

## **"Eleonas '23 - Chthonic and Anthropocene"**

**Organised by RIZES POLITISMOU AMKE**

**Curated by Dimitris Trikas**

The art exhibition "Eleonas '23 - Chthonic and Anthropocene" hosts the works of 48 artists, accompanied by a rich public program, performances, and other activities. It focuses on the Chthonic element and the Anthropocene era, exploring their conflict and dialogue within the Eleonas area, which serves as both the field of study and the point of reference.

The exhibition, encompassing artworks, speeches, and project activities, aims to highlight the critical and complex situations arising from the ongoing dialogue and conflict between Nature and Man. These polarities dominate the region due to the profound human imprint, and the exhibition delves into the relationship between the past and the present, and vice versa. Eleonas, once renowned during Peisistratus, evolved over time due to human choices, transforming from fertile agricultural land into barren wasteland by the 1960s, a consequence of anarchic industrialization.

The Chthonic and Archeological aspects are showcased with the fertility of the soil and the ritual dimension of the Iera Odos path of mysteries. Simultaneously, the Anthropocene era is depicted through human activity's reflection in the political and economic development of the region. This chronological journey reveals the destructive consequences on nature and the landscape, left by the human footprint. It raises the critical question regarding the present and the future of the region, and beyond: "What should we do now?"

### **A SECTION IN THE BODY OF IERA ODOS STREET**

In the urban area, where Marconi Street intersects Iera Odos street, serving as the "border" between the Municipality of Athens and the Municipality of Aigaleo, you'll find several noteworthy features. These include the archaeological site with the foundations of the ancient Kifissos bridge, Eleonas Metro Station, containers, and warehouses situated in an adjacent STA.SY plot, all of which date back to the excavation period and the extension of Metro Line 3. Additionally, there's the "Souzy Tros" space by Maria Papadimitriou and the Marconi neighborhood, which stands out as a unique social enclave within the vicinity.

These spaces are also exhibition spaces. The participating artists, performances, and public program will engage in discussions about contemporary art. They draw upon archeological and photographic materials from Mania Benisi and Maria Papadimitriou, sourced from the broader area. Furthermore, the speakers will contribute to the discourse with scientific insights, delving into the history and current state of the region. The overarching aim is to underscore the stratigraphic underpinnings of the Athenian metropolis and the enduring anthropogenic impact that reverberates within the city's essence and sense of body. *"The Marconi neighborhood is one of those neighborhoods that one encounters in big cities. Forgotten, without any infrastructure, they are usually located near industries. After all, they*

create them. In the heart of the city, but well hidden "cities of silence", as Gramsci calls them. Yards, detached houses, fields, mudflats. Marconi, the "flower of evil", is located in the most abandoned area of Athens, in Eleonas. Industries, crafts, tanneries, junkyards, foundries, transport agencies, car graveyards and the Naval Base. The subsoil of Eleonas as an Athenian example is a thorough record that tells the full story of the formation of its landscape. In this neighborhood one reads the writings left by the human hand. New traces, man-made, are registered in the record of the reconstructed Athenian land. The clay soil smells of livelihood." (The Olive Tree of Athens - Space and people over time, Ropaitou - Tsapareli Zoi, Philippotis Publishing, June 2006)

*"In the organic body of the city, its growth and development are inscribed layer by layer, the spaces it breathes and those from which it feeds, the places of worship and theft, and those of its waste and stench. Its interactions with its human society are also inscribed, as well as with other races, its periods of glory and the times of its devastating raids and conquests of its body as Körper. Materials of minimal value to both the geologist and the archaeologist, which admit to a single lexical stratigraphy description according to ISO before fading into oblivion: "anthropogenic deposits". What do the deposits add? Who brings them? The weather? The people? What do they show? Erosion and corrosion, removal, and addition; displacement and sedimentation; abandonment or creation in the cycle of life? A neo-archaeology of the place would become interesting if it aimed at a phenomenological reading of the subsoil. And perhaps then a third column would be written in its register, where the 'Leib' (body) of Athenian land would speak." (Educational Cultural Infrastructures: The Case of the Athens Metropolitan Railway as an Educational Tool, Mania Benisi, MSc Thesis, NTUA School of Architecture, 2021)*

So, we will find ourselves at the intersection of the fertile soil of Eleonas during the time of Peisistratus and the rich agricultural land of rural Athens up until the 1960s, contrasted with the "dead land" that human activities and the economy of the past sixty years have led to, and which continues with the impending "gentrification" of the area. In other words, these spaces will function as research fields and contemporary Wunderkammer, narrating and interpreting both old and new stories of the people and the cities along Iera Odos through their artworks and discussions. This will be achieved through a dialogue and coexistence that reflects the catastrophes and transformations of the landscape and the human geography of the region.

## **ANTHROPOCENE**

### **A UNIFYING TERM FOR THE HUMAN RACE**

Anthropocene: the catalyst for a comprehensive understanding of the trajectory of human existence within its immediate and broader environment, as a globalized condition encompassing the visible and measurable outcomes of all parameters shaped by human influence.

In the Athenian neighborhood, the Anthropocene is readily discernible along the path of Iera Odos, tracing the transition from nature to technological civilization in the stratigraphic layers of Eleonas and Eleusis. The time zero, now, is etched upon the surface of the disorderly,

scarred Eleonas and the cultural treasure of Eleusis. Our yesterdays and days before are inscribed in the soil saturated with pollutants, underground, and seawater. As the stratigraphy of the Anthropocene reflects itself with carelessly discarded or transported materials, the corresponding human geography is dominated by transient populations with short-term residence, devoid of any prospect of establishing a rooted connection with this place. This stands in stark contrast to its inherently fertile and always hospitable land.

**PARTICIPATING ARTISTS** \_ Dimitris Alitheinos, Dimitris Ameladiotis (performance), Avgoustos Veinoglou, Mpampis Venetopoulos, Dimitris Georgakopoulos, Giorgos Giparakis, Collectif MASI (performance), Campus Novel, Stella Dimitrakopoulou (performance), Martha Dimitropoulou, VIII Painting Workshop ASFA, Giorgos Zampoulakis with Chryssa Karousi, Anastasia Kiritsi, Vasiliki Lentza, Georgia Milona and Asimina Christopoulou (performance), Theodoros Zafeiropoulos, Vasia Zorbali (performance), Capten, Michail Karikis, Katerina Katsifaraki, Dimitris Kontodimos, Zisis Kotionis, Alex Loyloydis (performance), Nikos Moschos, Pandora Mouriki, Mania Benissi, Dafni Nitsou, Maria Ikonomopoulou, Maria Papadimitriou, Nikos Papadimitriou, Myrto Papadopoulou, Eleni Panouklia, Kostas Pappas, Vivi Perysinaki, Lea Roussopoulou, Vasilis Skylakos, Marios Spiliopoulos, Danai Stratou, Stefania Strouza, Savvas Stroubos with Elli Igliz (performance), Theodoros Terzopoulos (talk), Tassos Triantafyllou, Giorgos Tsakiris, Giorgos Tserionis, Filippos Tsitsopoulos (performance), Ehsan Fardjadinya, Marios Fournaris, magazine FRMK (performance), Pantelis Handris, Vivetta Christouli, Dionisis Christofilogiannis.

**SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS:**

Mania Benissi, photographer, MSc Arch. Eng. NTUA / MSc Geol. Eng. Imperial College.

Calliope Papaggeli, archaeologist, Honorary Department Head of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and Museums of the West Attica Antiquities Authority.

**EXHIBITION ASSISTANTS / WORK TEXTS:** Athina Lasithiotaki, Katerina Milesi

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER:** Pantelis Vitaliotis

**VOLUNTEER MANAGER:** Sia Stamatopoulou

**COMMUNICATION MANAGER:** Elpida Charitou

**INFORMATION**

**DURATION**

SEPTEMBER 29 TO DECEMBER 3, 2023

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY

14:30 - 20:30

**LOCATIONS**

INTERNAL SPACES OF ELEONAS METRO STATION

METRO CONSTRUCTION SITE - SPACE STA.SY MARCONI 3

ANCIENT BRIDGE ON KIFISSOS RIVER (part of the ancient Iera Odos), ELEONAS METRO STATION

MARCONI NEIGHBORHOOD, ON MARCONI & MADARON STREETS

CONSTRUCTION SITE B - entrance from Marconi neighborhood

THE **SPEECHES AND ROUND TABLES** ARE HELD AT THE ELLINIKO MOLIVI CULTURE CENTER, Iera Odos 154 & Naxou str.