

PRESS RELEASE

CITY PROJECT 2015

NEON presents Maria Loizidou at Kerameikos
9 September – 31 October 2015

From 9 September until 31 October, NEON Organization for Culture and Development presents the exhibition *A Transfer*, by Maria Loizidou at the archaeological site of Kerameikos. The exhibition is curated by the Director of the Thessaloniki Center of Contemporary Art, Syrago Tsiara.

CITY PROJECT is an initiative for public art and the city which is conceived and commissioned annually by NEON. NEON aims to activate public and historical places through contemporary art, contributing to the interaction of art, society and the city.

The exhibition *A Transfer* by Maria Loizidou is based upon the artistic and intellectual approach of the history and monuments of this particular archaeological site. Kerameikos, the most important cemetery of ancient Athens, offers the visitor one of the most beautiful ancient walks, with its exceptional examples of tomb sculptures and monuments.

Memory, trace, corporality, fragment and the ritualistic role of art have been key elements within the work of Maria Loizidou since the 80's. Whether for large scale public installations, such as *The Apparition of Angels* at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Fatima, Portugal, or for miniature interior reconstructions, the main and constant concern of the artist is the creation of a work that communicates with traditional craftsmanship, the value of tactility and the definition of the landscape through the relationship of light and shadow.

The new sculptural installation *A Transfer* converses creatively with the memory of the site and the trances of ancient Greek art, highlighting different sides of female creative work-craft that relate to weaving, collective work, the relationship with time and the artistic depiction of the female psyche on the crafted work. Maria Loizidou weaves a seemingly unwieldy and rigid material, like the thread from stainless steel, and gives form to exceptional works of art, exceeding the old and outdated division between art and craftsmanship.

According to the curator **Syrigo Tsiara**, *“In psychoanalysis the term ‘transfer’ refers to the process through which the unconscious desires are reactivated and acquire the status of a timely event. ‘Transfer’ by Loizidou Maria recalls one of the fundamental functions of art, which is none other than the reflection and process of past experiences, feelings and experiences that relate to individual and collective history. The texture of the material and the associations that arise from the collaborative practice of weaving reaffix social relations and trade issues in a timely manner within a longitudinal field of activity and human presence”.*

As stated by **Maria Loizidou**: *The characteristic gesture of a handshake, as it is depicted on many stones found in the archaeological site of Kerameikos and being called “reception”, comments on the moment where an old man bids farewell to “the living world”, while transferring life to someone younger. This moment of transferring life, which is connected with the end of a journey and the beginning of another, is also the moment of the boundaries between reality and psyche. What can we do within an archaeological site that is by default a cemetery, in order not to operate as a cenotaph of art? The curator of the exhibition Syrigo Tsiara gave the answer by choosing from my work, the practice of weaving. The weave reveals a plot, a narration.*

According to **Elina Kountouri**, Director of NEON Organization for Culture and Development, *“City Project follows NEON’s aim to bring the public in contact with contemporary art, through public and historical sites of our city. The exhibition at the archaeological site of Kerameikos, aims to explore the relationship between contemporary creation and the classical civilization, offering a new perspective to the visitors. In parallel, through this program NEON supports contemporary artists and gives them the opportunity, through new commissions, to express their own timeless perception in a way of conversing between antiquity and the contemporary”.*

Notes for Editors:

Duration of Exhibition:

9 September – 31 October 2015

Daily 08.00 – 20.00

Performance:

Wednesday – Sunday: 10.00 – 14.00 and 16.00 – 20.00

(It is possible that the opening hours of the archaeological sites will change)

The entrance at the archaeological site of Kerameikos is €2/per person and concessions €1.

In 2014, NEON’s commission City Project was given to Aemilia Papafilippou and was implemented at the Athenian Ancient Agora.

NEON is a non-profit organization based in Athens that works to widen access to contemporary art and culture. Taking its name from the Greek word for ‘new’, NEON is committed to broadening the appreciation, understanding, and creation of contemporary art in Greece and abroad in the firm belief that it is a tool for growth and development. Founded by art collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, and under the Directorship of Elina Kountouri, NEON breaks with the convention that a contemporary art organization should occupy a single space. Instead, NEON employs the open and diverse areas within society to carry out its program. NEON engages with a large, public audience and acts on a variety of projects to expose contemporary art’s ability to stimulate and inspire society at large.

Syrigo Tsiara

was born in Larissa in 1968. Tsiara studied Art History at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Social History of Art at the University of Leeds and completed a PhD on public art and national memory in Greece. Since 2007 she has been the Director of the Thessaloniki Center of Contemporary Art, part of the State Museum of Contemporary Art – Costakis Collection. She has also taught at the University of Thessaly (2004 – 2008) and she curated the Greek Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale.

Maria Loizidou

is a visual artist, educated in Lyon, France and settled in Nicosia, Cyprus. On 2014 she was short-listed for the Curate Award (Fondazione Prada and Qatar Museum Authorities). She has taken part in exhibitions (Venice Biennale of Art and Architecture, Cairo Biennale), created public projects (Futuroscope, Poitiers, 1991, Fatima, Portugal, 2007), she has created many in situ projects in museums (Musée d' Art Moderne de Saint Etienne, 2010 Beaux Arts de Lyon, 2005; Benaki Museum, 2008q Bozar, Brussels, 2012) and has given lectures in various institutions. Relevant collaborations with museums (Saint Etienne, Lyon, Istanbul, Athens) and art galleries (Maria Lund, Paris, Kalfayan Gallery, Athens), keep renewing her work's perspective enriching it with social and political concerns giving emphasis to "the power of fragility". Her collaboration with AA & U For Architecture, Art and Urbanism has given her the possibility to address such issues on an interdisciplinary level (aapulusu@cytanet.com.cy, www.aapulusu.com)

More information on NEON: neon.org.gr

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