

AKINOLIS  
PRESENTS

OPENING Thursday  
June 13th

# Fitzcarraldo

By Theo Michael

IN COLLABORATION  
WITH ROMAIN BILTON

June 14th -  
September 8th

Supporting Creativity

**NEON**





## FITZCARRALDO

Alkinois is pleased to present «FITZCARRALDO,» the new solo installation by Greek artist Theo Michael, with the support of NEON.

Inspired by Werner Herzog's cinematic masterpiece, this in situ intervention challenges traditional art hierarchies and presentation methods within a dedicated exhibition space. Over the past weeks, since his return to Greece, Theo Michael has meticulously explored the quarries around Mount Pentelis, the historic origin of the Parthenon's marble, to source massive rocks for this installation. By reflecting on the ancient techniques of extracting and transporting marble, Michael performs an act where not only the stones themselves become the primary artwork, but also the process of their extraction and transportation, relegating the accompanying sculptures to a secondary role. This performative gesture disrupts conventional art display, inviting viewers to rethink the relationship between art and space.

The installation, which occupies a significant portion of the exhibition area, comprises large marble rocks arranged to create a sculptural volume that balances meticulous assembly with the aesthetics of ruin. This work blurs the lines between historical and ahistorical, indoor land art, and the reflection on ancient skills and lost technologies.

«FITZCARRALDO» extends beyond mere sculpture to engage with architecture, social interaction, and meditation. The stones form a space within a space, evoking archaeological sites and fostering a unique landscape for social interaction throughout the exhibition. These boulders serve as metaphorical and practical anchors, prompting viewers to reimagine norms and traditional concepts of living spaces.

On the surrounding walls and spread around on the floor, Michael presents sculptures that explore archetypal forms with ancient Greek references and futuristic aspects. These pieces, depicting animals, undefined creatures and abstract stelae, reinforce the timeless nature of the installation's themes.

«FITZCARRALDO» is curated by Alix Janta-Polczynski in collaboration with Romain Bitton. The show will be on display at Alkinois Space all throughout the summer, inviting visitors to engage with this unique blend of archaeology and science fiction, history and modernity, and to experience a redefined approach to art and social space.









## NOTES BY THE ARTIST

It's been baffling trying to figure out what I'm doing for this show... so I have to open up and be maybe too honest at moments...but I need to start somewhere:

“Fitzcarraldo “ is primarily an exercise in Lithagogy (Λιθαγωγία), the ancient greek word for shifting marble from the quarries to the Acropolis. The ancient Greeks used “Οδός Λιθαγωγίας» which followed Perikleous St. in Penteli, then followed the Chalandri ravine and then what is Kiffissias Ave. all the way to the building site of the Parthenon. A technical feat on its own yet very under-appreciated as most have no clue how the monument was built. A similar route was followed for this exhibition, with one aim being to stray away from matters of intellectuality and into activities that resemble physical exercise, maybe even sport. Lifting stones, wandering in quarries under the sun, creating levers and sleds, tying ropes and mostly being in contact with various Mastores, people with a hands on knowledge of physics, was the bread and butter of this show. It would be interesting to explore a little why spiritual/intellectual work is better paid than manual work. In Ancient Greece the architects had to make pulley systems and be at the quarries themselves, and it seems that this approach produced superior results, that cannot even be replicated today . Yes I would like to see a reversal of the Status Quo where artists get paid more than curators or museum directors.

But this show is not a display of masculinity nostalgia. Probably it's quite the contrary. This is a flawed undertaking with major production problems, restrictions and doubts embedded into it . Like a manic Klaus Kinsky ( who the locals during shooting offered to kill ) I have been completely out of depth trying to set up my most ambitious show ever, my first purely sculptural show ever. I arrived in Athens less than four weeks before the opening after 23 years abroad. Having to figure out how to talk to forklift operators while desperately wanting to escape for a Freddo has been a form of very minor torture. And so as the movie “Fitzcarraldo “ is upon first viewing about a crazy man's dream of setting up an opera house in a small town in the middle of the jungle... upon second viewing it is about the challenges, failures and forces of compromise that make it all possible at the end... This show has a parallel dynamic.

The initial aim was to fill the space with megaliths. Huge stones that would warp human scale and create an immersive experience. Yet Michael Heizer I am not. I felt slightly deflated and empty to realize that this vision has been explored before, even though it somehow always works. Go big and most likely there will be response. A friend even said when I showed her the renderings for the show: “Wooo Man Art”, and then started laughing! But my relationship with masculinity is a bit more nuanced, if not quite complicated, I want to think. So what if I also made my mud sculptures as well, domestic scale works of organic hybrids and chimera like creatures that always float about on my brain? and then I could just leave them around the huge stones and see what happens. And maybe, exactly because I have demoted my real desire to secondary status, it'll come out better. I will employ the power of Peripheral Vision. Like when I was studying for school and listening to music simultaneously, I ended up a music expert... or when one looks at the Pleiades in the night sky, the trick is to not look at them but look nearby in the sky. Then the nuances of nebulous light reveal themselves. That way if I focus on a giant installation I might end up producing some decent small sculptures. Like a dialectic about what the background is. Or just a tactic of subterfuge.





## BIOGRAPHY

Theo Michael (b. 1979, Thessaloniki), Greek artist currently based between Mexico and Athens, is a generalist with a compulsion for vandalised seascapes and recycled polyurethane foam. His practice is a critique of speciesism and he maintains that the reason that bacteria, bees, fish and humans don't have equal standing is the main driver behind the current climate and pollution emergency. Although mostly known for his graphite drawings of rough seas and extinct creatures, in recent floor based installations he sets upon hybridising his own previous arrangements in a process that introduces errors and allows for random mutations. Rocks, soil and fruits from local markets frequently appear in his works as do odd furniture, animal parts, Sci-Fi props and ancient texts...

His absurd anarcho-museographical displays lead to a rational-irrational dialectic which destabilizes ideas of hierarchy and systems of order. In Michael's universe a banana peel is as significant as any of Picasso's paintings and a Bobbit Worm as complex as any insurance company CEO. In the artists own words: "These works seem absurd to people embedded in modern competition systems but they should look like Zen gardens to anyone aghast with the orthodoxy."

His work has been described by fellow artists as "drunk anthropology". Michael's drawings, sculptures and mosaics use archaeological, sci-fi and natural history references to engage in an alternative worldbuilding exercise, where boundaries and hierarchies between cultures and species have collapsed.

He received a degree in Fine Art from Aristotle University and Utrecht School Of Art and a Masters degree in Fine Art from Wimbledon School Of Art. Since graduating, his work has been exhibited in Palacio Nacional (Mexico City), Museo Universitario Del Chopo, Museo De La Ciudad De Mexico, Fotomuseum Winterthur, CAC-Passerelle (Brest), Thessaloniki Biennale, Kunsthalle Athena and Triangle France (Marseille) among others. He has had solo shows in Galeria OMR, Preteen Gallery, Steve Turner Contemporary and AMP Gallery Athens. His work has been featured in various publications, namely Artforum, Flash Art, Art Review, La Tempestad, revistaCodigo, Designboom and The Los Angeles Times.

**[www.theomichael.com](http://www.theomichael.com)**

ARTIST CV

Solo shows

2023, Eyes Compound, Allouche Benias Gallery, Athens  
2019 Crater Gardening, gdl90210, Guadalajara  
2019 Prehistory Repeats Itself, Espositivo, Madrid  
2018 La Simetria Del Ermitaño, Casa Del Lago UNAM, Mexico City  
2017 ARTHROPODOS, Galerie Vallois, Paris  
2014 The Opposite Of The Opposite, Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles  
2014 Reptile Dialectics, Galeria OMR, Mexico City  
2013 I Didn ´t Think Of Anything I Don ´t Know What To Do, Preteen, Mexico City  
2011 Scholars In Space, Galeria OMR, Mexico City  
2009 Smoke From The Edge Of The Known, AMP, Athens  
2001 Theo Michael, Steven Makris Gallery, Athens

Group shows

2024, La Casa Ideal, Proyecto Multiproposito, Mexico City  
2024, Reorientation Of The Earth, L.A. Beast Gallery, Los Angeles  
2023, Agua Que Quema, Museo Anahuacalli, Mexico City, cur. Karla Torres  
2023, La Casa Erosionada, Museo Anahuacalli, Mexico City, cur. Karla Torres  
2023, The Artist’s Artist, Juan De La Cosa, Mexico City, cur. Fransesco Pedraglio  
2023, Barbarismos, Pequod, Mexico City, cur. Joaquin Segura, Fernanda Ramos  
2023 CUT, P8 Gallery, Tel Aviv, cur. Avshalom Suliman  
2022 Every Day or Not At All, Peter and Merle Mullin Gallery, Pasadena, cur Robert Kett  
2021 The Last Tenant, MASA Galeria, Mexico City, cur. Mario Garcia Torres  
2021 Against The Linear, KEIV ATHENS, Athens  
2021 Reset, Maia Contemporary, Mexico City  
2020 Who’s Afraid Of Comodo, Allouche Benias Gallery, cur. Evgenia Vereli  
2019 Curved Arrows, Kunstaraum Am Schauplatz, Vienna  
2019 A Quien Corresponda, Kirkland Gallery, Cambridge  
2019 Streaming Realities Steaming, forgrace, Athens  
2019 Pabellon De Las Escaleras, gdl90210, Mexico City  
2018 Be Water Again, Korai, Nicosia  
2018 Nuevo Manifiesto De Cine Mexicano, Lodos Gallery, Mexico City  
2018 What Do You Dream Of?, Galeria Luisa Strina, Sao Paulo, cur. Magali Arriola  
2018 Constellations In The Dirt, NEON, Kouphonisi  
2018 Cerrajería, Lock Up International, Mexico City  
2018 El Apartamento Imaginario Del Dr Atl, 90210 Gdl, Mexico City  
2018 Geometria Primitiva, Galeria Mercado Negro, Puebla  
2018 Stopping Point, Daily Lazy Projects, Athens  
2018 Id^entity, Float Gallery, Athens  
2017 +52 Paisajes Recientes, Fundacion Calosa, Irapuato, cur. Paulina Ascencio  
2017 Cabinet, David B. Smith Gallery, Denver  
2017 Cajuelazo, 90210, Guadalajara  
2016 Where There Is Sea There Are Pirates, 3 137, Athens  
2016 Escape Routes, Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan  
2016 Lodos Presents A Theater Play, Museo Experimental El Eco, Mexico City  
2016 Chez Eux: Unseen Collections, Circuits&Currents, Athens  
2016 Politicas De Polvo, Galeria Emma Molina, Monterrey  
2016 Once(11), Espacio Monitor, Caracas

2016 Heroes, Galerie Vallois, Paris  
2015 Predictions Of A One Night King, Chalet Society, Paris  
2015 Verto, Studiocur/art, Paris  
2015 Disparitions, Galerie RueVisconti, Paris  
2015 Mascaras Mexicanas, Palacio Nacional, Mexico City  
2015 Now What, Gildar Gallery, Denver  
2015 Greased, The Breeder, Athens  
2015 Alotropos, Museo Universitario Del Chopo, Mexico City  
2015 No Sound, Galeria Millan, Sao Paulo  
2014 Art Basel Miami Beach Film Sector cur. by David Gryn, SoundScape Park, Miami  
2014 d h c m r l c h t d j; or true facts about stones, Lodos at Peregrine Program, Chicago  
2014 Delusions Of Decay, Curro Y Poncho, Guadalajara  
2014 Vernacular Alchemists, CAC-Passerelle, Brest  
2014 Stalactica, Quincaillerie Vander Eycken, Bruxelles  
2014 PLAT(T)FORM 2014, Fotomuseum Winterthur  
2013 Under The Volcano, former post office of Nagara Gose, Nara, Japan  
2013 Expanding Foam And Intellectuals, ReMap4, Athens  
2013 The Eternal Internet Brotherhood, Mexico  
2013 1:1, SteveTurnerContemporary, Los Angeles  
2012 SOCONFUSEDLOL, Beo Project, Belgrade  
2012 Footnotes On Candida Hofer, OMR, Mexico City  
2012 American Meat Locker, L.O.T., Luisville  
2012 The Possessed, Triangle France, Marseille  
2012 BYOB, Duesseldorf  
2011 BYOB, Miami  
2011 The Space Between Now And Then, OMR, Mexico City  
2011 Music For Insomniacs, Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City  
2011 Stranger In A Strange Land, Remap, Athens  
2011 BYOB Mexico City, Ex-Teresa Arte Actual, Mexico City  
2011 BYOB London, The Woodmill, London  
2010 First Biennal Of The End: Collapse, El 52, Mexico City  
2010 BYOB Athens, Kunsthalle Athena, Athens  
2010 DRAW, Museo de la Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico City  
2010 The Destroyed Room, Galerie Im Regierungsviertel, Berlin  
2009 Personal-Political, 2nd Thessaloniki Biennale  
2009 Remap 2, Athens  
2009 Video.it 2009, curated by Marina Fokidis, Torino  
2008 Apartment, curated by Brian Chalkley and Lewis Amar, London  
2008 MI2, Art Athina, curated by K.Dagritzikos Athens  
2007 1st Thessaloniki Biennale, «Public Screen»  
2007 Part Time Punks, Deste Foundation, Athens  
2007 Republic, L’ESTlondon, London  
2006 We ´ve lost the hearts and minds, E:vent Network, London  
2006 Centrefold, ZOOARTFAIR, London  
2006 Pay The Psychic, L’Est, London  
2005 Bangkok Experimental Film Festival, Bangkok  
2004 Agora, Transition Gallery, London  
2004 FleaMarket, TemporaryContemporary, London





**Fitzcarraldo**  
**Theo Michael**

**From June 13th to September 8th 2024**

**Opening hours**

**Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 17:00 to 20:00**

**Saturday 13:00 to 16:00**

**Alkinois**

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