Glasgow School of Art 2015, Zone d'Utopie Temporaire, 2017. Recently participated in KIOSKSOIK, A-Letheia, Documenta14, A Space revolution mini conference in the Biennale of Athens, People Never Notice anything in Guesthouse projects, London.

22nd May 2019 – Kostis Velonis:

Kostis Velonis is a Greek artist known for exploring the dystopia of unrealized Modernist and avant-garde projects. His sculptures, paintings, and large-scale installations are best characterized as craft-based compositions that construct allegories from the complex relations of history, class, identity, and the conflicts of the human soul. Velonis work has been supported by the MAK Center for Art and Architecture (Los Angeles, 2011), the Swedish Arts Council (Malmö, 2012), Casa Maauad (Mexico City, 2016) the Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart, 2017) and recently was a Stanley J. Seeger fellow at Princeton University (2018). He has participated in multiple exhibitions, biennials and residencies internationally. Most recently, his work has been shown at Kunsthalle Athena (Athens, 2014), Whitechapel Gallery (London, 2015), Lothringer13 – Städtische Kunsthalle München (Munich, 2015), Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea (Milano, 2015), documenta 14, Fridericianum, (Kassel, 2017), Museum of Contemporary Art -M HKA (Antwerp, 2017) NEON City Project (Athens 2017), Belvedere 21-Museum for Contemporary Art (Vienna, 2018), Leventis Foundation (Nicosia, 2019) Cranbrook Art Museum (Detroit, 2019) among other places.

29th May 2019 – Hera Büyüktaşçian

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan born in Istanbul and studied at Marmara University, Faculty of Fine Arts, (2006). Through her practice her works engages with the meaning of 'absence' within collective memory by reconstructing new realities or representations out of the existence of the invisible with an archeological and sociological narrative where she gathers different layers and aspects of time and history. She works as a storyteller, integrating metaphors from local myths, historic and iconographic elements. Water is a recurring theme in her practice, referring to what the artist understands as the fluid, aquatic nature of memory. Buyuktasciyan has taken part in many solo and group exhibitions within Turkey and abroad including 56th Venice Biennale, Armenian Pavilion, 14th Istanbul Biennale, MAXXI Museum and Dhaka Art Summit.

5th June 2019 – Viktorija Rybakova:

Viktorija Rybakova is an artist, architect and researcher from Lithuania. Her practice combines the academic and artistic fields, with her main focus being the human body and history. Rybakova is interested in the dialog of philosophy and neuroscience, the diversity and instability of human sexuality. After concluding a fellowship at Jan Van Eyck Academie in 2017, she moved to Brussels, where she runs studio laumes: an art, design and research atelier, together with Goda Budvytyte. Her works were exhibited at Fundação Iberê Camargo - Porto Alegre, Kunstverein Munich, Videobrasil (in 2015 and 2017) - Sao Paulo, The Baltic Pavilion at 15th Venice Architecture Biennial, KW Institute for Contemporary Art - Berlin, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art - Rotterdam, U-jazdowski - Warsaw, Contemporary Art Center in Vilnius, Tallinn Art Hall.

Curators

Christian Oxenius:

Christian Oxenius is a German-Italian freelance curator, author and researcher living in Athens. He completed a PhD research at the University of Liverpool on biennials, which lead him to collaborate amongst others with the Athens, Liverpool and Istanbul Biennial and to become Head of Research of the International Biennial Association. His interests range from artists' communities to storytelling, from poetic language to experimental critical writing resulting in a number of exhibitions and publications with an international relevance. He currently collaborates with Art for The World, Kunsthalle Osnabrück and other institutions internationally. Among his projects are: "*A contemporary art experience. A journey inspired by Rene Daumal's Mount Analogue*" (pub: Skira, Italy), Homeland – Canakkale Art Walk (Kunsthalle Osnabrück/Museum Felix Nussbaum), Postcards from Tarlabasi (parallel event 2017 Istanbul Biennial), Agora – Athens Biennial 2013.

Nikolas Ventourakis:

Nikolas Ventourakis lives and works between London and Athens. His practice situates in the threshold between art and document, denying one-way resolutions and offering an invitation to embrace ambiguous imagery, where the photographic is not yet real, and the familiar is a projection of a mix of memory and abstract thinking. In 2013 he completed an MA in Fine Art (Photography) with Merit at Central Saint Martin's School of Arts and was the recipient of the Deutsche Bank Award in Photography. In 2015 he was a visiting artist at CalArts with a Fulbright Artist Fellowship. He has exhibited internationally, most recently at the NRW Forum, Düsseldorf, the Mediterranean Biennale of Young Artists 18, and the Thessaloniki Biennale of Photography.