

NEON

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PRESS RELEASE

NEON presents the exhibition

space of togetherness

Curator | Elina Kountouri, Director NEON

Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece | School of Athens – Irene Papas

9 September – 20 October 2024

NEON presents the exhibition *space of togetherness*, at the Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece | School of Athens – Irene Papas from 9 September to 20 October 2024.

Curated by Elina Kountouri, Director NEON, the exhibition raises some of the most pressing issues facing Europe and the world today. The mobility of bodies, cultures, and ideas is what shapes Europe into a “space of flows”, through the interaction and exchange of cultural differences. *space of togetherness* is an exhibition about stories that develop in the intersection of race, politics, and rights.

space of togetherness develops at the premises of the Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece, in Athens. The Drama School holds significant cultural importance, running as a hub for artistic practices and a vibrant space where students and performers meet to advance their studies. Founded in 1930 and operating in tandem with the Greek National Theater, it embodies a dedicated laboratory for creative exploration and functions as an institution of education, fostering a spirit of pedagogy and progressive ideas.

space of togetherness welcomes the co-habitation between the activities of the Drama School and its exhibition and public program as it forms a unique living laboratory.

The exhibition will explore how preconceived ideas of racism, social mobility, and rights of migrants in contemporary society, are woven into our daily lives and how we can find a sense of belonging and learn to live and co-exist through the thoughtfulness of class, race, and gender. The strengths of individual artistic practices join forces with collective communities and artists to expose social histories that challenge stereotypes: Igshaan Adams, Taysir Batniji, Enri Canaj, Marianna Christofides, Døcumatism, Mona Hatoum, Patricia Kaersenhout, Menelaos Karamaghiolis, Bouchra Khalili, Grada Kilomba, Tarik Kiswanson, Sophie Kovel, Kalliopi Lemos, Maria Loizidou, Malgorzata Mirga-Tas, Stella Nastou, Kostas Roussakis, Georgia Sagri, Antrea Tzourovits, VASKOS.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a versatile public programme bringing together various contributors, including artists, scholars, social actors, and policy makers.

In the context of *space of togetherness* NEON has renovated several spaces in accordance with its principle of creating and gifting infrastructure to all its selected venues and opening to the public unexpected spaces of cultural importance.

Information: neon.org.gr

**Special thanks to the National Theatre of Greece
for giving us access to the School of Athens – Irene Papas**



NATIONAL THEATRE OF GREECE

NOTES TO EDITORS

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.

The **Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece** is located on 52 Pireos Street housed within a building complex which is representative of the early 20th century industrial architecture in the city. In 1997 it was declared a listed building as part of the conversion program of Pireos Street into a cultural axis. The building's strategic location, versatile functions – a factory of the chemical and pharmaceutical company “Sanitas”, warehouses of public institutions – and rich history cultivate “a space of togetherness”.

Pireos Street, spanning 9 km, historically connected the center of Athens and its port Piraeus, and played a crucial role in the city's urban development. It was initially planned in the 1830s as part of Athens' new urban design, becoming the route to Piraeus port, encompassed by the ruins of the ancient “Long Walls,” which once fortified this path. Until the early 19th century, the surroundings of the road were dotted with olive groves. With the city's urban growth, industries emerged in the end of 19th and early 20th century, marking the birth of the Greek industry. These included chemical, metal, textile and food industries, technical workshops and warehouses, some continuing their operations until the late 1990s or even today. The area has witnessed population movements driven by employment opportunities in the burgeoning industrial landscape with local, refugee and migrant working-class populations settling in the vicinity.

In the mid-90s, celebrated Greek actress Irini Papa initiated partial renovations of the buildings, envisioning a theatre and a drama school. Architect Manos Perrakis bridged early 20th century industrial architecture with a modern theatre facility. Since 2018, the National Theatre of Greece Drama School has been located there, hosting numerous theatrical performances. Since 2018-2019 academic year, the Department of Directing was also put into operation at the same time.

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