



# STATE OF CONCEPT ATHENS

State of Concept Athens

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opening hours: Wed-Fri 16.30-20.30, Sat 12.00-17.00

Group Exhibition: "I'LL OPEN THE DOOR STRAIGHT, RIGHT STRAIGHT INTO THE FIRE"

curated by What, How and for Whom/WHW

Marwa Arsanios, Lela Čermak, Dora Economou, Vlatka Horvat, Yota Ioannidou, Sanja Iveković, Adela Jušić, Gülsün Karamustafa, Rajkamal Kahlon, Mujeres Públicas, Ana Vujanović and Marta Popivoda, Theo Prodromidis, Želimir Žilnik

Opening: May 17, 19.30, with a guided tour by the curators and the artists

Exhibition dates: May 18 – September 7, 2019

We are happy to invite to the opening of the group show "I'll open the door straight, dead straight into the fire", curated by the collective [What, How and for Whom/ WHW](#) and inaugurated at State of Concept on May 17th.

Titled after a verse from a poem May 25th(1978) by poet, actress and anarchist Katerina Gogou(1940–1993), the exhibition "*I'll open the door straight, dead straight into the fire*" starts from the figure of women partisans in intertwined histories of Yugoslav and Greek anti-fascist struggles and post-war constellation of Cold War. The exhibition inserts itself in complex social landscape of Yugoslav-Greek relations situated in similar, yet historically differentiated political positions at the European semi-periphery whose histories of antifascist resistance led and inspired by communist ideas went into abrupt directions. In both countries, the recent re-patriarchization of society is one of many side-effects of political crises related to vassal position within European Union resulting in abolishing worker's rights, pauperization, rising racism and fascism.

The exhibition does not see the figure of the woman partisan as a heroic trope of salvation or a footnote of the histories once upon a time, but as a principle of praxis guiding the present. Trying to join various voices and approaches opposing the current conditions of re-traditionalization, enforcement of patriarchy and devastating capitalist growth, the exhibition taps into a crucial question of who are the partisan women of today. In doing so, it accentuates the key importance of artistic voices that by asking about the role of art and cultural production in politically turbulent time create actions that are at once political and poetic.

Having in mind the impact and the innovative female participation in historical and cultural dynamics, not only in Yugoslav partisan struggle but also in wider histories, female fighters and activists could be

considered 'partisans within partisans', whose complete histories and impact in various revolutionary process still need to be comprehensively researched and acknowledged.

While looking at interconnected Yugoslav and Greek partisan histories, experiences of victories and defeats of various temporalities of revolutionary female engagement, the exhibition relate them to wider liberation and anti-colonial struggles and contemporary feminist demands for total social alternative. *"I'll open the door straight, dead straight into the fire"* traces how individual voices and gestures coalesce in collective movements, mapping some of the possible currents of female emancipatory participation that run deep and wide, interflowing in the common stream of struggles.

### **Presented artists:**

**MARWA ARSANIOS** (B.1978 IN WASHINGTON, D.C., USA). LIVES AND WORKS IN BEIRUT, LEBANON.

Marwa Arsanios is an artist, filmmaker and researcher who reconsiders politics of the mid-twentieth century from a contemporary perspective, with a particular focus on gender relations, urbanism and industrialisation. She approaches research collaboratively and seeks to work across disciplines. Arsanios has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Beirut Art Center (2017); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2016), Kunsthal Lissabon, Lisbon (2015) and Art in General, New York (2015). Her work has also been shown in a number of group exhibitions, including From Ear to Ear to Eye, Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2017); Home Return, Maxxi Museum, Rome (2017); Let's Talk about the Weather, Sursock Museum, Beirut (2016); HERE AND NOW, Ludwig Museum, Cologne (2016); Thessaloniki Biennial (2015); Home Works Forum, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut (2010, 2013, 2015); Here and Elsewhere, New Museum, New York (2014); 55th Venice Biennale (2013); Meeting Points 7 – Ten Thousand Wiles and a Hundred Thousand Tricks, M HKA, Antwerp (2013); In Other Words, nGbK, Berlin (2012) and 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011), among others. Screenings of her videos have taken place at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2011, 2017); Berlin International Film Festival (2010, 2015) and e-flux storefront, New York (2009).

**VLATKA HORVAT** (B.1974 IN ČAKOVEC, CROATIA). LIVES AND WORKS IN LONDON, GB.

Vlatka Horvat works across a wide range of art forms and media, namely sculpture, installation, drawing, performance, photography, and text, presenting her work in various contexts – in gallery spaces, at theatre and dance festivals, and in the public spaces. Horvat's projects often involve gestures of rearranging both the space itself and the spatial and social relations at play in it: moving between bodies, objects, materials, the built environment and the landscape. After living in the US for 20 years, she currently lives in London. The Artist's recent solo and group exhibitions include: Buducnost (project). A commission for a public site billboard project. Zagreb (2019); Supporting Objects (solo). Eastwards Prospectus. Bucharest (2018); Cloud Pergola. Pavilion of Croatia at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, Venice (2018); In Eyes and Hands. Part of Strong Language programme of Off the Shelf festival. Sheffield (2018); Extensions, MSU – Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb (2018); Surroundings, Renata Fabbri arte contemporanea. Milan (2017); What Can Be Seen, A commission for Museums Sheffield. Millennium Galleries. Sheffield (2017); Means and Ends, Wilfried Lentz Gallery. Rotterdam (2016); In Suspension, CAPRI Raum, Dusseldorf (2016); Don't Stop, AAA (Art Altstetten Albsrieden), Art in the Public Space. Zurich (2015); Immeasurables, Zak | Branicka Gallery, Berlin (2015); Up in Arms, Kaaitheater, Brussels (2015).

**DORA ECONOMOU** (B.1974 IN ATHENS, GREECE). LIVES AND WORKS IN ATHENS, GREECE.

Dora Economou visits places, text and materials she has had a relationship with, either literal or fictional, takes samples and builds them into sculptures. Recent solo exhibitions include "Representation", Radio Athenes (2019), "Imbat Ambit" (together with Yasemin Nur) 2019 & "Mountains & Valleys" 2016, Françoise Heitsch gallery, Munich, "Naturalist", Ribot gallery, Milan (2015), "PREDEAL", The Breeder, Athens (2014) and "A Modern Hug", Françoise Heitsch gallery, Munich (2014). Group exhibitions include "Voyage around my Room", City of Athens Arts Center (2019), "Geometries", Agricultural University of Athens, "The Materiality of the Painterly Event" City of Athens Arts

Center (2018), "Reassembly", Tinos Quarry Platform (2017), "Hypnos Project", Onassis Foundation Cultural Center, Athens (2016), "Life Like", Transmission, Glasgow (2015), "Family Ghosts" Calling at Family Business, New York (2013), "Monodrome", 3rd Athens Biennial, Xenia Kalpaktoglou, Poka-Yio (2011), "Heaven", 2nd Athens Biennial (2009), "Point of Origin", Artspace Sydney in 2008, "In Present Tense", National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (2007), "Part time punks", DESTE Foundation, Athens (2007), 4th DESTE Prize, DESTE Foundation, Athens (2005). Dora Economou has participated in the following residencies and workshops: "Experimental Education Protocol" by Angelo Plessas, Sterna Residency Projects, Nisyros (2016); "The violent No! of the sun burns the forehead of hills. Sand fleas arrive from salt lake and most of the theatres close." by the Fiorucci Art Trust and 14th Istanbul Biennial, Kastelorizo, Greece (2015), Harold Arts, Ohio (2012), Palinesti, San Vito al Tagliamento (2009), Artspace Visual Arts Centre, Sydney (2008), Scanning Istanbul (2005), Triangle Artist in Residence Program in DUMBO, Brooklyn, Royal School of Architecture, Copenhagen (2004).

**YOTA IOANNIDOU** (B. 1976 IN ATHENS, GREECE). LIVES AND WORKS IN ATHENS.

Yota Ioannidou creates and revises archives in her projects, following a process of research (visits in archives and in situ research), collection (texts, images, data, maps, films) recordings, involving various ways of formulation. The formulation of the research material combines storytelling and formation of reading and performing groups on the research subject. So far in her projects looks into issues related to social struggles and movements with a strong focus on the idea of the local and translocal (i.e. most of her projects are referred to social struggles from the current Greek history related to examples that we find in other places as well as in past times). The Artist lives and works in Athens. Selected Projects and Exhibitions include: The Storyteller, the knife and the "machine", AGORA-Athens Biennale 2013, Ideological Guide to the Venice Biennale, Voice\_Over, archive installation and lecture performance, ISET-Athens, On the hill one happens to be sitting on: A tribute to failure, GOETHE-INSTITUT ATHENS-BAUHAUS UNIVERSITY WEIMAR, "Notes on Fear, SMART PROJECT SPACE, Amsterdam.

**SANJA IVEKOVIĆ** (B.1949 IN ZAGREB, CROATIA). LIVES AND WORKS IN ZAGREB.

Sanja Iveković is a feminist, activist and pioneer in the art of "new media" such as video art, performance, installations and the use of public space, was distinguished as a representative of New Art Practice an alternative movement that emerged in Belgrade and Zagreb after the students protests in 1968. She has presented solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art MOMA New York, MUDAM Luxembourg, and has participated in exhibitions in various institutions and events such as documenta 12 and documenta 14, TATE Modern, Irish Biennial EVA International, Manifesta, Gwanju Biennale, etc. In 2009, Iveković was the winner of the Camera Austria Award as photography was recognized as an integral part of her conceptual work. In 2014 she was shortlisted for the Artes Mundi prize, exhibiting her photography-based works, *GEN XX (1997–2001)* and *The Disobedient (The Revolutionaries)* at the Turner House Gallery, Penarth, Wales.

**ADELA JUŠIĆ** (B.1982 IN SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA). SHE LIVES AND WORKS IN SARAJEVO.

Adela Jušić is a contemporary visual artist from Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is known for her socially engaged art on the subject of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the role of partisan women during the Second World War in Yugoslavia. Jušić has exhibited in more than 100 international exhibitions (*Manifesta 8*, Murcia, Spain; *Videonale*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany; *Image Counter Image*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany, *Balkan Insight*, Pompidou Center, Paris). She has participated in many artists in residence programs (ISCP, New York; Kulturkontakt, Vienna; i.a.a.b. Basel, Museums Quartier, Vienna) and in numerous panels, workshops and conferences. In 2010 she won *Young Visual Artist Award* for the best young Bosnian artist in 2010, *Henkel Young Artist Price CEE* in 2011, and Special award of *Belgrade October Salon* in 2013. Her solo exhibitions include *Children of the (non) revolution*, Erste Foundation, Real but not true, Cultural Center Tobačna 001, Ljubljana, STEALTH, MMC Kibla, Maribor, Here come the women, Gallery Praktika, Split, etc.

**GÜLSÜN KARAMUSTAFA** (B.1946 IN ANKARA, TURKEY). SHE LIVES AND WORKS IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY.

Gülsün Karamustafa is a Turkish artist and since the 1970s, the practice of artist has encompassed various media, including painting, sculpture, collage, performance, installation and video, and her work has had a strong influence on younger generations of Turkish artists. Together with her husband, she was imprisoned after the *coup d'état* of 1971 for taking part in the student protests, and was denied a passport until 1986. This experience had a strong influence on her work. Her practice explores burning social and political issues in contemporary Turkey, such as questions of gender and sexuality, migration and exile, the role of religion, stereotyping and essentializing ethnicity, and the attitudes of the West towards the Middle East. Karamustafa was one of the laureates of the 2014 Prince Claus Award.

**RAJKAMAL KAHLON** (B.1974 IN USA). SHE LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN, GERMANY.

Rajkamal Kahlon is a past participant of the Whitney Independent Study Program and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Kahlon's work has been exhibited widely in museums, foundations and biennials in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, including the 2012 Taipei Biennial, Meeting Points 7, HKW, MUAC Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, the Edith Russ Haus Für Medienkunst, 21er Haus, the Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, NGBK, Queens Museum, Bronx Museum, Artists' Space, Apex Art and e-flux. Kahlon's work has been exhibited widely in museums, foundations and biennials in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia including the 2012 Taipei Biennial, Meeting Points 7, MHKA, HKW, MUAC Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Edith Russ Haus Für Medienkunst, 21er Haus, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, NGBK, Queens Museum, Bronx Museum, Artists' Space, Apex Art and e-flux.

**THEO PRODROMIDIS** (B.1979 IN THESSALONIKI, GREECE). HE LIVES AND WORKS IN ATHENS, GREECE.

Theo Prodromidis' practice combines historical research, fiction and documentary elements and induces a variety of associations by critically examining the relationships and contemporary operations of architecture, the philosophical discourse, the modernist and other avant-gardes, auteur cinema and devised theater techniques, amongst others. His work has been exhibited and screened in galleries, museums and institutions such as the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Nanjing International Art Festival, Les Rencontres Internationales, Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, the 1st and 5th Thessaloniki Biennale, the 4th Athens Biennale, Werkleitz Zentrum für Medienkunst, Fondazione Merz, and others. Since 2017, he has been the curator of the periodical screening program "Sunday Narratives", one of the contributors to the School of Redistribution that is part of the Future Climates program, and a volunteer at the Piraeus Open School for the Immigrants. He is currently a Visiting Artist under the Risk Change program at the Department of History and Philosophy of Sciences of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, a member of the General Assembly of the Institute of Radical Imagination and a co-founding member of the Laboratory for the Urban Commons.

**ANA VUJANOVIĆ** (B.1975 IN BELGRADE, SERBIA). SHE LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN AND BELGRADE.

Ana Vujanović is a cultural worker: researcher, writer, dramaturge and lecturer, focused on bringing together critical theory and contemporary art. She holds Ph.D. in Humanities – Theatre Studies. She has lectured at various universities and educational programs throughout Europe, was a visiting professor at the Performance Studies Dpt. of the University Hamburg, and occasionally teaches at HZT Berlin. Since 2016 she is a team member and mentor of fourth year students at SNDO – School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam. She was a member of the editorial collective of TkH [Walking Theory], a Belgrade-based theoretical-artistic platform, and editor-in-chief of the TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory (2001-2017).

**MARTA POPIVODA** (B.1982 IN BELGRADE, SERBIA). SHE LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN, GERMANY.

Marta Popivoda is a filmmaker and video artist, and a cultural worker. Her work explores concerns with the discursive power structures of the contemporary (art) world, intersections between performance and film, as well as with the Yugoslav socialist project, through the production of films, video installations and performance. Her work is strongly related to the TkH (Walking Theory), a theoretical-artistic platform and journal, where she is a member of the editorial collective. Her works have been part of exhibitions and programs at Tate Modern London, MoMA New York, M HKA Antwerp, 21er HAUS Vienna, GARAGE Museum Moscow, Beirut Art Center, Musée de la danse Rennes, Museum of Modern Art + MSUM Ljubljana, Arsenal Institut für Film und Videokunst, HAU – Hebbel am Ufer, SAVVY Contemporary, NGBK Gallery, and District Berlin, Kampnagel Hamburg, Matadero and La Casa Encendida Madrid, etc.

**ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK** (B.1942 IN NOVI SAD, SERBIA). HE LIVES AND WORKS IN NOVI SAD.

From his beginnings in the lively amateur film scene of Yugoslavia in the 1960s, filmmaker Želimir Žilnik has gone on to make more than fifty films, including a number of feature films and TV productions, often in the genre of docudrama. He received international recognition early on, winning the Golden Bear for Best Film at the 1969 Berlin International Film Festival for *Early Works*. In the 1970s his films encountered political opposition, and he left Yugoslavia for West Germany, where he realized several independent films, including some of the earliest films dealing with the topic of guest workers. In the 1980s, after leaving Germany—due to his films once again facing political opposition and censorship—and returning to Yugoslavia, he made numerous TV and feature films through which he portrayed early symptoms of the country's growing social conflicts, continuing in the 1990s with films dealing with the maladies of the post-socialist transition as well as questions of migration.

**LELA ČERMAK** (1921 -1999, LIVED IN ZAGREB, CROATIA).

Lela Čermak was a painter and restaurateur. During the WWII, she joined Yugoslav partisan resistance and worked at one of the most prominent antifascist press "Naprijed" ("Forward"). She has exhibited in numerous partisan exhibitions during and after the war.

Since 1952, she has been working at the Conservation Institute in Zagreb, specialized in the Cortauld Institute of Art and the National Gallery in London (1954/55, 1956/57). She was a director of the Institute from 1968 until her retirement in 1979.

**MUJERES PUBLICAS** (2006, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA).

Mujeres Públicas is a Feminist Group of Visual Activism, a term that allows it to underline its intention to work between the visual arts and political activism as a favorable and effective crossroads in the communication of its feminist ideas. Selected works include *Monument to revolution*, Athens (2017); *Efemerides II*, Borges Cultural Center, Buenos Aires (2017); *Feminism in politics!* Pratt Manhattan Gallery, NY (2016); *Fragmentos de un hacer feminista*, Emilio Caraffa Museum, Córdoba (2016); *Mitominas, 30 años después*, Recoleta Cultural Center, Buenos Aires (2016); *Bandera resistencia*, House of Cultures, Resistencia (2015); *Lee mis labios*, Theoretical art + thought, San José (2015); *Cuerpo y Poder*, Pasaje Fuencarral, Madrid (2014); *Really useful knowledge*. Galerija Nova, Zagreb (2014); *Rainbow in the dark*. SALT Galata, Istanbul (2014).

## About the curators:

The exhibition is curated by WHAT, HOW & FOR WHOM/WHW, a curatorial collective formed in 1999 and based in Zagreb and Berlin. Its members designer and publicist Dejan Kršić. Since 2003 WHW collective has been running the program of Gallery Nova, a city-owned gallery in Zagreb.

Since the first exhibition in 2000, WHW curated numerous international projects, among which are *Collective Creativity*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, 2005; 11th Istanbul Biennial *What Keeps Mankind Alive?*, Istanbul, 2009; and *One Needs to Live Self-Confidently...Watching*, Croatian pavilion at 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial, 2011. Recent projects include *My Sweet Little Lamb, (everything we see can also be otherwise)*, (co-curated with Kathrin Rhomberg), various locations in Zagreb, 2016/2017; *Everything we see could also be otherwise (My sweet little lamb)*, (co-curated with Kathrin Rhomberg and Emily Pethick), The Showroom, London, 2017; Želimir Žilnik: *Shadow citizens*, Edit Russ Haus für Medienkunst, Oldenburg; 2<sup>nd</sup> Industrial Art Biennial, *On the shoulders of the fallen giants*, Rijeka, Pula, Labin, Raša, Vodnjan, 2018...

In 2018 WHW launched a new international study program for emerging artists called WHW Akademija, based in Zagreb. In March 2019 members of WHW Ivet Ćurlin, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolović were appointed as artistic directors of Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna. WHW as a collective continues working in Zagreb with collective activities coordinated by WHW member Ana Dević.

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