

9 Sept. - 20 Oct. 2024

NEON

space of
togetherness



NATIONAL THEATRE OF GREECE

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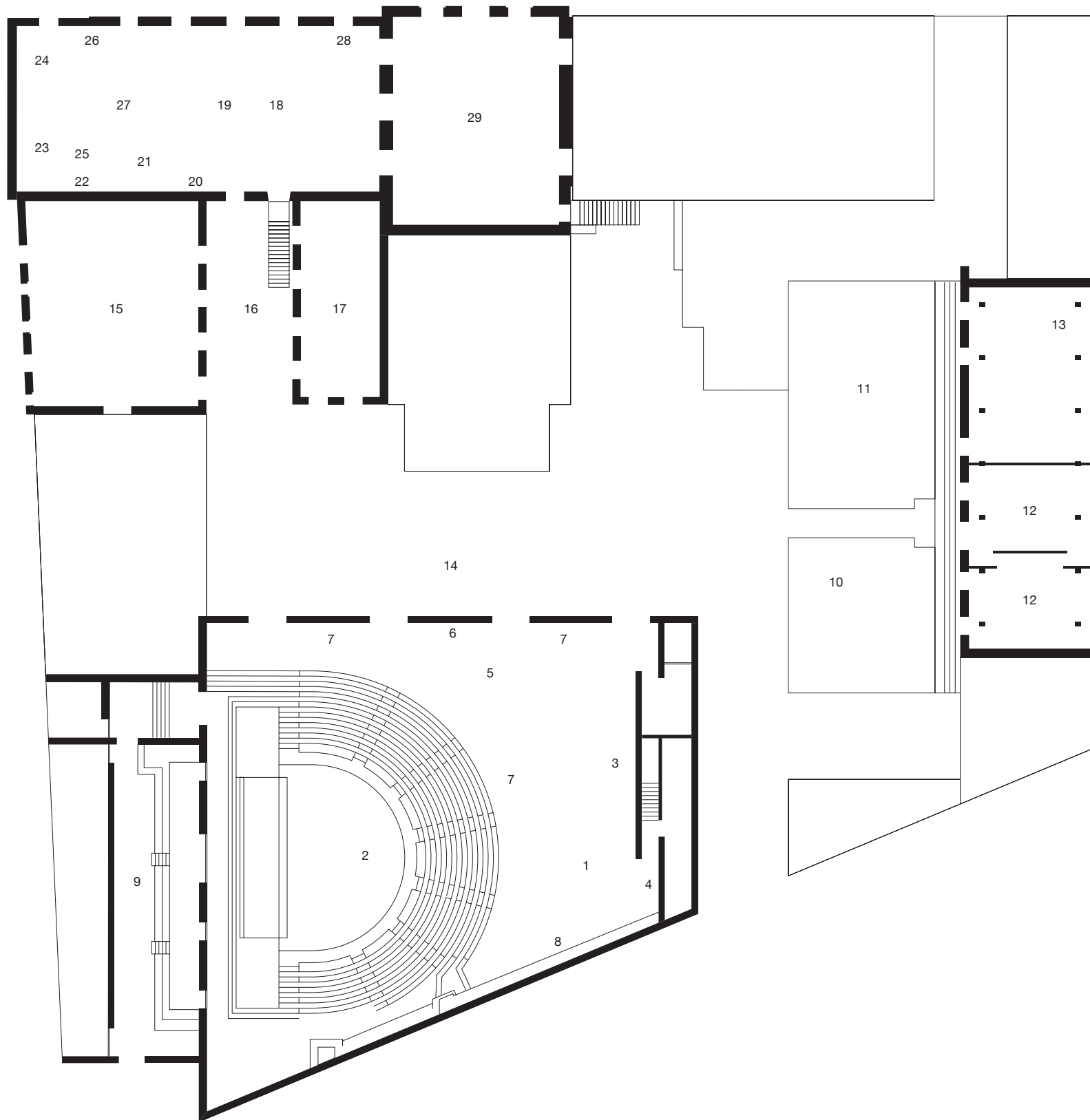
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Igshaan Adams
Taysir Batniji
Enri Canaj
Marianna Christofides
Døcumatism
Mona Hatoum
patricia kaersenhout
Menelaos Karamaghiolis
Bouchra Khalili
Grada Kilomba
Tarik Kiswanson
Sophie Kovel
Kalliopi Lemos
Maria Loizidou
Małgorzata Mirga-Tas
Stella Nastou
Kostas Roussakis
Georgia Sagri
Antrea Tzourovits
VASKOS

National Theatre of Greece Drama School |
School of Athens - Irene Papas

Wed. & Sun. | 11.00-19.00
Thur.-Sat. | 12.00-20.00

Free Entrance



- 29 Igshaan Adams
- 24 Taysir Batniji
- 22 Enri Canaj
- 18, 19 Marianna Christofides
- 13, 15, 17 Documatism
- 27, 28 Mona Hatoum
- 1, 23 patricia kaersenhout
- 13 Menelaos Karamaghiolis
- 2 Bouchra Khalili
- 9 Grada Kilomba
- 21 Tarik Kiswanson
- 3, 4 Sophie Kovel
- 5 Kalliopi Lemos
- 10, 16, 25 Maria Loizidou
- 6, 7, 8 Malgorzata Mirga-Tas
- 26 Stella Nastou
- 14 Kostas Roussakis
- 12 Georgia Sagri
- 13 Antrea Tzourovits
- 20 VASKOS

space of togetherness

space of togetherness is an exhibition of stories from the intersection of race, politics, and the rights of individuals and communities. It explores how the migration and movement of people and ideas enables cultural interaction and exchange to shape Europe, and indeed the world, into a 'space of flows'. It proposes how artists, in the present moment, use their distinctive voices to engage society in shaping, questioning and re-examining how past histories are told. The works in this exhibition urge us to come together in a public space and contemplate present injustices for a fairer future.

space of togetherness features recent and past works of Taysir Batniji, Enri Canaj, Døcumatism, Mona Hatoum, patricia kaersenhout, Menelaos Karamaghiolis, Bouchra Khalili, Grada Kilomba, Tarik Kiswanson, Sophie Kovel, Kalliopi Lemos, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Stella Nastou, Georgia Sagri, VASKOS. Including five new works by Igshaan Adams, Marianna Christofides, Maria Loizidou, Kostas Roussakis and Antrea Tzourovits, especially commissioned for the exhibition.

Fittingly, the exhibition venue is the National Theatre of Greece Drama School | School of Athens - Irene Papas, a dynamic hub for artistic practices that brings together students and performers of diverse origins and social and cultural backgrounds. Founded in 1930 and operating in tandem with the Greek National Theater, the Drama School functions as an institution of education and a workshop for creative exploration and progressive ideas. Today's Pireos Street was planned in the 1830s as part of Athens' new urban design. Stretching for 9 km it follows the same route as the ancient Long Walls that connected the centre of Athens and its port Piraeus. Such a direct link to the port made it an attractive location for new industries during the late 19th and early 20th century including chemicals, metals, textiles, food, technical workshops and warehouses. Several of these continued operating until the late 1990s; some remain to this day. As Pireos Street became the centre of Greece's economic and industrial development, local, refugee and migrant working-class populations seeking employment opportunities settled and created neighbourhoods in the area.

In the mid-1990s, celebrated Greek actress Irini Papas initiated partial renovations of the buildings at number 52 Pireos Street, envisioning a theatre to be named "School of Athens". Architect Manos Perrakis remodelled the early 20th century industrial architecture into a modern theatre facility, fusing past with present to form a new space for creativity.

In *space of togetherness* works by individual artists, shown alongside those by artist collectives expose social histories that challenge stereotypes. The exhibition explores the assumptions and prejudices of contemporary society woven into our daily lives. Around racism, social mobility, and the rights of different communities and migrants. It suggests how,

through greater awareness of class, race, and gender, we can learn to co-exist and find a sense of belonging. Artists who have themselves experienced migration become powerful narrators. Photographer Enri Canaj's work 'is a series

of passages from the world as it is to a world imagined'. Antrea Tzourovits, just 12 years old when he moved to Greece from the former Yugoslavia during the 1999 conflict, uses personal, enigmatic and humorous childhood memories to explore the relationship between 'play' and 'conflict' and address a collective history shaped by war, loss and trauma.

Several works consider the politics of memory. In Marianna Christofides's commissioned work, *Restor(y)ing Waters* (2024), the artist collaborated closely over several months with women associated with Melissa Network, a non-profit institution for migrant women in Athens. Their witness accounts from Afghanistan, Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Lebanon, the Philippines and Ukraine are interwoven with improvised vocals by Greek vocalist Savina Yannatou to create collective places for listening. Artist's Sophie Kovel's work considers the civic sphere and its current erosion by 'ethno-nationalist' fascist politics and positions these contemporary far-right movements within a longer history of colonial violence. Døcumatism, a collective of filmmakers, artists, curators, historians, social workers, researchers and educators active in the neighborhood of Kypseli, present *the AfroGreeks*, an ongoing community project about the African Diaspora in Greece.

Igshaan Adams's hand-woven installations and tapestries address complex personal and communal histories that reflect his identity as a queer person of mixed race and religion growing up in Bonteheuwel, a racially segregated part of Cape Town during apartheid. *space of togetherness* brings together a selection of his earlier works as well as a new commission that will evolve during the duration of the show, activating the exhibition space with dance performers from South Africa and Greece.

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas's art is a witness to a struggle for equal rights. Her work integrates life and political activism, echoing a 1960s feminist movement that declared 'the personal is political'. From the perspective of her Roma roots and 'minority feminism' her work advocates women's strength and offers a rare opportunity to see the Roma on their own terms, both as a contemporary community and a people with a rich cultural heritage. She creates intricate textile collages by fusing materials and fabrics collected from family and friends—curtains, jewellery, shirts and sheets—which become 'microcarriers' of history, carrying their intimate connections and past lives into her work.

During September and October 2024 *space of togetherness* creates a unique living laboratory from the cohabitation of the activities of the Drama School, the exhibition and a versatile public program that brings together

other institutions, artists, scholars, and policy makers. At the centre of the Drama School we invite people to sit, meet and talk around a work by Kostas Roussakis, a 27-metre-long table set with 90 stools each bearing a sculpted letter. Read consecutively, these form four lines from the poem *Touching this youthfulness* by Nikos Karouzos, a first-generation post-war poet. Those gathering around Roussakis' table bring their own knowledge, ideas, and experiences—and perhaps dissenting voices—to join in rejecting censorship of the imagination and create a space to explore ideas about mutual respect, compassion and care.

Even when we don't agree, we can find a way to listen, understand and live with each other.

Elina Kountouri
Director NEON

Igshaan Adams

b.1982
Cape Town, South Africa

Igshaan Adams lives and works in Cape Town.

Igshaan Adams's hand-woven installations and tapestries address complex personal and communal histories that reflect his identity as a queer person of mixed race and religion (born Muslim yet raised in a Christian home) and growing up in Bonteheuwel, a racially segregated part of Cape Town during apartheid. *space of togetherness* brings together a selection of his earlier works and a new commission that will evolve during the duration of the show, activating the exhibition space. This performative aspect of his practice offers viewers a lens into his technique and method of working.

The performance is in consultation with Garage Dance Ensemble from O'okiep in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. It starts with a six-day workshop demonstrating the power of dance and movement to heal internal wounds. Directed by Adams, dancers from Cape Town — Jaime-Lee Hine, Lewellyn Regardt Afrika, Savannah Ashley Petrus, Zandile Salukazana, and Zanele Salukazana—together with local dancers Sofia Pouchtou, Elton Petri, and Candy Karra, leave painted traces of their bodies on inked-in canvases positioned on the linoleum floors.

In the negative space between these body prints Adams creates woven pathways using beads and colourful threads to reveal boundaries and borders, past and present. Through this weaving he creates a new entanglement of earlier histories—the linoleum floors of houses in Cape Town, Adams's previous tapestries and 'dust clouds' works —and the energy and resilience of the body transcribed in the new body prints.

*When Dust Settles:
The Body's Archive*, 2024

*KLIP GOOI
(STONE THROW)
IV*, 2021

Carry, 2018

Fall, 2018

Crawl, 2018

Hang, 2018

Linoleum flooring

Ondergedompel,
2022

Untitled, 2018

Taysir Batniji

b.1966
Gaza, Palestine

Taysir Batniji lives and works between Paris and Gaza.

Often tinged with impermanence and fragility, Taysir Batniji's work draws inspiration from his story, as well as history and current events. His methods always distance, divert, stretch, conceptualise or simply play with the initial subject, offering poetic, sometimes acrid, points of view on reality in the end.

His ongoing work, *Delayed Reality*, began in late 2015, following the Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan terrorist attacks in Paris. As an echo of the artist's *Wallpaper* project (2015), these drawings are designed around collected elements from media representations which are then rearranged, transformed, and extrapolated. Trying to deal with the often violent proliferation of images produced by mainstream media, which often forgets or conceals other global realities, these drawings are inspired by international events or simple memories and illustrate a series of dreams or mental images that are sometimes nightmarish.

Delayed Reality,
2015-ongoing

Enri Canaj

b.1980
Tirana, Albania

Enri Canaj lives and works in Athens.

Enri Canaj is a photographer. He is a member of the international photo agency Magnum Photos, which has been operating as an artists' cooperative since its foundation in 1947. Magnum photos has represented many of the most renowned photographers and combines photojournalism, art, and storytelling. Enri Canaj's work focusses on refugees and migrants. He started photographing the refugee influx into Europe in 2011. He photographs in Greece, the Balkans, and the rest of Europe. Characteristic of his approach is that he gets to know the people he photographs: they are not just people and facts. He follows them on their migration journey and recounts their effort to reach new places, their life in the camps or in the host country, their first moments there, their daily life. At this point, he notes, their present walks in parallel with his own past, as he had to migrate with his parents when he was 11 years old. Enri Canaj depicts the range of emotions that these people experience along the way and through border crossing; he captures the boundary between reality and hope for the future.

- 01 A group of teenagers from Syria and Germany at the city metro station. As some of them said, they have experienced many racist attacks, both by the host society because they are foreigners and by the Arab community for dishonouring their religious image. The metro station is their hideout, a place of their own. Berlin, Germany, 2018
- 02 Borderline between Greece and North Macedonia, 2015
- 03 Mother & daughter at their new place in Athens. Athens, Greece, 2018
- 04 Hiding from a police patrol. Idomeni, Greece, 2015
- 05 Under the rocks. Paris, France, 2017
- 06 In the cold winter days many unhoused migrants seek shelter in the central train station. Brussels, Belgium, 2018
- 07 Rosengard neighborhood, where recent migrant families are located. Malmö, Sweden, 2018
- 08 Idomeni train station. Idomeni, Greece, 2016
- 09 A small boat with refugees and migrants safely reaches the Greek coast. Greece, 2014

Marianna Christofides

b.1980
Nicosia, Cyprus

Marianna Christofides lives and works in Berlin.

Over the past 15 years, Marianna Christofides has built a multifaceted body of work spanning 16mm film, installation, text, and sound. It is recognisable for its poetic stance towards documentary and its capacity to responsively and ethically convey stories that encapsulate the fragility of our times. What drives her practice is an ever-present urgency to remain attentive to imprints of wounding – in society, the environment, and the individual – and to seek therein manifestations of a resilience of the spirit.

In *Restor(y)ing Waters* (2024), the artist collaborated closely over several months with women from Afghanistan, Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Ukraine. These women are part of the Melissa Network, a non-profit institution for migrant women in Athens. Emerging from a series of collective storytelling workshops and numerous individual conversations, bodies of water become the entry point to talk about justice, freedom, migration, and exploitation, but also dreams, childhood, enchantment, and empowerment. In the seven-channel sound installation encircling a sculptural weave braided from discarded electrical wires, diasporic testimonies are rendered in narration and song. They surge to meet the mesmerising vocal interventions by Savina Yannatou, with whom Christofides worked in close collaboration. A web of destinies unfolds as the chorus of voices swells into a stream of heightened sensory imagery. *Restor(y)ing Waters* traces how willpower becomes the buoyancy that keeps us afloat on the undulating waves of life.

Restor(y)ing Waters, 2024

In *Rivers, Banks* (2019), a 14-meter-long meandering, pleated curtain that echoes the form of the River Drina, which separates Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, marks the space. Part of the larger project *Days In Between* (2011–19), it looks at rivers in their twofold roles of connecting and separating, their flowing and dividing; of showing the imaginary versus bare reality and exposing geological forces vis-à-vis political instrumentalisation. A cinematic phrase on the floor ponders scarred places, loss, and our share in narratives of violence. Jointly, the two installations navigate the fluid continuum of being together before the backdrop of a mutilated world.

Rivers, Banks, 2019

Marianna Christofides

Døcumatism

A collective community project about the African Diaspora, *the AfroGreeks*, was initiated in Greece in 2015 by Døcumatism. It consists of video installations, interviews, social interactions, research, public actions, and an archive – laboratory. The term Afro-Greek is a self-proclamation that the protagonists of the work use in a critical way. It was first used publicly in 2019 as the title of a video installation by Døcumatism, during a public dialogue at the Kypseli Agora. It launched the artistic movement documented here, doing much to stimulate a public discussion about the African diasporic communities in Athens and beyond. Initial events took place in the neighborhood of Kypseli, one of Athens' most culturally diverse areas but one that had been marginalized for a long time. Over the years, Døcumatism has created a network of collaborators within a community whose protagonists are mostly the members of the African Diaspora in Greece. Collected by Døcumatism, their stories highlight the problems of integration linked mainly to marginalised trajectories. The resulting archive that has been created represents the first attempt to document the history of African communities in Greece. It contains audiovisual research material spanning four centuries, portraying the history of the African Diaspora in the Mediterranean through artistic processes, as part of the national narrative and Greek history. *the AfroGreeks* project is a dynamic platform of expression for the participants, as artists and as active citizens in the effort to combat all forms of racism.

The project has been presented internationally at universities, conferences, the Center of Contemporary Art in Geneva, Serpentine Cinema, the AfroEuropeans Conference, ICA Sofia etc. The presentation of *the AfroGreeks* at the Drama School of Athens will be accompanied by live events: concerts, workshops, open discussions, and guided tours.

The project was supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Human Rights 360, and Marni Films.

Døcumatism is a collective that consists of filmmakers, artists, curators, historians, social workers, journalists, researchers and educators active since 2009 in the multicultural neighbourhood of Kypseli. Starting with the moving image and document (documentum) the collective organizes art actions and public dialogues on critical social issues with the aim of exploring invisible and inaccessible landscapes and launching possible solutions to crucial social issues. Their goal is to initiate dialogue and make the 'invisible' visible. Through art actions, films starring real-life heroes, and stories that break barriers and stereotypes, the Døcumatism team makes film art a functional tool for those living on the margins of society. The collective's collaborations foster the interaction of artists, protagonists, and viewers; these figures work together to design art actions that focus on key social issues. Each issue functions as an 'apparatus'

the AfroGreeks

Døcumatism

throughout a given action's preparation, production, and distribution, mobilizing broader debates and making the recipient an eyewitness in situ. The archive of Døcumatism which is in progress is openly accessible to the wider public in situ and digitally <https://documatism.com/>.

The AfroGreeks is a collective community ongoing project whose practise evolves around moving image as the starting and ending point of public actions that are filmed. Screenings will be accompanied by an archive workshop presented at the Library of the Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece; its content focusses on a four century audiovisual research material, that captures - through an artistic process- the history of African Diaspora in the Mediterranean as part of the national narrative. Visitors become witnesses and are invited to study the open access archive material of the work through a participatory process shaped by the protagonist and co-creators who will be present in the exhibition space. Viewers are further invited to investigate the archive and participate creatively in its evolutionary path. The archive provides access to research material from the African-origin populations in Crete and Thrace from the 16th century until today. Viewers will explore international literature of African origin authors, 60 (to date) filmed public actions and project videos, primary material of the 200 (to date) unedited interviews of the protagonists, and photos selected and submitted by Afro-Greeks themselves. Moreover, viewers will be invited to provide their own testimony to the project.

Grace Chimela Eze Nwoke, Greek anthropologist and performer of Nigerian descent, is an active member of the Døcumatism group and is in charge of curating the archive and coordinating *the AfroGreeks* project's live actions.

the AfroGreeks ARCHIVE

Mona Hatoum

b.1952
Beirut, Lebanon

Mona Hatoum was born into a Palestinian family in Beirut, Lebanon.

A traditional oriental carpet, *Baluchi (red)*, 2007, looks as if in a state of disintegration as large patches of the weave appear to have been moth-eaten or somehow worn-out. On second glance one can see that the apparently random patches come together to form a recessed world map.

In this work, Hatoum creates a positive-negative reversal of the world map, since the land masses or continents have been created by painstakingly plucking out the pile of the carpet, so that they appear like fissures or gaps.

This work presents an unfamiliar view of the world, since it uses the 'Peters' projection – an egalitarian representation of land mass in true proportion – as opposed to the more familiar image of the world drawn from a dominant, northerly perspective.

Doormat II, 2000-01, consists of a what appears to be a traditional doormat made up of sharp steel pins with recessed lines that spell-out the word 'WELCOME'. Velvety at a distance, but bristly up-close, the work is both welcoming and potentially harmful. Here, the everyday object is unable to fulfil its expected function and becomes dangerous, serving to deny access to the space rather than facilitate it. The paradoxical nature of the work challenges the assumption that domestic equates comfort, evoking instead a place of threat or constraint.

Baluchi (red), 2007

Doormat II, 2000-01

patricia kaersenhout

patricia kaersenhout, Surinamese descent, born in the Netherlands

Soul of Salt pays tribute to the enslaved people of the African diaspora through an interactive installation that blends mythical and historical references in a healing ritual. It consists of 8000 kilos of salt which is publicly blessed by migrant and refugee women from the Melissa Network, a platform based on grassroots participation in Athens, who perform the 18th century slave song *Many Thousand Gone*.

The artists notes: 'The sea salt stands as a symbol for mental and physical liberation and refers to enslaved people crossing the salt water of the Atlantic Ocean on their way to plantations. It represents the salt of all the tears shed during slavery and colonialism and refers to the salt enslaved people refrained from eating so they would become light and fly back to Africa. The blessed mountain of sea salt depicts the suffering but also the hopes and dreams of people. It commemorates the past, while also transcending it. Visitors are invited to dig into the mountain and take some of the salt home. Together with their family members, they can dissolve the salt in water as a symbol for solving the pain of the past, giving peace to the souls of their ancestor.'

Maria Sybilla Merian, famous for her botanical illustrations, is less well-known as a slave owner. In order to carry out her studies of plants and insects, she depended on the enslaved and indigenous women of Suriname. Merian's drawings of insects and plants ignore the context of colonialism, slavery and sexual exploitation in which she was working. As a starting point for *Of Palimpsests & Erasure* we chose images from the original edition of her *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*¹ to show a complex story of oppression, abuse and migration in multiple layers. The images in the original book appear to be printed recto verso with the original, coloured drawing visible through the paper, like a blind embossing. We've incorporated images of women into these pages creating a visual manifestation of a palimpsest. The bodies of the women 'disrupt' a dominant history and, at the same time, claim a place in a history that has actively erased them.

The Soul of Salt, 2016/2024
– an ongoing installation

Of Palimpsests & Erasure,
2021

¹ *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* digitalised by the Niedersächsische Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen.

Menelaos Karamaghiolis - Døcumatism

Negros Tou Moria, MC Yinka, Demelza, Moose, Tosin, The Royal Accord Singers, Grace Nwoke, Mikel Ergar, Kofi Yiadom, B-Boy hustler, Menelaos Karamaghiolis, Stavros Triantos, Magnus Briem, Stelios Bouziotis, Renia Papatthanasiou, Panos Markou, Melissanthi Giannousi.

The Afro-Greek artists record their songs in a city entangled in perpetual turmoil. They affirm their faith dynamically and organise free dance activities in public spaces, claiming visibility. While the city has been protesting in front of the Hellenic Parliament for the last 12 years, a contrapuntal dialogue projected on two screens takes place: Afro-Greeks participate in the demonstrations of an ongoing crisis through impulsive artistic interventions and offer alternative ways of expression and protest against violence, fear, and all kinds of prejudice and racism. Their public actions create an improvised and free 'parliament' shaped through street art and different manifestations of faith in public space. The city of Athens protests, prays, remembers, falls in love, dances, claims, and becomes – at least briefly – a radical model of equal coexistence without prejudice.

Artist and filmmaker Menelaos Karamaghiolis works on fiction films, documentaries, artist films, installations, and radiomovies starring real-life, overlooked heroes. His work transcends frontiers and stereotypes to serve as an essential tool for dialogue and social change. His films have been screened globally garnering many international awards, such as *ROM*, 1989, 'a turning point for Greek documentary films' and 'a masterpiece that must become a classic of the history of cinema', *Black Out p.s. Red Out* 1998, 'the first post-modern Greek film,' *J.A.C.E. – Just Another Confused Elephant* 2012 (52 international festivals & 11 awards) and the first Greek interactive documentaries, *Meeting with Remarkable People* 2011-2020 (24 feature-length films & 180 shorts). He is a founding member of the collective Døcumatism since 2009. He is currently working on video installations and live events of the ongoing collective community projects *the AfroGreeks* and *Greekies*. Karamaghiolis's work has been shown at international institutions as the National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens, the 56th Venice Biennale, Rodeo, Serpentine Cinema, Haus N Athen, and the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, among others.

Døcumatism is a collective that consists of filmmakers, artists, curators, historians, social workers, journalists, researchers and educators active since 2009 in the multicultural neighbourhood of Kypseli. Starting with the moving image and document (documentum) the collective organizes art actions and public dialogues on critical social issues with the aim of exploring invisible and inaccessible landscapes and launching possible solutions to crucial social issues. Their goal is to initiate dialogue and

Singing in Athens,
2011-2023

Menelaos Karamaghiolis

Døcumatism

make the 'invisible' visible. Through art actions, films starring real-life heroes, and stories that break barriers and stereotypes, the Døcumatism team makes film art a functional tool for those living on the margins of society. The collective's collaborations foster the interaction of artists, protagonists, and viewers; these figures work together to design art actions that focus on key social issues. Each issue functions as an 'apparatus' throughout a given action's preparation, production, and distribution, mobilizing broader debates and making the recipient an eyewitness in situ. The archive of Døcumatism which is in progress is openly accessible to the wider public in situ and digitally <https://documatism.com/>.

Bouchra Khalili

Bouchra Khalili is a Moroccan-French visual artist who lives in Vienna and works internationally.

The Circle concludes Bouchra Khalili's long-term investigation into the Movement of Arab Workers (MTA) and its theatre groups, Al Assifa ('The Tempest' in Arabic) and Al Halaka ('The Circle' or 'The Assembly' in Arabic), evidenced in the film *The Tempest Society* (2017, premiered at documenta 14), a book of the same title (Book Works, 2019), and the sound work *An Audio Family Album* (2020), among other projects.

The Circle starts with Al Assifa's legacy being transmitted by the young Athenians, protagonists in *The Tempest Society*, to Mia and Lucas, two young French people of Maghrebi descent living in Marseille.

In 1973, Marseille saw a series of racist murders that targeted members of the Maghrebi community. In protest, the community organized the first general strike led by migrant workers in France, which gave birth to the MTA, the first autonomous organization of Maghrebi workers. In the immediate aftermath of the formation of the MTA, theater became an essential part of their activism with the creation of Al Halaka ('The Circle' in tribute to the Maghrebi tradition of public oral storytelling) in the South of France and Al Assifa ('The Tempest') in Paris. Both groups were created by founding members of the MTA.

Mia and Lucas—at once 'storytellers' and 'film editors'—bring together and connect the few traces left by this forgotten pioneering struggle for equal rights of migrants in France. Combined with performative gestures resurrecting the oral repertoire of Al Assifa and Al Halaka, performed by Mia and Lucas as well as by former members of Al Assifa and Al Halaka, *The Circle* unfolds the complex constellation of events and people that led to the formation of the MTA and its theater groups, culminating in the candidacy of 'Djellali Kamal'—a pseudonym for an anonymous member of Al Assifa—in the French presidential election of 1974.

Surviving members of Al Assifa and Al Halaka appear repeatedly to re-enact fragments of their own performances, staged fifty years after their first rendition, and as witnesses of a pioneering struggle for equal rights.

Mia and Lucas, belonging to the generation of the 'grandchildren' of the MTA, are joined by Abdellali Hajjat and Youcef 'Rocé' Kaminsky, both from the generation of the 'sons'. Abdellali, a sociologist and political scientist, was among the very few academics to conduct research on the MTA in the early 2000s, while Rocé is a hip-hop artist, historian, and collector of audio culture from the independence era and the diasporas. Together, they engage equally in this transgenerational dialogue from their own positions and sites of knowledge production as well as methods of knowledge dissemination: Abdellali provides evidence of his research, while Rocé passes on music produced by members of Al Assifa to Mia and Lucas.

The Circle, 2023

Co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation; Luma Foundation; and MACBA, Barcelona

Similarly, Mia and Lucas excavate a parallel history of media and film production. Fragments of the work of the collectives Vidéo 00—pioneers of video-making in France—and Cinélutte resurface both as testimony on the MTA and as traces of the interconnection between video and filmmaking and struggles for equal rights.

The candidacy of 'Djellali Kamal' was a call to the millions of undocumented workers excluded from the right to vote. At a time when immigrant communities were subdued into political neutrality by the threat of deportation, Kamal's candidacy was conceived as a public performance addressing the denial of migrants' civic rights and projecting a potential transnational citizenship.

Nevertheless, throughout *The Circle*, 'Djellali Kamal' remains anonymous, so as to illuminate the powerful fabulistic and poetic force of the candidacy as a collective fiction celebrating a hypothesis: what if an 'unconditional citizenship' could form our shared 'circle'?

Timeline for a Constellation prefigures the mock-up for an upcoming book, *The Circle: A Timeline for a Constellation* (Book Works, 2025). As a poster, it takes inspiration from the wall newspaper tradition and is an attempt to set out a chronology of the events that gave rise to the Mouvement des travailleurs arabes in France (Movement of Arab Workers, MTA) and its theatre troupes, Al Assifa and Al Halaka, from the first of these in 1971 to the crucial year of 1974, which culminated in Djellali Kamal, the pseudonym of an anonymous undocumented hunger striker, member of the MTA and the theatre group Al Assifa, standing as a candidate in the French presidential election. Founded in 1972, in the aftermath of the assassination in Paris of Djilali Ben Ali, a 15-years-old Algerian, the MTA quickly became the main autonomous organization of immigrants, operating at the intersection of several struggles. Resolutely anti-racist, the movement's demands included rights to papers, decent working and living conditions, and cultural and artistic expression.

This timeline unfolds the interwoven layers shaping the constellation-like history of the movement, articulating activism and performing practices with the theatre groups Al Assifa and Al Halaka, formed by MTA's founders and their allies. Additionally shining a light on the multiple alliances that developed around the MTA, the timeline emphasises the tight connections between people, places, and events, and the simultaneity of action required by groups engaging with one another in solidarity. This visual and textual investigation, combining archives, chronological elements, and excerpts from forthcoming interviews with members of Al Assifa and Al Halaka, highlights the originality of the approach of the MTA and its theatre troupes deeply invested in notions of citizenship, agency, and the right to self-representation.

Timeline for a Constellation, 2023

Grada Kilomba

b.1968
Lisbon, Portugal

This attempt at a 'constellated' chronology draws on numerous cross-referenced sources, including the pioneering and essential work of Mogniss H. Abdallah and Abdellali Hajjat, various archives and personal collections, Geneviève Clancy and Philippe Tancelin's indispensable *Les Tiers Idées* on the Al Assifa experience, and interviews by the artist with founders and members of Al Assifa and Al Halaka, among others. This visual and textual investigation also summarises the narratives gathered previously during Bouchra Khalili's long-term investigation into the MTA and its theatre groups, evidenced in the film *The Tempest Society* (2017) and a book of the same title (Book Works, 2019). Further works continuing this research include the sound work *An Audio Family Album* (2020) and the multi-screen film installation *The Circle* and *The Storytellers* (2023).

Very little visual material is left of the performances given by Al Assifa and Al Halaka: just a few photographs and virtually nothing on film. Shot on 16mm and based on 'unarchived' material, *The Storytellers* poetically imagines fragments of the performances of Al Assifa and Al Halaka. Reviving the North African tradition of the halqa (a story told before an audience), in each of the films the founder members of Al Assifa and Al Halaka perform pieces from their oral repertoire –sketches and poems about racism, housing and living conditions– and, fifty years on, reconnect with the power of collective performance. As with the halqa, *The Storytellers* plays with genres, languages, time and space so that the audience can form a community brought together by the very act of storytelling. With *The Circle*, *The Storytellers* is a meditation on the power of film and public performance to imagine other forms of belonging.

The Storytellers, 2023

Grada Kilomba (b.1968, Lisbon, Portugal) lives and works in Berlin.

Grada Kilomba's work draws on memory, trauma, gender, and postcolonialism, interrogating concepts of knowledge, power, and violence.

18 Verses (2022) is a spatial and sound installation by Grada Kilomba formed of a poem written by the artist, engraved and hand-painted on 18 carbonized wood pieces, each carefully displayed in the exhibition room and immersed in a sonorous landscape.

18 Verses, 2022

The burning process is an ancient technique in which pieces of pinewood go through fire and water several times, allowing the wood to reveal its unique surface or skin: a visual metaphor, which Kilomba uses to explore issues of identity, displacement, water surveillance, and cyclical violence. Boats now navigate in opposite directions in global waters: from south to north, and from east to west. *18 Verses* refers to the boats used to transport millions of enslaved Africans from their continent, just as much as the dramatic migration routes that cross the Mediterranean today.

In this sculptural installation, the artist shifts from the outside to the inside, from the past to the present and its compulsive repetition. In a state of chaos and disorder, the installation is arranged around the poem. From beneath the waters emerges an imaginary female entity, mantled in fabrics, guardian of the poem. In a gesture of affect and warmth, each engraved verse is hand-painted with gold leaf and translated into five languages: Yoruba, Kimbundu, Creole from Cabo Verde, Portuguese, English, and Arabic from Syria, honoring a timeless, yet present narrative.

A sonorous landscape immerses the room, where human breathing negotiates its own space amidst the noise of wind and waves. The insistent repetition of sounds produced by touching or striking objects becomes a metaphor for the systemic repetition of violence and simultaneously for the prevalence of the human and the poetic.

Tarik Kiswanson

b.1986
Halmstad, Sweden

O Barco - The Boat (2021)
Poem by Grada Kilomba

one boat, one cargo hold
one cargo hold, one load
one load, one story
one story, one piece
one piece, one life
one life, one body
one body, one person
one person, one being
one being, one soul
one soul, one memory
one memory, one oblivion
one oblivion, one wound
one wound, one death
one death, one sorrow
one sorrow, one revolution
one revolution, one equality
one equality, one affection
one affection, Humanity

O Barco - Το Πλοίο (2021)
Ένα ποίημα της Grada Kilomba

ένα πλοίο, ένα αμπάρι
ένα αμπάρι, ένα φορτίο
ένα φορτίο, μία ιστορία
μία ιστορία, ένα όλον
ένα όλον, μία ζωή
μία ζωή, ένα σώμα
ένα σώμα, ένα άτομο
ένα άτομο, μία ύπαρξη
μία ύπαρξη, μία ψυχή
μία ψυχή, μία μνήμη
μία μνήμη, μία λήθη
μία λήθη, μία πληγή
μία πληγή, ένας θάνατος
ένας θάνατος, μία θλίψη
μία θλίψη, μία επανάσταση
μία επανάσταση, μία ισότητα
μία ισότητα, μία στοργή
μία στοργή, Ανθρωπότητα

Ποίημα της Grada Kilomba, μεταφρασμένο
στα ελληνικά από τον Αλέξη Καλοφωλιά

Tarik Kiswanson lives and works in Paris, France.

In *The Wait* (2024) we see post-war history eliding with contemporaneous experience. With this new work, Kiswanson continues his reflections upon the weight of history, regeneration, and the idea of levitation. These lines of inquiry coalesce in a work that takes the form of an ovum hovering over a post-war reconstruction chair. The oblong form arises out of the artist's fascination with transformative states in nature, an archetypal shape that recurs in the origins of all life forms as an egg, seed, or chrysalis.

Over several years, Kiswanson has researched post-war periods across different places and moments in history, with one focus being reconstruction furniture. This chair is one example of such mass-produced furnishings created for the general populace as part of the general rush across Europe to reconstruct society just after the end of World War Two. The artist brings these chairs into his work, pulling this timeline into focus, as well as into play with his concerns and experiences of contemporary migration and the trials and endlessness of resettling and reconstructing.

The Wait, 2024

Sophie Kovel

b. Los Angeles, USA

Sophie Kovel lives and works between New York and Paris.

Sophie Kovel is an artist and writer whose work examines the economic, social, aesthetic, and ideological operations of ethnonationalism.

Sourced in 2024, this wallpaper is repurposed bodega floral wrapping paper, referring to architectural interiors and antechambers typical of American government buildings, offices, and bureaus. It is modelled on one such interior at the New York Metropolitan Republican Club, where the founder of the white nationalist group the Proud Boys, Gavin McInnes, lectured in 2018.

Histories of racialization and gender difference inform the modern, modernist surface.¹ The motif “Say it with Flowers,” a Victorian-era slogan for Mother’s Day, describes the relationship between persevering patriarchal and gendered advertising, like a corporate step-and-repeat or media wall. These façades and their interiors are one site of formation for whiteness and the aesthetic imagination of the nation-state.²

In anticipation of a 2018 lecture at the Metropolitan Republican Club in the Upper West Side by Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes, antifascist counter-protests broke out, including an attempt to prevent entry by gluing the club’s keypad lock shut. As of June 2024, a high-ranking Proud Boys member has pleaded guilty for conspiring to obstruct an official congressional proceeding and assaulting U.S. Capitol police. He and five other members of the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers were on trial in the January 6th investigation—four of whom were convicted for seditious conspiracy. At political rallies and in private channels, the group is currently rebuilding in anticipation of the forthcoming U.S. presidential election.

Untitled (Sometimes it is not a question of what the visible hides but how it is that we have failed to see certain things on the surface) or Untitled (The modern surface), 2024

Caulk Lock, 2022

¹ Anne Anlin Cheng, ‘Skins, Tattoos, and Susceptibility.’

² ‘Processes of racialization shaped the very definition of what it means to be modern. Architectural historians must contend with these racialized histories, as well as how the disciplines of art and architectural history themselves emerged from racial-nationalist logics.’ Mabel O. Wilson, Charles L. Davis, and Irene Cheng, *Race & Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*.

Kalliopi Lemos

b.1951
Oinousses, Chios, Greece

Kalliopi Lemos lives and works in London.

Her artistic practice has been a continuous exploration of human rights, gender injustice, forced migration, and existential journeys. She has been investigating the transformations of female imagery throughout world religions, mythologies, and traditions, as well as its symbolisms relating to mythical deities and goddesses. She traces lines between femininity and mysticism using the archetypal woman-nature bond as a symbolic field for discussing humanitarian issues regarding exploitation, inequality, and oppression. In her monumental *Tools of Endearment* series, the artist demystifies the stereotypical passive female roles and replaces them with the figure of a powerful heroine in order to emancipate the female subject. *The Necklace* (2016) is a heavy chain lying on the ground. Its links resemble bear traps or *Dionaea muscipula* (Venus flytraps). Any woman wearing it would certainly be wounded by the razor-sharp edges of this jewellery. The public placement of the *Tools of Endearment* sculptures reinforces the artist’s contention that such tools are still required in a contemporary world. By doing so, Lemos creates a bridge between women’s issues and people experiencing her works, thus challenging viewers and sparking debate.

The Necklace, 2016

Maria Loizidou

b. 1958
Limassol, Cyprus

Maria Loizidou lives and works in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The 42 plants in this part of the Drama School have been transferred from the private garden and home of 94-year-old Olga Loizidou, one of the last remaining residents in a house in the middle of an aggressive development of skyscrapers, at the heart of the port city of Limassol, Cyprus.

In *Olga's Garden*, a short film made in 2019 by artist Maria Loizidou with director Danae Stylianou, we witness Olga resisting the noise of construction to take care of her private garden. The story of each seed, plant and tree is linked to her life—the walnut tree has grown alongside her from childhood through adulthood and the long partnership with her late husband Kostas Loizidis.

Olga's insight and knowledge come not from any formal training but from intuition, observation and discipline. *'My garden is my life. Whatever I liked, I planted to see it'*. Olga encourages us to consider the working conditions and rights of the labourers building this new urban development with its constant noise and strained infrastructure. *'They never stop. They work constantly from 7am to 7pm. They need to finish soon. That's the only thing that gives me hope. How many people -foreigners/migrants- work there? I appreciate at least that they (construction companies) give work to all these people.'*

Now when age means she is no longer able to care for her plants, Olga has given permission for them to be transported to this public space, extending their life as 'migratory plants' taken care of by a younger generation. This new garden represents her lived practice, reminding us that transposing seeds, soil, plants, water recreates memories of places once lived: our homes past and present.

Maria Loizidou's textile installations, hand-woven from stainless steel and metallic thread emphasize collective, personal and diasporic histories. Her work *Volant Migrants (2023)* combines movement, nature and the tale of the abduction of Persephone used in mythology to explain the cycle of the seasons. Birds, flowers, motifs and the diverse colours of nature become travel companions on an unpredictable journey.

As a Cypriot, the experience of war resonates deeply with Loizidou who says her quest is to find a way 'to contribute to the healing of our personal and collective trauma'. With this work she bears witness to histories of conflict and division with compassion, dignity and strength.

Migrant, la femme qui porte sa maison (2023) is an ode to women who flee their homelands under life-threatening conditions, crossing borders and rough seas to seek refuge and protection.

A woman is transporting her house, partially protected by a flimsy armour made of fragments resembling broken eggshells, an imagined home.

Olga's Garden *Limassol-Athens, 2024*

The installation was realised in partnership with Papigion Project, founded by Achilleas Chariskos. Papigion Project has undertaken the maintenance and care of the artwork and is part of the exhibition's public programme.

The delicate paper and fragile structure reflect tensions experienced in environments of escalating violence, on the journey to asylum, and through separation from family and friends. Such trauma, sadness and mourning are recurring stories of our time.

Migrant, la femme qui porte sa maison continues the legacy of the series *Femme Maison* by French artist Louise Bourgeois that became a symbol of the feminist struggle and women's hybrid role in the domestic and public spheres.

Volant Migrants, 2023

Commissioned by the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris 2023

Migrant, la femme qui porte sa maison, 2023

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas

b.1978
Zakopane, Poland

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas lives in Czarna Góra, Poland.

Her art integrates life and political activism, echoing a 1960s feminist movement that declared 'the personal is political'. Mirga-Tas creates vibrant textile collages from the perspective of her Roma roots and 'minority feminism'. Her work advocates women's strength and offers a rare opportunity to see the Roma on their own terms, both as a contemporary community and a people with a rich cultural heritage.

Mirga-Tas's work depicts everyday life: relationships, alliances, and communal activities in a collection of large, colourful portraits celebrating extraordinary Roma women including artists and activists. She creates intricate textile collages by fusing materials and fabrics collected from family and friends—curtains, jewellery, shirts and sheets—which become 'microcarriers' of history, carrying their intimate connections and past lives into her work.

Maria's Romani Family, a major work is one of a series of new textile collages showing scenes from the Swedish-Roma experience, this composition is inspired by a faded black and white photograph of the family of Maria Dimitri. The subjects — from a young girl to an old man leaning on a stick — have dressed up for the occasion and walk forwards, holding hands and smiling at the camera. By adding colour and texture to their clothing and the landscape around them Mirga-Tas creates this joyful scene of a happily united family group.

The name of the series, *Herstories*, reflects histories written from a feminist perspective and emphasising the role of women.

In her work *Sofia Taikon* (2023), Sofia Taikon (née Brzezinska), is a Polish-Roma survivor of Auschwitz and Ravensbrück who was rescued by the Scandinavian Red Cross and settled in Sweden, defying its government's policy at the time which prohibited Roma immigrants. After the war, Taikon successfully applied for reparations from the German state.

Shpresa Agushi is executive director of the Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women Organizations of Kosovo, RROGRAEK, working from Priština, Kosovo. She started her career in 1999, immediately after the end of the war in Kosovo, and became the first Roma woman to become an official of an international organization working with Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in Kosovo. Agushi's goal, both as a woman and an activist, has always been to assist women and girls from these three groups to become activists and advocates for their own well-being. She

also works for the whole Roma community to achieve equal rights and full integration with wider society.

Zinet Galushi, an ordinary citizen of Prizren, Kosovo, takes care of the daily needs of her family and is an accomplished costume maker. Romani artist and activist Edis Galusi is her son. He collaborated with Mirga-Tas to make an installation of *Herstories* in Prizren for the third edition of the Autostrada Biennale. Edis Galushi is one of only a few Roma authors in Kosovo and has made a substantial contribution to the heritage of Roma culture and literature through poetry and theatre. He works with many national and international artists, always with the aim of presenting Roma culture in a better light.

Zinet Galushi, 2022

Maria's Romani Family, 2022

Herstories series

Sofia Taikon, 2023

Shpresa Agushi, 2019-2022

Stella Nastou

b. Athens, Greece

Stella Nastou lives and works in Athens.

Three snapshots in which the geometry of the frame and the silence of the content allow freedom in all its forms.

Three snapshots in which the shades of grey and fog of the landscape evoke a charcoal drawing.

Three snapshots: infinite stories.

The water moves,
the water stagnates,
water drowns,
For some, the abyss.
For some, hope.
Muddy water, fog, pier, shore/shore of the sea.

Black and white analogue photos

Three different presences of water (1. Water thick in stasis, a carved ladder in the rock, fog in the atmosphere; 2. Sea water and sky water, fog, becoming one and being pierced by the pier that disappears into them; 3. The journey is over, the boat has arrived, on the beach multiple foams shake hands. The important thing is that they shake hands).

Three stories where all the versions are valid. Melancholy is alternated with hope. Now it is this. Then it's something else.

Stella Nastou

Stair, 2019
Pier, 2020
Knot, 2018

Kostas Roussakis

b. 1971
Athens, Greece

Hell, therefore, is our homeland
a rising sin,
the black smog from the factories
high at daybreak.¹

Kostas Roussakis lives and works in Athens.

Kostas Roussakis constructs a new work for common use at the courtyard of the Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece. It is a 27-metre-long table with 90 stools. Each stool bears a letter, and these all form four verses from the poem *Touching this youthfulness*, by the first post-war generation poet Nikos Karouzos. The letters are sculpturally inserted into the objects; each one is a unit, a sound. All the seats together compose the text and a meeting place where people collectively gather around a table. Poetic language, the different languages we speak, and the objects all bring us together or separate us. They can be both boundaries and horizons. The artwork is commissioned for this building where the Drama School is located which used to be a factory. We can see the industrial buildings of Pireos street from the courtyard – a landscape of labour unfolds. *Hell*, which is the title of the work, is the common ground we all share.

Hell, 2024

Special thanks to the Greek National Opera

¹ *Touching this youthfulness*, Nikos Karouzos, *Poems I (1961-1978)*. Excerpt translated by Christos Chrissopoulos, novelist.

Georgia Sagri

b. 1979
Athens, Greece

Georgia Sagri lives and works in Athens.

Georgia Sagri explores political, social, philosophical, and ecological issues, pushing the boundaries of bodily experiences. Her practice includes sculpture, sound, and installation with an emphasis on the economy of means, seeking empowerment, recovery, and collective care through her performance art.

For the exhibition *space of togetherness*, the artist develops an in situ space of co-existence titled *Breath*, after her 2003 performance. The works transcend the physical, emotional and cognitive experience, rhythm, touch, tempo, temperature, proximity. The sensory element is informed through *IASI*.

IASI (recovery practice from performance pathologies) is her ongoing research project, part of Sagri's artistic practice, which began ten years ago and evolves in her studio, YΛH[matter]HYLE in Athens. As part of her personal research, she conducts individual sessions with participants who have responded to an open call. These sessions are based on techniques she employs for preparation and recovery from her performances, utilizing breathing, movement, and voice.

The sessions take place on a specially designed soft stage, both a sculpture and a welcoming space, a kind of shell. The necessity of the stage of recovery stems from Georgia Sagri's belief that 'we all live our lives on stage, performing endlessly. The *Stage of Recovery* is a space where participants can, for a while, free themselves from the need to perform for others and themselves. There, they can feel safe and liberated from any audience.'

As part of the post-session process, Sagri uses sensory impressions of accumulated bodily experiences as references to create works and capture the body's memory. Works that emerged from previous individual sessions complement the installation. They hover in the space and function as memory traces and sensory references for the ongoing sessions.

The exhibition includes the video-recorded performance *Breath*, which Sagri revives from her earlier presentation in 2003, in her solo exhibition *Oikonomia* in 2023. Here, the artist again applies her practice of recovery. Through this process, Sagri comments on wear and healing, emphasizing the value of recovery in art and life.

A series of pencil drawings from recent years are displayed directly from the artist's notebooks. These forms or mental states capture a transitional state, a state of transformation and suspension.

Breath, 2024

Antrea Tzourovits

b. 1987
Danilovgrad, Serbia
and Montenegro

Antrea Tzourovits lives and works in London.

Antrea Tzourovits starts from his personal story to address a collective history shaped by war, loss, and trauma. His childhood memories from former Yugoslavia, before moving to Greece during the 1999 conflict, are central to his work and always emerge in an enigmatic or humorous way. As a child, he experienced the celebrations of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's win of the 1998 FIBA Basketball World Championship, which was soon overshadowed by the NATO bombings in 1999 during the Kosovo War. His works explore the relationship between 'play' and 'conflict'.

The new commission for *space of togetherness* investigates these traumatic memories. The title *You know you can see your nose all the time, but your brain decides to ignore it somehow* alludes playfully to the painful facts that cannot be undone and the traumatic memories that last, defying our brain's attempts to erase them. The work comprises a sound installation with recordings from the OAKA Stadium in Athens – where the 1998 FIBA Basketball World Championship took place – and a wall installation composed of reclaimed basketball court flooring. It is a site-specific work that takes us to a different environment, to a game that we cannot see, that is not there, that cannot happen. Exploring the intricacies and paradoxes of human experience, Antrea Tzourovits creates a platform to contemplate history and the persistence and elusiveness of memory and how it shapes reality.

You know you can see your nose all the time, but your brain decides to ignore it somehow, 2024

VASKOS

VASKOS are a multidisciplinary artistic duo made up of Vassilis Noulas and Kostas Tzimoulis created in Athens in 2014.

In their work, VASKOS deal with ephemeral and everyday materials. They converse with various cultural references, claim Greekness and international avant-garde status at the same time, use free association with words, texts, objects and materials, camp weird identities, and anticipate eco-queerness.

You Are My Mirror is a series of staged photographic diptychs that derive from the joy of artistic coexistence and sharing creativity – a celebratory and cherishing feeling of the everyday experience. The sense of care and responsibility for one another, and by extension the demand for equity and fairness, inspire this project. VASKOS try looking upon the ‘artistic duo’ as a contemporary artistic practice, a conscious choice that offers an alternative model of artistic symbiosis and complicity, testing the limits of the traditional identity and the common singularity/oneness of the subject. They create hybrid environments somewhere between reality and fiction. *You Are My Mirror* series has references in history of art and in queer and DIY aesthetics; it is a game of identities and roles that plays with mirror images and reflections and is often infused with homoeroticism.

The Fishermen from the series *You Are My Mirror*, 2016/2024

Birds on the Perch from the series *You Are My Mirror*, 2016/2024

NEON

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.

National Theatre of Greece Drama School | School of Athens - Irene Papas

The National Theatre of Greece Drama School | School of Athens - Irene Papas 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 Piraeus 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 Irene Papas 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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Texts on
Antrea Tzourovits, Enri Canaj,
Kostas Roussakis:
by Galini Notti,
Assistant Curator

Texts on
Kostas Roussakis, Georgia Sagri:
by Maria Tavlariou,
Assistant Curator

Texts on Bouchra Khalili,
Grada Kilomba, Kalliopi Lemos,
Mona Hatoum:
courtesy the artists' studios

Texts on
the AfroGreeks, Marianna
Christofides, Menelaos
Karamaghiolis – Documatism,
patricia kaersenhout, Sophie Kovel,
Stella Nastou, VASKOS:
courtesy the artists

Texts on
Taysir Batniji, Tarik Kiswanson:
courtesy of the artist and Sfeir-
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