

Athens, April 3, 2025

## PRESS RELEASE

### Donation of the artwork *RULE II* by Antony Gormley and NEON to the Island of Delos

The first contemporary artwork to be permanently exhibited in an archaeological site in Greece will be a sculpture by British artist Antony Gormley, located in the exterior space of the Archaeological Museum of Delos, following the completion of the first donation by the NEON organization to the Ministry of Culture.

The donation, a joint effort by NEON and Gormley, comes at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture and under the shared vision of enhancing public engagement with contemporary art in sites of global archaeological significance.

The original counterpart to this work, *RULE*, was created for the exhibition *SIGHT*, which was held at Delos from May to October 2019. *RULE II* (2019) will remain permanently on the island as a reference point for the discourse between classical and contemporary culture.

The permanent installation of Antony Gormley's artwork is the first in a broader initiative by NEON to gift contemporary artworks to archaeological sites where it has previously organised exhibitions, in collaboration with the Ephorates of Antiquities. Over the past 12 years, NEON has worked closely with the Ministry of Culture to curate and present 11 contemporary art exhibitions in archaeological and historical sites across Greece, aiming to offer fresh perspectives on cultural heritage through the lens of modern contemporary art.

**As Dr. Lina Mendoni, Minister of Culture, states:** *'The donation of the artwork RULE II by its creator, Antony Gormley, and NEON to the sacred island of Delos marks a significant milestone. This is the first contemporary artwork to be permanently exhibited in a Greek archaeological site. RULE II, an anthropomorphic sculptural installation created in 2019 was commissioned by NEON for the exhibition SIGHT on Delos. Now, it returns to remain there forever.'*

*This gift carries profound symbolism. It compellingly illustrates the harmonious coexistence of cultural heritage and contemporary creation, demonstrating how the latter continually draws inspiration from the former. The piece embodies a powerful message, as it is deeply inspired by Delos's sculptural masterpieces. Antony Gormley, an artist with a distinguished background in anthropology and art history, recognizes classical heritage as a perpetual source of artistic inspiration. We sincerely thank him for his decision to make RULE II a permanent feature of the Delos archaeological site.*

*At the same time, this marks the first in a series of contemporary artworks donations from NEON to the Ministry of Culture. These works, previously exhibited in archaeological sites as part of temporary exhibitions, will now become permanent installations. This initiative highlights the crucial collaboration between public policy and private initiatives in preserving and enriching our cultural heritage while fostering dialogue with contemporary art. To NEON's founder, Dimitris Daskalopoulos, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for his generosity and unwavering commitment to the arts.'*

**Dimitris Athanasoulis, the Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades,** comments: *'The seated iron figure placed atop a capital serves as a synecdoche for Antony Gormley's SIGHT exhibition. His sculptures, organically integrated into the archaeological site, offered a fresh perspective on Delos in 2019. Now, this minimalist yet evocative aggregated figure outside the Museum will serve as a permanent visual landmark. It will create a dialogue between the island's illustrious past and the 21st century global community. This gift by NEON and the artist affirms the vision of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades to collaborate in this historic exhibition. 'to collaborate on projects that bridge antiquity with contemporary culture.'*

**Dimitris Daskalopoulos, the founder of NEON,** elaborated on the broader vision behind this collaboration: *'As a collector and the founder of NEON, my passion has always been to support creativity and ensure that contemporary art is accessible to the public as I firmly believe that art derives its true significance from its interaction with people. When contemporary artistic expression engages harmoniously with our ancient heritage, it unlocks new interpretations that inspire, challenge, and enrich our collective consciousness. NEON's longstanding collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Ephorates of Antiquities has facilitated numerous exhibitions in archaeological and historical sites, offering such opportunities. I extend my deepest gratitude to Antony Gormley for embracing this initiative. The presence of his work in Delos ensures that*

*contemporary art will continue to converse with antiquity, inviting audiences to discover new ways of understanding the values and energy of this unparalleled site.'*

**Elina Kountouri, Director of NEON**, highlighted the emotional and philosophical dimensions of this donation: *'My outmost gratitude to Antony Gormley for the singular experience we all had while on Delos back in 2019. Projects like SIGHT are driven by a profound emotional motivation shared by everyone involved. Now, six years later, the donation of Antony Gormley's work ensures that future visitors to Delos will experience a moment of connection—one that transcends time and memory. They will witness a contemporary artistic vision that invites them to reinterpret our past and contemplate the complexities of our digital future.'*

**Antony Gormley** mentions: *'It was an honour and a joy to have been invited by NEON to create SIGHT on the island of Delos in 2019. When I first arrived on the island, I was greeted by carpets of flowers and instantly felt its atmosphere: a quiet, humming energy that was not dependent on the ruins, but which seemed to exist within the rocks themselves. This island, the epicentre of the Cyclades, devoid of trees and traces of human life, so full of history and mystery, was a rich and unique environment to respond to. I wanted the works to help us reorient ourselves – acting as acupuncture points, indicators of human presence in space, and moments of captured human time.'*

*I am delighted that, with the support of NEON, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, and the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, RULE II will now be permanently installed on this island of mythological and material exchange. I look forward to witnessing, over time, how this work will evolve, and both continue to activate, and be activated by, this incredibly powerful site.'*

The exhibition *SIGHT* (2019) was the first contemporary art exhibition to be presented at the archaeological site of Delos. A collaborative effort between NEON and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades, the exhibition showcased 29 iron 'bodyforms', including five new works created for Delos. These figures were strategically placed throughout the island—from the commercial port to the summit of Mount Kynthos, and from the archaeological site to the Stadium, Theatre, merchant stores, and the Museum—restoring a human presence and creating a journey of potential encounters.

Antony Gormley is widely acclaimed for his sculptures, installations and public artworks that investigate the relationship of the human body to space. His work has developed the potential opened up by sculpture since the 1960s through a critical engagement with both his own body and those of others in a way that confronts fundamental questions of where human beings stand in relation to nature and the cosmos. Gormley continually tries to identify the space of art as a place of becoming in which new behaviours, thoughts and feelings can arise.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About NEON:**

Founded in 2013 by Dimitris Daskalopoulos, NEON aims to promote contemporary art as a key tool for growth and development. NEON constructively collaborates with cultural institutions to bring contemporary artistic expression closer to the public, emphasising the importance of accessibility and engagement.

Since its inception, NEON has maintained a close partnership with the Greek Ministry of Culture to highlight archaeological and historical sites through the lens of contemporary art. To date, NEON has curated 11 major international contemporary art exhibitions in historic locations, including Delos, the Ancient and Roman Agora, the archaeological site of Kerameikos, the former Public Tobacco Factory, the Hill of the Nymphs, and the National Observatory of Athens.

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's mission is to foster artistic creation as a catalyst for inspiration, reflection, and dialogue. Through exhibitions, educational programs, events, sponsorships, scholarships, and international collaborations, NEON continues to cultivate a vibrant and inclusive cultural landscape. NEON collaborates with cultural institutions and supports the programs of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art.

### **International Press Inquiries:**

Melissa Emery | SUTTON, +44 (0)20 7183 3577, melissa@suttoncomms.com