

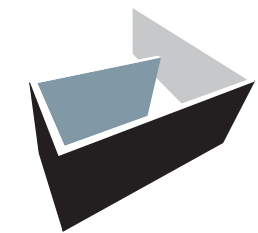
PLACES
in
Zone D

SOPHIA PETRIDES
ΣΟΦΙΑ ΠΕΤΡΙΔΗ

DANAE STRATOU
ΔΑΝΑΗ ΣΤΡΑΤΟΥ

EVANTHIA TSANTILA
ΕΥΑΝΘΙΑ ΤΣΑΝΤΙΛΑ

ZONED



Είναι πιστεύω μας ότι η εξέλιξη έρχεται πάντα μέσα από πρωτοποριακές ιδέες. Είναι εταιρική μας φιλοσοφία να αναζητούμε και να υποστηρίζουμε τέτοιες ιδέες όπου αυτές συμβαίνουν. Στο χώρο της Τέχνης η ιδέα της έκθεσης “Places in Zone D” μας ενέπνευσε από την πρώτη στιγμή για την δυναμική που έχει στο να εκφράσει με πολύ καινούργιο τρόπο σύγχρονους προβληματισμούς και να ανοίξει ένα νέο κεφάλαιο στα εικαστικά δρώμενα στην Ελλάδα με διεθνή απήχηση. Το τελικό αποτέλεσμα που μοιραζόμαστε μαζί σας σήμερα μας κάνει υπερήφανους και εκφράζει απόλυτα και το δικό μας όραμα για πρωτοπορία.

Audi – Kosmocar AE

We believe that progress is always a result of innovative ideas. It is within our corporate philosophy to search for and support such ideas as they occur. “Places in Zone D” idea inspired us from the first moment as a dynamic way of addressing contemporary issues and a new viewpoint of artistic expression in Greece with a global outreach. As an expression of our own vision of pioneership we proudly share the final outcome of this idea with you today.

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εφυλλίζοντας το σημειωματάριό μου, οι αφηρημένες έννοιες, οι ιδέες και τα σχέδια πάνω στο χαρτί άρχισαν να παίρνουν μια πιο ξεκάθαρη μορφή.

Η σύνθεση όλων αυτών οδήγησε στη δημιουργία του ZONE D: ενός χώρου μεταβλητού και εναλλασσόμενου, μέσα στον οποίο το έργο του καλλιτέχνη δεν περιορίζεται αναγκαστικά στο περίγραμμα μιας γκαλερί, αλλά έχει την ελευθερία και τη δυνατότητα να λειτουργεί μέσα σε ένα πιο ευέλικτο σχήμα, ανάλογα με το θέμα, τις διαστάσεις, το χρόνο και τις εκάστοτε απαιτήσεις του έργου.

Η έκθεση "Places in ZONE D" προέκυψε ύστερα από ατέλειωτες συζητήσεις με τις τρεις καλλιτέχνιδες τον περασμένο Απρίλιο στο καφέ απέναντι από το θέατρο Volksbuehne, στο Βερολίνο.

Η Δανάη Στράτου, παλιά φίλη και συνεργάτης της γκαλερί, η Ευανθία Τσαντίλα και η Σοφία Πετρίδη, τρεις πολλά υποσχόμενες νέες γυναίκες στο χώρο της τέχνης, συνέβαλαν στην υλοποίηση αυτής της έκθεσης χάρη στον ενθουσιασμό και την πίστη τους στο ZONE D. Στην ομάδα προστέθηκε δυναμικά και η ιστορικός τέχνης Καλλιόπη Μηνιουδάκη, που ζει και εργάζεται στη Νέα Υόρκη, η οποία με τις γνώσεις της και το νευραλγικό της γράψιμο φώτισε ακόμα περισσότερο τα έργα της έκθεσης.

Θα ήθελα να ευχαριστήσω θερμά όλους όσους πίστεψαν σ'αυτήν την έκθεση και συνεργάστηκαν για την υλοποίησή της, και ιδιαίτερα τον Κωνσταντίνο Πολίτη και την "Γνώμων Κατασκευές", που μας παραχώρησαν τον καταπληκτικό χώρο των Thission Lofts. Τον Αντώνη Σταυρόπουλο για το σχεδιασμό του λογοτύπου και τον Κώστα Ταμπουράκη.

Την AUDI για την ευγενική χορηγία.

Τους συνεργάτες μου στην Γκαλερί Ζουμπουλάκη, που δούλεψαν μαζί μου για την οργάνωση της έκθεσης, και το Μιχάλη Βαρουξή, που έμεινε στην Αθήνα το δεκαπενταύγουστο για τον κατάλογο.

Και τέλος ευχαριστώ πολύ την Πέγκυ, που μάλλον χωρίς αυτή δεν θα υπήρχε και το ZONE D.

Δάφνη Ζουμπουλάκη

Going through the pages of my notebook once more, initial ideas, abstract thoughts and drawings on paper started to form a clearer image.

The amalgamation of all these led to the creation of ZONE D; a flexible and mobile space, in which an artist's work does not have to be adapted to a gallery's special boundaries, but is free to function in a more open context, according to each work's thematic, timing and special requirements.

The exhibition "Places in ZONE D" was the outcome of endless conversations with the three participating artists, which took place last April at a café opposite Volksbuehne Theater in Berlin.

Danae Stratou, an old friend and collaborating artist of the gallery for years, Evanthia Tsantila and Sophia Petrides, three very promising women artists, contributed to the realization of this exhibition with their enthusiasm and faith in ZONE D.

Kalliopi Minioudaki, an art historian based in New York, joined with great enthusiasm too, by contributing an insightful and historically research - oriented text.

I would like to express my warmest thanks to everyone who believed in this exhibition and worked for its realization, and especially to Konstantinos Politis and "Gnomon Constructions" for offering Thission Lofts space.

To Antonis Stavropoulos for designing the logo and to Kostas Tabourakis.

To AUDI for their kind sponsorship.

To my colleagues at Zoumboulakis Galleries for working with me to organize this exhibition, as well as to my publisher Michalis Varouxis.

Finally, I would like to thank Peggy, without whom ZONE D would have never existed.

Daphne Zoumboulakis

Τρεις γυναίκες εικαστικοί, τρία “projects” σχεδόν ένας χώρος: Μια σύντομη εισαγωγή στην έκθεση *Places in Zone D*.

Εφόσον ο αφηρημένος χώρος [του μοντερνισμού και του κεφαλαίου]

τείνει προς την ομοιογένεια... ένας νέος χώρος δεν μπορεί να γεννηθεί αν δεν τονίζει διαφορές.

Henri Lefebvre

Η ανάδειξη διαφορών -και όχι οι ομοιότητες που θα προέκυπταν από μια αυστηρά προσδιορισμένη επιμελητική (curatorial) πρόταση- είναι αυτό που με κέρδισε όταν προσκλήθηκα να γράψω για τη συμμετοχή της Σοφίας Πετρίδη, της Δανάης Στράτου και της Ευανθίας Τσαντίλα στην έκθεση που εγκαινιάζει το χώρο τέχνης Zone D. Παρόλα αυτά η έκθεση *Places in Zone D* επιφυλάσσει περαιτέρω προκλήσεις για τον κριτικό τέχνης. Ως συνάντηση τριών εγκαταστάσεων που συνδέονται σαν μια οιονεί τριλογία με θέμα το «χώρο» -πραγματικό και φαντασικό- η έκθεση συμβάλλει στις ποικίλες τωρινές διερευνήσεις αυτού του καίριου, αν και υπό διαπραγμάτευση, ζητήματος της σύγχρονης τέχνης και του μεταμοντερνισμού. Ως συνάντηση, όμως, τριών γυναικών αντηχεί πρόσφατες εκθέσεις οι οποίες πραγματεύονται τις «διεθνικές» καλλιτεχνικές πρακτικές που διέπουν το έργο σύγχρονων γυναικών εικαστικών -φεμινιστριών και μη- με κυριότερη την έκθεση *Global Feminisms* του Μουσείου Τέχνης του Μπρούκλιν. Οργανώνοντας στην Αθήνα τη συνάντηση τριών Ελληνίδων των οποίων η διεθνής δράση έχει υπερβεί τα όρια των κέντρων και των περιφερειών του καλλιτεχνικού κόσμου, η έκθεση *Places in Zone D* δίνει την ευκαιρία να θεθεί το ζήτημα της παραμέλησης των Ελλήνων καλλιτεχνών από τα διεθνή δρώμενα, καθώς επίσης να αντικρουστεί η ανανεωμένη, όμως μωπική, έμφαση στο σώμα ως το επίκεντρο της δημιουργίας των σύγχρονων γυναικών εικαστικών (όπως επανήλθε στην επιφάνεια με την προαναφερθείσα έκθεση.) Η συχώνευση του υποκειμενικού και αντικειμενικού χώρου της Πετρίδη, η υποκειμενική αναμέτρηση της Στράτου με τη φύση και η εξονυχιστική μελέτη του/των χώρου/ων της μνήμης από την Τσαντίλα, εναλλακτικά προτείνουν διαφορετικές προσεγγίσεις του χώρου ως ενός ακόμη κοινού αντικείμενου που συνδέει την προβληματική πολλών γυναικών της σύγχρονης τέχνης - επιβεβαιώνοντας τη στροφή στο χώρο που προέβλεψε στην αρχή της δεκαετίας η φεμινίστρια ιστορικός τέχνης Ewa Lajer Burcharth.

Λόγω της εικονικής και διατλαντικής εξοικείωσής μου με την εξέλιξη των έργων -τα οποία, όπως και ο χώρος της έκθεσης, δεν θα έχουν ολοκληρωθεί πριν την τελευταία λέξη αυτού του κειμένου- η πρόκληση αυτού που μου παρουσιάστηκε ως η συμπαρουσίαση μιας βίντεο και δυο φωτογραφικών εγκαταστάσεων ειδικά προσαρμοσμένων στο χώρο, πήρε τη μορφή επαναορισμού της «site-specific εγκατάστασης» ως σύμπτωμα της κινητικότητας του σύγχρονου καλλιτέχνη (νομάδα είτε εκ πεποιθήσεως είτε ως αποτέλεσμα επαγγελματισμού) καθώς και της εντατικοποιημένης διακίνησης της τέχνης. Κριτικοί και θεωρητικοί έχουν ήδη σχολιάσει το φαινόμενο «απαγκίστρωσης» των site-specific εγκαταστάσεων από το φυσικό χώρο (είτε θεσμικό [institutional] είτε δημόσιο) καθώς αυτή αντιτίθεται στην αρχική ανατρεπτικότητα τους. Η υπό αμφισβήτηση σήμερα αντιθεσμική ριζοσπαστικότητα της μοναδικά άρρηκτης σχέσης μεταξύ «site-specific εγκατάστασης» και του χώρου (site) στον οποίο εκτίθεται (και με τον όποιο πολλές φορές ταυτίζεται απόλυτα, προδίδοντας τη διαπλοκή των θεσμικών πλαισίων της τέχνης και αναίρωντας την εμπορευματοποίηση της) δεν είναι αντικείμενο αυτής της εισαγωγής. Η μετάλλαξη, όμως, αυτής της σχέσης (site-specificity) όπως αποκαλύφθηκε από την προετοιμασία της έκθεσης, διαφωτίζει την τρέχουσα κατάσταση της παγκοσμιοποιημένης και κοσμοπολίτικης καλλιτεχνικής παραγωγής, καθώς και τις επιπτώσεις της για τις σύγχρονες μορφές των site-specific εγκαταστάσεων. Το παράδοξο τριών εγκαταστάσεων που προορισμός τους είναι να διευθετηθούν *in situ* -σε ένα χώρο/site, ο οποίος ούτε είχε επιλεγεί εξαρχής και ούτε έχει ακόμα ολοκληρωθεί, αλλά αποκαλύφθηκε στις τρεις εικαστικούς σταδιακά μέσω ψηφιακών σχεδίων- υποδηλώνει τη θέση του σύγχρονου καλλιτέχνη ως ελεύθερου επαγγελματία που καλείται από διάφορους καλλιτεχνικούς φορείς για την παραγωγή εγκαταστάσεων, συχνά μακριά από το χώρο υλοποίησής τους. Πάνω από όλα, όμως, αναδεικνύει την εικονική και «λεκτική» (discursive) διάσταση του χώρου/site όπου αυτές οι εγκαταστάσεις πρόκειται να συναρμολογηθούν σε μια νέα εκδοχή «αγκίστρωσης» της εγκατάστασης στο χώρο/site.

Ως υποπροϊόν της κινητικότητας του σύγχρονου καλλιτέχνη, η Miwon Kwon υποστηρίζει ότι «η *in situ* διαμόρφωση ενός *project* που προκύπτει από μια τέτοια κατάσταση είναι προσωρινή, φανερά ακατάλληλη για την επαναπαρουσίαση του οπουδήποτε αλλού χωρίς την αλλοίωση της σημασίας του». Υπό αυτή τη σκοπιά, προτείνω την παράκαμψη των διαφορών μεταξύ των «μέσων» των τριών αυτών εγκαταστάσεων, υπέρ της προσωρινής αντικατάστασης του όρου εγκατάσταση από τον τριτογενή όρο «project». Στόχος αυτού είναι μόνο να θιχτεί η τροποποιημένη, απεξαρτημένη («απαγκιστρωμένη») και παρόλα αυτά συνεχόμενη μοναδικότητα της στενής σχέσης τους με το χώρο έκθεσης (site-specificity), καθώς και τα συμπτώματα της εξ αποστάσεως συνεργασίας και ανταλλαγής ρόλων (μεταξύ του καλλιτέχνη, του εμπόρου τέχνης, του κριτικού τέχνης κλπ.). Σε ένα ευαίσθητο σενάριο θεσμικής εμπλοκής, τα «projects» στο Zone D δεν αναπτύσσονται απλά μια μοναδικά συγκεκριμένη (specific) σχέση με ένα ευέλικτο χώρο (site), αλλά συνιστούν το Zone D αυτό καθ' αυτό ως το προσωρινό τους site, τόσο ως εστία νέων καλλιτεχνικών προβληματισμών όσο και ως ένα κινητό εκθεσιακό χώρο, πολλά υποσχόμενο στην τοπική και διεθνή καλλιτεχνική σκηνή.

Απόδοση από το αγγλικό κείμενο, Κ. Μ.

Three artists, three “projects,” almost one place: A note on *Places in Zone D*

In as much as abstract space [of modernism and capital]

tends towards homogeneity... a new space cannot be born unless it accentuates differences.

Henri Lefebvre

It was Zone D's embrace of differences, rather than the enforcement of similarities through a preconceived curatorial concept, that first appealed to me when I was invited to write about the works of Sophia Petrides, Danae Stratou and Evanthia Tsantila. *Places in Zone D*, however, promised two further critical challenges. As an encounter of three installations loosely linked as a trilogy about real and imaginary “space,” it contributes to many current explorations of this central, yet contested, territory of both contemporary art and postmodernity. As an encounter of three women artists, however, it echoes recent investigations of “transnational” artistic practices by women artists-feminist or not-the most prominent being the Brooklyn Museum's *Global Feminisms*. Staging in Athens the meeting of three Greek artists whose artistic production cuts across the barriers of the art world's centers and peripheries, *Places in Zone D* offers an opportunity to address the neglect of women artists “from” Greece and to counter the renewed, yet myopic, emphasis on the body as the locus of contemporary women artists' production, as it resurfaced in the above-mentioned exhibition. Conversely, Petrides' amalgamation of subjective and objective space, Stratou's subjective confrontation with nature, and Tsantila's scrutinizing of memory's space(s) suggest diverse negotiations of space as an alternative underlying concern of contemporary artistic practices by women artists, verifying the shift foreseen by the feminist art historian Ewa Lajer Burcharth at the beginning of this decade.

In the process of my virtual and transatlantic familiarization with the progress of the works which, along with the exhibition space, will not have been completed before the last word of this essay will have been rehearsed, the challenge of what was presented to me as an intersection of two photographic and one video installation morphed into a redefinition of site-oriented installation *per se* as symptom of the mobility of the contemporary artist (whether nomadic by agenda or as a result of professionalism) and the transferability of art. Critics have already commented on the “unhinging” of site-specificity from physical locale (whether institutional or public space) that has compromised site-specificity's initial critical edge. While the debated politics of site-specificity is beyond the scope of this introduction, its transmutation as revealed by the preparation for this exhibition elucidates the current state of cosmopolitan artistic production and its repercussions. The paradox of three site-oriented installations meant to be arranged *in situ* - in a “site” that was neither selected from the beginning nor is yet physically completed, but was gradually revealed to the artists through digital plans - merely captures the status of the contemporary artist as a freelancer on call by institutions, often working far from the actual site. It highlights, however, both the virtual and discursive existence of the “site” where these installations are to be assembled.

“As a by product of contemporary artists' globe trotting (as guest, tourist, adventurer, in-house critic, pseudo-ethnographer etc.),” Miwon Kwon contends that “the *in situ* configuration of a *project* that emerges out of such a situation is temporary, ostensibly unsuitable for re-presentation anywhere else without altering its meaning.” It is in this light that I propose to eschew the differences in media of these three installations, in favor of the provisional use of the vernacular term “project,” in order to grasp their modified, “unhinged,” yet persistent site-specificity, among other symptoms of long-distance collaboration and role exchange (between artist, dealer, critic etc.). In an optimistic twist of institutional complicity, the “projects” in Zone D are not just specific to a “functional” site, but in and of themselves constitute the temporary site of Zone D both as a discursive site of advanced art practices and as a mobile new space that promises to make a difference in the local and international art scenes.

Kalliopi Minioudaki, New York, July 2007

SOPHIA PETRIDES



The photograph tells us that when we see we are unconscious of what our seeing cannot see.

Eduardo Cadava

The interior furniture of houses appeared together with the interior furniture of minds.

John Lukacs

While she has maintained a studio in Berlin for more than a decade, Sophia Petrides is above all a New York based artist. Known worldwide as a “photographer” of mostly enigmatic apparitions of animate objects, inaccessible figures and serene interiors, she is distinguished for images - of spaces, above all - hypnotically recomposed through the rhythmic and rhyming unfolding of their own parts. Yet photography, digitally reconfigured, is only the primary means of choice for a private “trip” through the liminal space of subjectively inhabited environments - a space at once physical, mental and psychic - and for a life-long quest for the slippery, stubbornly unknown, part of the image - what the artist calls its ultimate “pleasurable meaning.”

Petrides, however, has experimented with many media, including video (as in *I Am Protected by Your Fear*, 1997-2005). Throughout her career she has never stopped painting and drawing (often with unconventional means and on untraditional surfaces that include but are not limited to sugar, thread, markers and grid paper), maintaining a tension between abstraction and figuration, between representational line and decorative constellations of pictorial mark-making, and between word and image. Moreover, sculpture has played an important yet variable role in her oeuvre, that ranges from her public debut in New York (her thesis exhibition in 1992, whose minimalist “furniture” has all been destroyed), to her ongoing use of sculptural objects within her photographs (such as the sugar-coated guns in *More Pleasure More More* [2000] or the fur piece in *My Envy* [2002], *Your Envy Motherfather 1* [2003] and *You in Me* [2007] in this installation) and the recurring return to sculpture in the form of “assisted” or combined *ready-mades* (such as the ladder-cum-light-bulbs of *Private Spectacle* [2007], or the motorcycle that echoes earlier series of sugar-coated objects).

In fact, her self-denounced sculptural beginning can still illuminate Petrides' work, not simply as a glossary for iconographic motifs that recur in her photographic imagery (such as beds, doors, bulbs, plugs, cables, etc.), but as the founding moment of her idiosyncratic poetics of intimacy. With white replicas of floors, ceilings and doors in various materials (such as sugar and plaster) spread - nearly mirrored - over minimally constructed beds, Petrides first intimated the collapse of real and imaginary space through the intimate co-extensiveness of architecture and objects, of surfaces of her dwellings (house or studio) and of its furniture - co-extensive in the sense of the phenomenological understanding of the “flesh” of the world as a fabric that enfolds in itself both body and mind, interior and exterior, the invisible and the visible. Ever since her turn to photography this mode has remained the prevalent underlying thread of a consistent artistic program - despite the medium or occasional iconography - illuminated, if not informed, by Gaston Bachelard's understanding of the intimacy of space, itself predicated upon his phenomenological analysis of the house as a site of psychic integration of the imagined being. Although the modern notion of interiority, applicable at once to both physical and mental space, follows a long path from 19th century literature to the writings of Sigmund Freud, it was Bachelard who remarkably postulated the spatial architecture of subjectivity as inhabitable rather than simply inhabiting - “houses are in us as much as we are in them” - while capturing the subjective importance of lived space. “Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent,” the philosopher concludes, “it has been lived in...but with all the partiality of imagination.” A near-homage to Bachelard, the *Poetics of Intimacy 1* (2006) encapsulates her approach, even though it is a rare example of the artist's use of herself as a model. She covertly portrays herself as an Ingresque odalisque on a daybed, with her nude back turned to the viewer and her body barely surviving annihilation from a sensuous brocaded velvet cover as it merges with the daybed's identical upholstery. While her body is featured indeed as “inhabiting” the starkly lit real space, she, however, looks at her own inhabitation by it: the faded diagonal reflection of this scene on the wall, a screen of ultimate spatial intimacy.



It is in light of the dissolution of the physicality of space into a topography of intimate being that one begins to fathom Petrides' poetics of space as characteristic of all her imagery as well as explanatory of her structural recoding of photography through digital technology. Her "pensive" photographic work is achieved mostly with open, ongoing, series of thematic variety, but with significantly "recycled" motifs, such as in the series *Silence Please* (1998-), where she transposes her works (paintings or photographs) in the space of the museum, or the series *Poetics of Intimacy* (1992-), where she quasi-surrealistically zooms in and onto the familiar faces of her private space to capture, for instance, light bulbs in an auratic solitude or pairs of switches in nearly bodily pairs. Despite the diversity of the themes of each series however, and whether Petrides takes her tripod outside her private spaces (as in the *Superman Series* [1999-2004], which is based on the photograph of an abandoned carousel in an Italian forest dramatically recomposed) or not, she constantly confronts her camera's eye with the surfaces of her ambient - often architectural - spaces to ask them to surrender the familiarity of their everydayness for the unfamiliarity of their intimacy. Petrides first trusts her camera (a classic Hasselblad) to expose the conflation of real and imaginary space, almost echoing with her results Walter Benjamin's understanding of photography's unveiling of the "optical unconscious." She is thus left to be haunted by "found" architectural or natural déjà-vus, such as the identical doors no. 7 and no. 8 from Berlin's streets mirrored in *Window at the Backyard: Attraction of a Gaze* (2007), in the *The Poetics of Power*, or the two stone eagles that she juxtaposes in the same installation (yet through three different photographs) as

a found quasi-transatlantic mirror-image - since they come respectively from New York and Berlin. However Petrides relies on the latest technology to rework photography into digital composites, in order to further her quest for an anatomy of the imaginary space in its osmosis with the real one. Redefining the photographic archive as an electronic file cabinet of scanned transparencies available for an ongoing contemplation and recycling - thus converting the archive from an image bank of traces of history to a collection of nearly diaristic records of the reality of her unreality - she deconstructs selected images into segments which she redeploys by appropriation, or through more sophisticated forms of repetition, multiplication, superimposition, splitting and mirror-imaging. In effect she clones fragments of the real space into uncanny mental architectures of unreal one and reintegrates them as works within works in a perpetual mise-en-abyme. Obvious or covert (as in several uncannily king-sized beds, pieced together from two) mirror-imaging is Petrides' signature means through which she builds her images and intimates the inextricableness of real and imaginary in a manner that evokes Gilles Deleuze's Bergsonian understanding of the indiscernible embrace of real and virtual image in his analysis of the cinematic "crystal image" and the resulting "objective illusion."¹ Despite the individual scenes of random or staged inhabitation, that range from the art spectators in the *Silence Please* series to the staged narrative of uncommunicativeness and desire in *I Will I Will Not* (2000), Petrides essentially takes the viewer along on her trips in space - whether in her house, her studio, her parents' house, a train car, an enchanted forest or a museum - to question the codependence of being and

¹ "...the actual image itself has a virtual image which corresponds to it like a double or reflection. In Bergsonian terms, the real object is reflected in a mirror-image as in the virtual object which, from its side and simultaneously, envelops and reflects the real: there is coalescence between the two. There is a formation of an image with two sides, actual and virtual...The crystal image, or crystalline description has two definite sides that are not to be confused...but indiscernibility [of the virtual and the real image] constitutes an objective illusion...In fact, there is no virtual which does not become actual in relation to the actual, the latter becoming virtual through the same relation: it is a place and its obverse which are totally reversible. These are the 'mutual images' as Bachelard puts it, where an exchange is carried out. The indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary, or of the present and the past, of the actual and the virtual, is definitely not produced in the head or the mind; it is objective characteristic of certain existing images which are by nature double."



space "in all its social, sexual and emotional parameters." She could not have put it better: "is the experience of taking trips everyday back to our space emotional or rational? Do we take trips back to the architectural space of the room or to the imaginary architectural space that we emotionally construct? Are the walls, doors, closets, light bulbs...bed, and a shadow on the brick wall mirrors of themselves or mirrors of us?"

The above introduction oversimplifies the subtleties of the imagery and the image-making of a sophisticated poetics, which includes the titles of her works that deserve, however, separate analysis.² Yet it aims at facilitating the encounter with Petrides' signature objects, surfaces and curiosity as they reemerge in the photographs of this installation, *The Poetics of Power*: desk, beds, doors, the opened or closed drawers, the starkly lit wooden reflective floor, the phantasmically split eagle, but also the painterly wall, itself a wooden closet digitally stretched through mirror-imaging into a suffocating dead end, and the imaginary landscape of the creased sheet in *Your Envy Motherfather 1*. There are many ways to envision the effect of this "project" in its totality, however. On one level it can be seen as a mini-retrospective, not as a theater of old work but as a manifestation of a fundamental principle of the artist's image making: recycling, understood not simply as a reuse of an image but as a self-reflexive (re)incorporation of works within her works. As such, not only do old masterpieces *My Envy* and *Your Envy Motherfather* of the series *My Envy* (1999-) mesh with works made for this "project" (*You in Me*, *Private Spectacle*) along with renditions of older works (the sugar-coated motorcycle), and what it seems to me is the beginning of a new series (*The Poetics of Power*, *Window at the Backyard...*), but images - such as the body of the father or the desk - migrate from work to work, traditional painting enters photography as a scanned image in the wallpaper of *Private Spectacle*, while sculpture literally penetrates the boundaries of a photographic installation, incorporating Zone D as its site.

From a still self-reflexive point of view, this collage of diverse interior views of an esoteric abode stands as a self-portrait of the artist-as-photographer. Given Talbot's definition of photography as "words of light," the room morphs into a metaphor for camera lucida, with the bulbs of the ladder - itself a subtle stand-in for the tripod - triggering such an association. Taking into consideration the bond of photography and psyche, which makes us think (according to Cadava's understanding of photography in light of both Benjamin and Freud) the image's passage into consciousness both in psyche and photograph "at a moment of danger," the room also becomes a psychic camera, resurfacing self-defining family dramas and spatial configurations. "If the psyche and photography are machines for the production of images," as Cadava writes, "what is produced is not simply any image, but an image of ourselves. And we are most ourselves when, not ourselves, we are an image or a photograph - an image or photograph we may never see 'before our gaze.'" And yet Petrides' intention is not her self-portrayal through whatever the beheading of a man and the blinding of her parents by means of their turned backs might signify in an alternative psychobiographic reading of these works. Instead, she undertakes another esoteric trip in her silent space - a composite of views of her parents' house in Athens, her own in New York, and views from her studio in Berlin - yet to expose its gendering, if not to toy with its politics. The artist is explicit: "in my installation *Poetics of Power*, I explore the gendered space which is defined by the social, political, and sexual functions of the gender, male or female, as well as the power relations which are developed in it." Commensurate with the powerful grip of public space and architecture in their stereotypical gendering as masculine, is the unusual (for Petrides) violation of the installation's interiority by the fragments of public architecture - the menacing eagles - and the motorcycle. Yet its space remains stubbornly internal, circumscribed by the wall paper, the implied window view and architectural impasses,



² For instance, *In this trip you lost the chance to mortify your pleasure*, *Split me split me not*, *Desiring desire desiring image*, to mention only a few of the most captivating ones.

whether walls or secretive closets. Unlike other women artists - such as Louise Bourgeois or Francesca Woodman, who have perpetuated the psychosocial gendering of space exposing the house as an imprisoning confinement of femininity, or embraced it as a cipher of femininity, itself identified with darkness and unconsciousness by Freud - Petrides allows symbolic hints to map the space of the house, the architecture of our being, as both feminine and masculine, even though her scale weighs the displacement of the feminine through the masculine colonization of the space. Stained compulsively by her own hand with red pigment, the wallpaper is a sign of femininity whether seen as a historic emblem of domesticity, a decorative surface of seductive artifice, or even a "stained" one. But it occupies only one wall. Conversely, the signifiers of male power proliferate: the desk - a staple of genius understood historically only as male, as a synecdoche of the "study room" - or the eagle, a cliché of stately prowess apotheosed through its appropriation by Nazi architecture, cancel its presence. This is especially the case since the installation is presided over by an obscure icon of the Father centered on the wall that faces the viewer as s/he enters it. Yet, in as much as power, as unmistakably gendered patriarchal hegemony, is inscribed in her objects and the ornaments of private and public space in their essential interlacing with each other and their unavoidable grip of being, Petrides also conjures gendered power's subversion, if not just opening the space for a "resisting" reading of her work. At least, this is the only way I can see her perverse evocation of signifiers of masculine power, only to be subverted. "Father" is but a disembodied head feminized by her disguising him with fur, dwarfed legless on Petrides' childhood bed - not to mention the diminutive size of the photograph itself. And if the ladder, crippled by its sugared leg, does not bring her high enough to confront the gaze of the male in *You in Me*, it is his feminization - again through the use of fur, the fetishist's favorite - that renders him an icon of androgyny, a make-believe vision of the ideal being. In effect, the lending of the father's body to her mother through mirroring, and his feminization, in *Your Envy Motherfather 1*, almost turns gender hybridization into a precondition for the unbearable burden of captivity in the paratactic

lifelong coexistence of heterosexual marriage, if not a wholehearted castration of paternal authority. After all, Petrides introduces us to this gendered environment with a motorcycle, a potent symbol of "masculine autonomy and power" whether seen as violently penetrating or supporting the "body" of our cultural structures, yet with a twist. Obsessively sugar-coated in a gesture of cancellation of its aggression, isn't it offered as a delicious fetish - a figure of disavowal of patriarchal power, or a parody of itself?

K. M.

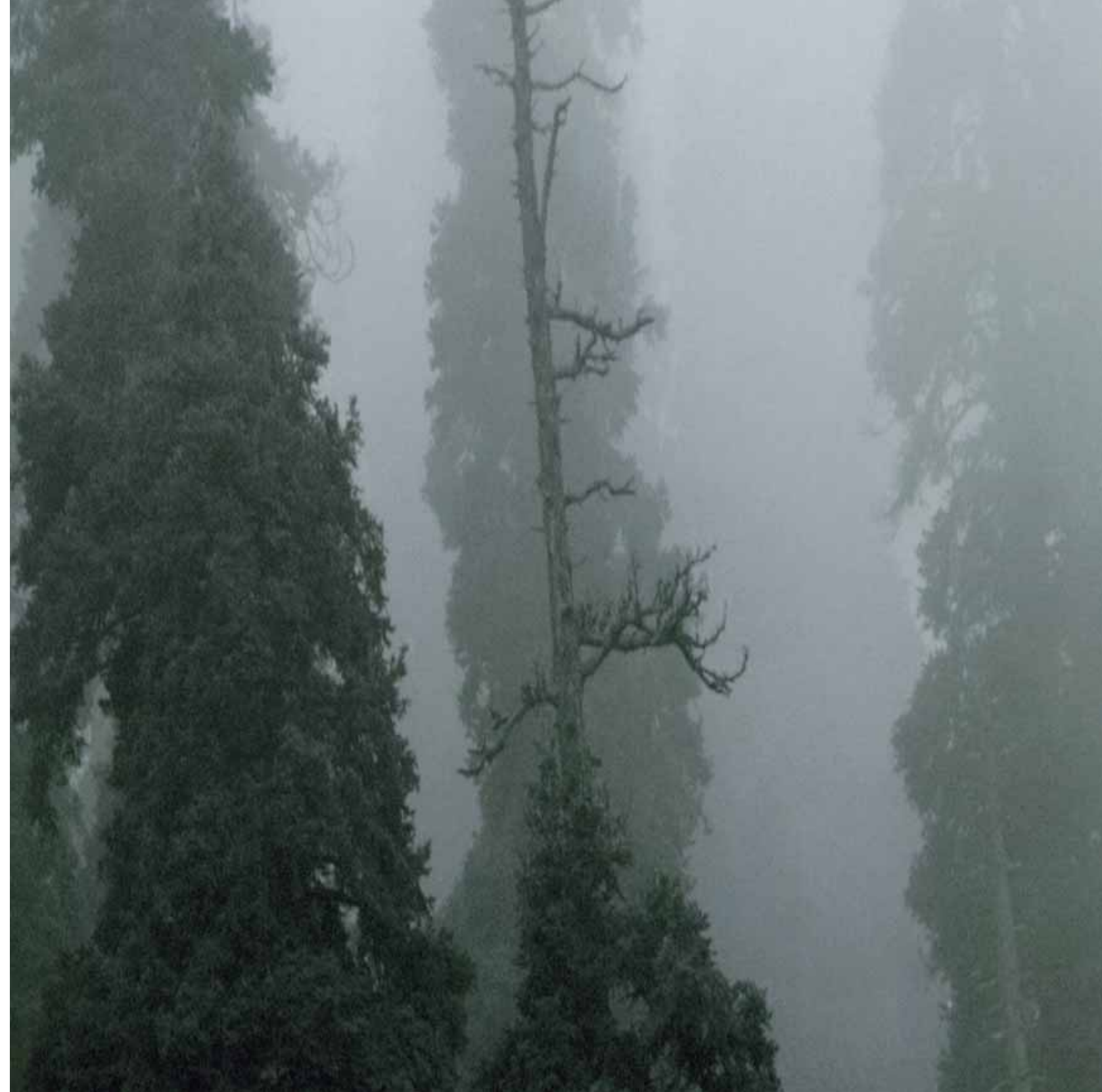
The artist would like to thank: Kulturwerk Bethanien, Mathias Mrowka and his staff, Duggal photolab, Mamoon Obaidullah and his staff and Youli Petridou.



SUGAR COATED MOTORCYCLE. A BUG AMID MY ROOM, motorcycle, sugar, artificial resin, dimensions varied, 1992-2007 | 19



DANAE STRATOU



The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way...But to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself.

William Blake

In the history of western civilization forests represent an outlying realm of opacity which has allowed that civilization to estrange itself, enchant itself, terrify itself...in short, to project into the forest's shadows, its secret and innermost anxieties.

Robert Pogue Harrison

Sculptor by training, living - while not always working - in Athens, Danae Stratou has been more widely known in Greece for her large scale site-specific installations and her "traveling works." After an undistinguished beginning as a modernist sculptor and a designer of decorative constructions, which allowed her to raise her first child, Stratou rediscovered herself in the mid-1990s as a sculptor of the "expanded field." Experiencing her second pregnancy as a reawakening of her creative drive and her need to dedicate herself to it, she broke free both from the social expectations of her role as a mother and the influence of her mother's (sculptor Eleni Potaga) work - understood generically as the making of autonomous sculptural objects. As such she offers an interesting case study for a reconsideration of stereotypical perceptions of motherhood as an obstacle to female artistic identity, and a re-theorization of the existing models of artistic "influence" and "resistance" to include the newly formed genealogies of women artists.

Stratou's first breakthrough was a product of collaboration (as a member of the group D.A.S.T., comprised of herself, industrial designer Alexandra Stratou, and architect Stella Constantinides), a large-scale earth work: *Desert Breath* (1997). Made of sand and water, in one of the most most impressive and literal applications of the term "earth art," the internationally celebrated *Desert Breath* still exists, as a monumental anti-monument to nature and time, in a plateau of the Sahara desert, near the Red Sea. It consists of two interlocked spirals, the first of positive and the second of negative sand cones of systematically changing scale that move out from a center: another sand cone almost completely sunken in an artificial water pool. Sculpting the wasteland of the Sahara into an intricate relief

that relied solely on site-related materials, shapes, and techniques, while in close dialogue with the desert's infinity, and meant to be viewed from the nearby mountains, rhythmically experienced by walking and harmoniously returned to nature through erosion, it introduced some of the most lasting characteristics of Stratou's oeuvre. A dual penchant for both geometry and the most nebulous of the natural elements (earth, water, air), the importance of site-specificity, and an intense (often synaesthetic) engagement of the viewer, are some of the signature characteristics that repeatedly resurface in the artist's indoor and outdoor work (as well as D.A.S.T.'s unrealized proposals), turning Stratou into a sophisticated space-maker who puts the viewer in experiential situations that challenge, reconfigure, and often supplant his/her purely visual consumption of art. Water and soil, for instance, were the primary materials of her first solo exhibition in Athens, where Stratou hinged her interest in the primary elements of the world on the particularities of an industrial site situated at the junction of city and sea - Sarantopoulos' Flour Mills - while enhancing the spatial diptych through audiovisual means. In the first room, the artist cut the space in two through a minimalist line of water, paradoxically stilled and structured as it imperceptibly flowed in a preexisting functional structure on the floor, while she invited the viewer to experience the austere unfolding of shape through the recorded rhythm of flowing water. Having referred to the orientation of the building amidst land and sea in *Water Section*, in *Breathe* (2000) Stratou capitalized on the mysterious quality of the abandoned space next to it to induce an earthly experience. Aiming to harmonize man with earth through what she has repeatedly referred to as the awakening of an atrophied yet primordial "internal bodily memory," *Breathe* transformed the room into an organic womb, carpeted with amorphous soil that immersed the viewer in an otherworldly multi-sensorial experience by means of visual abjectness, the smell and unexpected pulse of the earth (through an invisible platform underneath it) and a soundtrack of otherworldly breathing. Such dialogue of opposites has taken multiple forms in other site-specific installations as well as public works. In *Water Perspective*, with which Stratou represented Greece in the 48th Venice Biennale, she used the exhibition room as a shell for an unorthodox combination of video and sculpture in a piece whose complexity depended on the viewer's alternating experience of it through static and kinesthetic viewing. A video projection of a section of the sea's surface, vertically filmed, was viewable only through a screen, formed by the rectangular rims of over 900 steel tubes of considerable depth, that

blocked the entrance. Stratou thus counteracted the flatness of the projected image (creating an engulfing three-dimensionality when viewed closely from individual tubes) and subverted the normative mode of film viewing (substituting the static spectatorship of moving images for the kinetic viewing of still film). Moreover, she again bridged geometry and organic fluidity, industrial ready-made material and found nature, depth and surface, while actively engaging an expanded notion of "site" that included her cultural origins as a Mediterranean artist, Venice as a water city, and the physical properties of the Greek pavilion in and of itself. In *Earth Cubes* (Lido, 2000), negative (incised) and positive (protruding) earth cubes were turned into fake water pools by employing reflective surfaces that captured, in real time, the fleeting appearance of their surroundings - causing the viewer to confront the cosmic union of earth and sky through an unconventionally "filmed" and horizontal landscape.³ Stratou's second breakthrough came in the form of what she refers to as traveling works. Breaking free from the predicaments of monocultural production, she adopted a quasi-nomadic artistic identity. Instead of casting yet another exoticizing or ethnographic gaze on the "other," Stratou made traveling her personal means to pursue the "journey" of her artistic ideas, from unconscious to conscious, as she has repeatedly called the trajectory of her instinctually conceived projects from their conception to their thorough conceptualization. Succumbing herself, for instance, to the rhythm of earth's "veins" - the world's seven largest rivers - she brought her experience to Athenian viewers in the video installation *The River of Life* (2004). Rather than presenting any authoritarian truth about the other, or professing a trans-cultural "third space" to accommodate difference, she eclipsed western "sameness" through the multiplicity and the proliferation of others, seamlessly piecing together her continuous views, from the boat, of the banks' people and places, and simulating her immersion in the rhythm of the rivers through space in the panoramic form of the installation. Alternatively, displaying her travel diaries to frame photographic stills from the same trip in an installation titled *See Through* (2005), she simultaneously shared her private thoughts and travel impressions while exposing "point of view" as the limitation for any encounter with the other. In a formally related photographic installation, *Cut-7: Dividing Lines* (2006), consisting of diaphanous photographs mounted on plastic sheets, Stratou laid bare the fallacies of globalization, thematizing the transmutation of national borders into vicious "dividing" lines - based on socioeconomic, religious, ethnic and nationalist differences. Neither

professing a political agenda, nor aestheticizing her views of the seven "wounded" sites to which she traveled in order to feel them, she sandwiched the viewers in a narrow passageway amidst juxtaposed views from either side of each "line" - once again relying on space, this time to simulate the tension between hatred of and unencumbered coexistence with eternal and renewed others.

In *Soul Forest* (2007), Stratou's shift from an experiential account of earth's "veins" to a pictorial recording of its "lungs" is only seemingly a break from a trajectory of more complex installations, even though this photographic treescape seems a compromise compared to the moving landscapes that entered the mirrors of *Earth Cubes*. In light of Robert Rosenblum's - among others - diagnosis of the neo-romanticism that underlies the debatably postmodernist return to nature - initiated by the emergence of earth/land art - since the 1960s, *Soul Forest* is a footnote inextricably linked to her previous oeuvre and her overall fascination with nature. In addition, since the forest in this work was photographed at the end of a dangerous descent from a Hymalayan cliff in Kashmir, when the magic of its serenity ensured her safety, it can be also seen as a souvenir from the travels for *Cut-7: Dividing Lines* - a personal postscript to a political traveling work in the pattern established by the exhale of *The River of Life* into *See Through*. Comprised of seven photographs of ancient trees, each printed twice in over-life-size and miniature dimensions and encased in Plexiglas, *Soul Forest* is installed as two constellations of freestanding, diaphanous plastic steles. A hybrid installation, both photographic and sculptural, it again showcases Stratou's deft space-making which harkens back to the Minimalists' fetishism of phenomenological space. Despite the content of the steles, *Soul Forest* is not a theatrical setting representing a forest. With the physicality of the steles, even though filmy (2cm), rivaling the tree images, it forms a congregation of objects that confront the viewer with the same theatrical "presence" that Michael Fried castigated as idiomatic of minimalist objects, returning the body to the spectator as an indispensable tool of aesthetic experience. The change of scale is a further key factor that unsettles the viewer's "body ego," aiding the artist in enhancing the viewer's self-awareness in relation to the scale of the work, and in simulating her own changing self-perception as she wandered in and out the forest.

By probing the phenomenological dwarfing and gigantizing of the viewer, the artist also manages to accentuate the fairy-tale evocation of enchanting and enchanted forests, aiding us in understanding her (re)turn to nature.

Φαντάζομαι ένα δάσος
έναν τόπο που θα μπορούσε να είναι αληθινός ή παραμυθένιος,
στα όρια του συνειδητού και του ασυνείδητου κόσμου
εκεί όπου αυτοί οι δύο κόσμοι σχεδόν αγγίζουν ο ένας τον άλλο...

Γιγάντια δέντρα υψώνονται μέσα από την ομίχλη
Προς την ανυπαρξία
Προς το λευκό φως

Περιπλανιέμαι.
Αισθάνομαι μικρή.
Είναι πελώρια.
Φεύγω ενώ αυτά παραμένουν.
Αισθάνομαι πελώρια.

I imagine a Forest
a place that could be real or from a fairy tale,
a place on the edge of the conscious and subconscious world
where these two worlds almost touch each other...

Tall trees coming out of the fog pointing upwards
To nothingness
To white light

I wander around;
I feel small.
They are huge.
I walk away and they remain.
I feel huge.





As a cultural construct, the forest has been historically regarded with a measure of ambivalence. Celebrated as a spiritual place, on the one hand, it has often and simultaneously been feared on the other, as the abode of evil - as evidenced by the enchanted forests of the Brothers Grimm's celebrated tales and their symbolic relation to the unconscious. Neither a strictly "picturesque" landscape, nor one of "sublime" terror, nor a neo-romantic view into nature as a sanctuary of homeless spirituality or lost paradises, *Soul Forest* recasts an existing place as an imaginary landscape or a psychic topography. A cinematically fragmented collection of photographic traces of a real forest - a place conducive to Bachelardian poetic reverie - becomes an oneiric place as reverie's own product. Opaque, back-lit silhouettes of monochromatic trees pierce the sky as menacingly as spears, while others, shrouded by the veil of thick fog, are disembodied, becoming phantasmic echoes of their brothers. The closer Stratou gets, as signified by the *repoussoir* of certain branches that create a pictorial first plane, the more spectral their photographic documentation appears. Fog dissolves trees next to or behind others into their ghostly shadows, turning them into afterimages or faded mnemonic traces on the layers of the unconscious of the Freudian "memory pad." As a paradoxical record of a real landscape of poetic unreality, *Soul Forest* thus questions the boundaries of consciousness and unconsciousness, reality and unreality, truth and its negation. Its fragments become "membranes of meditation" - to borrow Thomas Struth's term for his own photographic landscapes of jungles - or even better befitting her transparencies of spectral trees, membranes of imagination. As such, *Soul Forest* substantiates the ambiguous place of forests in our collective imaginary. Attesting to the casting of the forest as a shadow of civilization throughout the history of western thought, Robert Harrison observes:

If [forests] evoke associations of danger and abandon in our minds, they also evoke scenes of enchantment. In other words,

in the religions, mythologies, and literatures of the West, the forest appears as a place where the logic of distinction goes astray. Or where our subjective categories are confounded. Or where our perceptions become promiscuous with one another, disclosing latent dimensions of time and consciousness. In the forest the inanimate become animate, the god turns into a beast, the outlaw stands for justice, Rosalind becomes a boy...the straight line forms a circle, the ordinary gives way to the fabulous.

As Stratou adopts the bewilderment of a child lost in the forest, romantically reclaiming childhood as the stronghold of creative imagination, as she has stated in interviews, her disembodiment of trees - the future weapons of mass destruction, according to vigilant politicians - cannot but awaken ecological anxieties about the latest state of earth's deforestation. Neither a "greenbelt" activist, nor an artist whose return to nature is programmatically conceived as an act of protest against the increasing dangers of deforestation and of its socioeconomic motivation - begun already with Joseph Beuys but dramatically increased in recent years under the global warming alerts, some of which were featured in ICP's recent show *Ecotopia* - Stratou's *Soul Forest* looms large as an ominous memory of a lost species from another era. Imported and encased in Plexiglas, the trees form a futuristic botanical display of an extinct species in, one might imagine, a city like Athens, whose civilization every summer is tragically clearing its way through the last vestiges of green. Whether despite the artist or according to her intention, *Soul Forest* becomes a somberly political work. In light of the loss of causality between artistic representations and political engagements, after all, as Jacques Ranciere concludes, an artistic intervention can still be political "by modifying the visible, the ways of perceiving it and expressing it, of experiencing it as tolerable or intolerable."⁴

K. M.



3 Despite the prevalence of nature in these installations, city has entered the site-specific logic of her vision in works adjusted or made in urban environments, as in the transformation of *Water Perspective* for an exhibition at the Contemporary Art Museum in Athens, as well as the interactive installation of public viewfinders which she dispersed in Athens in 2004.

4 Even more so since contemporary Kashmir's forests, considerably impoverished, are legally protected survivors of Western exploitation (including tourism), wars and local poverty (through profitable tree smuggling) - a hot local political problem in and of itself. In a sense, the work points to the impossibility of the treescape as a type of landscape - inherently a constructed view of nature/natural beauty - despite its endless resuscitations that only recall/repeat the traumatic reality.

EVANTHIA TSANTILA



We speak so much of memory
because so little of it is left.

Pierre Nora

While living and working in Berlin since the late 1990s, Evanthia Tsantila has repeatedly reappeared in the Greek scene as a “stranger to ourselves,” to borrow the title of Julia Kristeva’s recent study of the “stranger” in society and in us. In contrast to the multiform efforts to bridge the gap between art and life since the 1950s, Tsantila has instead, with her art and public persona, geared towards a “difficult” art that both questions and polices art’s autonomy, while acting as a conceptual alchemist of new and old media. Not surprisingly, she does not consider “communication through art as a process which brings the artist close to the world,” as she recently expressed, “but as something that takes place among the viewers... a transcendental moment of an almost incomprehensible agreement among them, as they are being touched by the same work.” While this commentary was in regard to the lack of communication as thematized in her recent installation *Silence* (2007), it does convey the intentional hermeticism and solitude of her art. *Κείμεια 1993-5* (1995) is one of the earliest samples. A poem with the same title on its cover was inserted in a translucent yet inaccessible glass cube in a conceptual gesture that guarded the essence of artistic objecthood, enacting its uncommunicative alienation, and welcoming her work, as Harry Marandi has observed in another case, in melancholia’s regime. Yet what of the two bars wounding the wall of the gallery, adding to the enigma of her perennial pursuit of the endangered object of art in the society of spectacle and alienation, while returning it to it?

This vestigial site-specificity resurfaces as a common element in most of her early installations. Yet unlike Stratou’s phenomenological teasing of the gallery space, Tsantila’s installations of the 1990s unite the occasional exhibition and the represented space in a fragile codependence that loosens the chains of art’s commodification while unsettling given notions of art’s production, exhibition and viewing - questioning, in her words, “can some notion of an essential objecthood absorb all the state of affairs in which an art work is made, exhibited,

viewed, understood or not understood?” Exemplary of this period are installations such as *Ramona* (1995) and *Harbor* (1997), and her participation in the 48th Venice Biennale (1999). Prompting the viewer to look hard for the artistic “object,” in *Ramona* she paraphrased monochrome - a staple of 20th century avant-garde pictorial strategies - into a site- and sky-specific intervention: three blue rectangles of distinctly different dimensions were surreptitiously painted on the walls of a building of uncertain future, in a liminal dialogue with found shapes (the skylight) and the color of the sky in a specific moment of the day (through the same skylight). Equally fragile and specific - with site here understood as both the building of the Pavilion and the institution of the Biennale as a landmark of cultural tourism - was her immaterial proposal for the Biennale. Turning the most advanced means of the culture industry on its head, Tsantila colonized the exhibition space, nearly imperceptibly, with three laser beams (reflected into twelve mirrors), which highlighted its role - as constitutive of art - by repeating its shape in and out of the Pavilion, while also resisting it by alleviating it from the usual accumulation of works in such massive art fairs.

Since the turn of the century, however, Tsantila’s production has taken a rather more intense, interdisciplinary turn, whether consummated in drawings, or in multimedia installations that encompass a variety of mechanical and hand-made images, often utterly hybridized. A “purist” exception, despite its sculptural quality, is her video installation *Atomica* (2001), in which the “narcissistic” predicament of early video art survives in her juxtaposition of two soft screens (sheets) facing each other, with a video projection of herself looking obsessively through the space of the viewer, at her face acting out various emotional states. It is through a more complex method, however, that usually Tsantila interlaces traditional and new media, materials, and genres as well as other arts, not in a vacuous affirmation of the “postmedium” era. An idiosyncratic testing of various arts’ and mediums’ translatability into an autonomous visual art experience, coupled with an “archival impulse,” underscores most of her recent endeavors. Exemplary are the large drawings with photographic effects and historically significant archival origins (such as the *Ball*



series), or with invented graphemes and cinematic subject matter (like the drawing series *Silence*, based on stills from Ingmar Bergman's homonymous film), or installations in which architecture, literature, cinema, theater, photography, and drawing intersect - whether referenced, appropriated, "transcribed" (in the words of Jan-Erik Lundström) or cross-pollinated. Characteristic of the latter are the variations *Crime and Punishment* (2002-4), which translates a passage from Dostoyevsky into performance, narrative, painted and projected image; and *How Nice...How Nice That We Don't Understand Each Other* (2004), in which Bergman's masterpiece again provides the starting point for an exploration of cinematic time, space and narrative through the use of ink and professional actors, elaborate drawing and video. As the artist explains, in these new series, "using other practices like architecture, film, video, theater, literature, performance and combining them with traditional ones like drawing," she investigates "that which remains after the continuous transformations from one medium to the other" while also acquiring "the distance of fine art from these practices." Medium translatability underlies especially her return to "production" through a continuous and deliberately laborious reinvention of drawing that, in and of itself, constitutes the watershed of her latest work. Benjamin's definition of the task of the translator - "no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original," - itself paralleling his understanding of photography's infidelity, somehow resonates in light of the eclectic appropriation of photographs in Tsantila's drawings. For, as Cadava further interprets, "the task of translation is not to render a foreign language into one we may call our own, but rather to preserve the foreignness of this language."

To the structuring impulses of archiving and translating I will add the historical and cultural specificity of Berlin - the capital of the reunified German nation, where Tsantila lives and works as a "stranger among them" - in an attempt to describe *Standing* (2007) as a treatise on memory, despite the artist's credo that the "work of art cannot be announced" and the fact that most of its parts have not been yet executed. For, as an installation, *Standing* is less a sequel to her variations of *Silence*, in which the artist first filmed her neighbor, Frau

Wolff, in all her fragility and aloofness, than it relates to works such as *The Ball* or *The Room/The Landscape*, which dealt with issues of history, memory and their undeniable relation to trauma - indelibly, to me, linked with the schizophrenic crisis of memory and mnemonic desire that had been feeding German art and culture since the Holocaust, and only renewed under the still-recent reunification. With *Standing*, however, the artist aims at exposing generically, as she has astutely said, "the inability of memory to travel on its own means." It will be comprised of a video (the alteration of three projections, on one loop, showing Frau Wolff standing in a cemetery, a courthouse and an anatomy classroom), a vitrine of small color photographs taken by the artist (some of the same institutional spaces where Frau Wolff is filmed in the video *Standing*), and a wall installation of ink drawings based on photographs of mostly private archival origins (as if from a family album), yet with conspicuous omissions, multiplications, or additions from other sources that effect a liminal space of uncanny encounters. It is not accidental that one of these figurative drawings or better, palimpsests, of heterogeneous archival traces, is haunted by the specter of Aby Warburg, the art historian whose monumental gathering (the *Mnemosyne Atlas*) of photographs of "elective affinities" as identifiable forms of collective memory (ranging from reproductions of Renaissance masterpieces to press photos) "questioned," as Benjamin Buchloh observes, "whether under the universal reign of the photographic reproduction, mnemonic experience could even continue to be construed" - before the Holocaust offered its somber answer. For in as much as Warburg's anti-positivist redefinition of the Atlas opened the way for the archival impulse in postwar German art, the most prominent being the antinomic archive of Gerhard Richter who was teaching when Tsantila studied at Düsseldorf, she counteracts it to intimate not only a disbelief in historical truth but in its mnemonic tracing. The definition in the Octoberists' recent volume on 20th century art of the contemporary "archival impulse" makes evident Tsantila's strategies as well as trepidations:

This impulse which has many precedents in postwar, art is manifest in a will to make historical information, often lost,



marginal, or suppressed, physical and spatial, indeed interactive, usually through found images, objects and texts arranged in installations. Like any archive, the materials of this art are found but also constructed, public but also private, factual but also fictive.

In her own version, Tsantila eschews the non-visual knowledge that informs her archival material, and supplants her archive with “constructed” material - a “made” film, and drawings with “doctored” memories borrowed from other archives - frustrating the transmission of personal and collective memory as it is being unhinged from its documentary means (photography, video), and from the dramatically focused *lieux de memoires* (both the “unstoried” public spaces of Berlin and the private space of Frau Wolff’s aged body).

In terms of exhibition strategy, the juxtaposition of framed drawings on the wall, and photos of a size reminiscent of another era in the museum case, entail different and semantically differentiating viewing of interchangeable documentary and artistic material, thus hampering the passive consumption of the projected image - the immersive surrender of the viewer to the “spectacle.” *Standing* will, however, remain the centerpiece of the installation: an obscure trilogy of the mute intersection of private and public history in the eye of a presumably candid camera and, above all, a slow, lethargic portrait of an unknown Berliner in the effected “elsewhere” that the artist seeks. Frau Wolff will be displaced from her everyday reality, or rather misplaced in a series of “wrong” places - spaces of representation (rather than representational places, as Lefebvre distinguishes the lived space), spaces with multiple layers of memories, or maybe without (due to the repeated exile of memory that successive regimes have entailed for most places that have survived destruction, redefinition, or renaming in Berlin, as Sophie Calle’s *Detachment* recently reminded), places which Frau Wolff might have never entered and of which we know little to nothing but their antiquity (they all date from the 19th century). Asked to conform to a command of minimal acting - to stand - she will embody herself in filmic time surrounded alternately by a cemetery turned into a landscape through uselessness, a symmetrical staircase of a flamboyantly and paradoxically (for a

courthouse) decorated interior, and a futuristically modern anatomy study room. It is impossible to foresee the effect of the space on her fragilely aged yet bulky body, or to presume - as the artist does, judging from her filming in *Silence* - her gradual affectless spacing-out, although we can agree with her that the film will be a recording of “a character who is real, while not its recording.”

It might be rewarding to question differently the means and the effects of this encounter. As a successive projection of three almost-still images, Tsantila seems to be toying with the complicit (un)truthfulness of three documentary media at once: video, film, and photography - if *Standing* is not just a treatise on “photography in the expanded field.” Tourist or home (video) movies aside, the suspension of photographic “stasis” and “narrativity,” the immobility of the camera, and the centrality of “standing” as prolonged “posing” are replete with references to photography, in a near-Barthesian search of the indexical truth of the documented body, here filmed. Above all, these three pieces of untrained acting resemble experiments in the “cinema of the everyday body” whose truth has been propagated by Deleuze:

The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself...It is through the body that cinema forms its alliance with the spirit. “Give me a body then” is first to mount the camera on an everyday body. The body is never in the present, it contains the before and the after, tiredness and waiting. Tiredness and waiting, even despair are the attitudes of the body.

Praising the revelations of the body in neorealist and underground cinema, Comolli’s “revelation cinema” and Brechtian “gest,” Deleuze observes that it is its tiredness that “suggests to thought something to incommunicate, the unthought, life,” obliquely shedding light on Wolff’s directive to just stand for her revealing body attitude rather than the readable signifiers of class, gender, age, etc. Yet the invocation of the above three media’s claims to truth, only serves Tsantila to further intimate the gap between memory’s means and its release. With the extraction of the knowledge that Tsantila has systematically mined, about the spaces she used, or



about what is after all an *East* German lady of her next door - a Prussian who survived the war, Nazism, and the Siberian camps of forced labor, who served and outlived GDR - collective and personal memory of places and people recedes, locked in sites of both vulnerability and power (body, cemetery, and arenas of panoptical institutional power). In addition to the arguable amnesia of the body - something which remains to be seen - Tsantila exposes technology's incapacity to transmit memory, siding with the pessimists in the endless debate already marked by Krackauer's belief that photography destroys memory, yet in a distinctly different historical moment: a period of excessive colonization by the mass visual culture in the new Berlin, within a society where extended controversies about the (in)capacity of "memorial art" after the Holocaust and long-held counter-memorial conceptual artistic practices have shaken belief in the mnemonic potential of the image.

Seen as withdrawn into the sanctuary of Tsantila's art's autonomy, then, *Standing* might rely on personal remembering - memory's "involuntary" sparking to recall Proust, as her collage/drawings do in practice - the urging responsibility left to the viewer to survive the onslaught of spectacle and electronic memory. Or, alternatively, it may rely on the viewer's loving gaze, for "the eye can confer the active gift of love upon bodies which have long been accustomed to neglect and disdain," according to Kaja Silverman's re-theorizing of the gaze, since, to her, "to look is to embed the image with a constantly shifting matrix of unconscious memories." Yet despite the artist or not, Berlin threatens the autonomy of *Standing* as it enters it through the entropically reconfigured Jewish cemetery - inactive since 1945 but violated by Nazis and neo-Nazis, and now

functioning as a memorial - or through the still-used 19th century court and the uncanny scientific theater of death. After all, it is Berlin, the multilayered palimpsest of architectural and other memories, the "city of voids," in the words of Andreas Huyssen.⁵ In its shadow, one wonders if *Standing*'s silence provocatively mimics the undoing of collective memory that followed and enabled the reunification, leaving citizens, like Frau Wolff, "liberated", yet their memories homeless once again. Or whether, instead, it is just a trigger to induce mnemonic desire and probe the private archaeology of collective memory before its complete vanishing by what Nora calls the acceleration of history, if not just by its distortion as history. There is no need for further referential markers. The age of both the architecture and of this woman from Berlin are sufficient triggers to urge us to ask the right or wrong questions while there is still time.

K. M.

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⁵ "No other major city bears the marks of twentieth century history as intensely and self-consciously as Berlin. This city-text has been written, erased and rewritten throughout this violent century and its legibility relies as much on visible markers of built space as on images and memories repressed and ruptured by traumatic events."





Σοφία Πετρίδη

Γεννήθηκε στην Ελλάδα, ζει και εργάζεται στη Νέα Υόρκη και το Βερολίνο. Το 1992 αποφοίτησε από το Parsons School of Design, στη Νέα Υόρκη (Τμήμα Γλυπτικής). Επίσης σπούδασε Πολιτικές Επιστήμες στο Πάντειο Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών και παρακολούθησε μαθήματα Λογοτεχνίας και Φωτογραφίας στο Deere College. Έχει παρουσιάσει τη δουλειά της σε ατομικές εκθέσεις στις ΗΠΑ ("Poetics of Intimacy", Φωτογραφία, Larissa Goldston Gallery, Νέα Υόρκη, 2006 / "Multi-media Installation", Γκαλερί DHG, Λος Άντζελες, 1999 / "Non Fiction", Fine Arts Gallery, Σαν Φρανσίσκο, 1996), και στην Κορέα ("My Envy" Multi-media Installation, Cais Gallery, Σεούλ, Κορέα, 2006). Επίσης έχει λάβει μέρος σε ομαδικές εκθέσεις σε ΗΠΑ, Ευρώπη, Κορέα, Βραζιλία, Ιαπωνία και Ελλάδα (μεταξύ αυτών: "Three collections", Daelim Contemporary Museum, Σεούλ, Κορέα, 2007 / "The world's 10 most remarkable contemporary photographers", Gallery H, Σεούλ, Κορέα, 2006 / "Scarecrow", Video Installation, Μουσείο Αβέρωφ, Μέτσοβο 2006 / "Women in the Bedroom", Photo Installation, Larissa Goldston Gallery, Νέα Υόρκη, 2006 / "Documenta USA 5", Museum of Contemporary Art, Μίσιγκαν, 1998 κ.ά.). Έργα της βρίσκονται σε συλλογές στις ΗΠΑ, στην Ευρώπη, στην Ασία (Ιαπωνία, Κορέα, Κίνα) και στην Αυστραλία.

Δανάη Στράτου

Γεννήθηκε στην Αθήνα. Σπούδασε γλυπτική στο Central St. Martins College of Art and Design του Λονδίνου, από όπου αποφοίτησε το 1988. Από το 1998 έχει συνεχή παρουσία σε σημαντικές εκθέσεις διεθνώς. Έργα της ανήκουν σε μουσεία και ιδιωτικές συλλογές στη Ελλάδα, τη Γαλλία, τις ΗΠΑ, τη Βρετανία και την Αίγυπτο. Επιλογή ατομικών και ομαδικών εκθέσεων: "DESERT BREATH", Land art project, D.A.S.T. Arteam, Αίγυπτος (1997), "48η Biennale της Βενετίας", Ελληνικό Περίπτερο (1999), "1η Biennale της Βαλένθια" (2001), "Art Paris", Carousel du Louvre, Παρίσι (2002), "Memories of Nature". Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh USA (2000), "Σύνοψις I - Επικοινωνίες". Εθνικό Μουσείο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης, Αθήνα (2000), "Open 2000: III International Exhibition of Sculptures and Installations", Lido Βενετίας, "Διαπολιτισμοί", *The River of Life*, Εθνικό Μουσείο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης, Αθήνα (2004), "SEE THROUGH", Γκαλερί Ζουμπουλάκη, Αθήνα (2005), "Caravansarai", Τυφλίδα, Γεωργία (2005), "Scarecrow", *Introspec*, Μουσείο Αβέρωφ, Μέτσοβο 2006, "CUT - 7

Διαχωριστικές Γραμμές", Γκαλερί Ζουμπουλάκη, Αθήνα (2007), "1η Biennale της Θεσσαλονίκης: HETEROTOPIAS", (2007)

Ευανθία Τσαντίλα

Η Ευανθία Τσαντίλα γεννήθηκε στην Θεσσαλονίκη. Από το 1998 ζει και εργάζεται στο Βερολίνο. Σπούδασε στην Ακαδημία Καλών Τεχνών του Ντίσσελντορφ με τον Γιάννη Κουνέλλη, από όπου αποφοίτησε το 1997. Το 1999 εκπροσώπησε την Ελλάδα στην 48η Biennale της Βενετίας. Έχει συμμετάσχει σε ατομικές και ομαδικές εκθέσεις στην Ελλάδα, τη Γερμανία και αλλού: ATOMA, MUAR-Κρατικό Μουσείο Αρχιτεκτονικής, Μόσχα (2001) / FAMILISTERE I, KW Kunstwerke, Βερολίνο (2002) / COSMOPOLIS I, Κρατικό Μουσείο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης, Θεσσαλονίκη (2004) / Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Βερολίνο (2004) / DOUBLE VISION, Biennale της Πράγας (2005) / URBAN REALITIES-FOCUS ISTANBUL, Martin Gropius Bau, Βερολίνο (2005) / THE GRAND PROMENADE, Εθνικό Μουσείο Σύγχρονης Τέχνης, Αθήνα (2005) / Volksbuehne am Rosa Luxemburg Platz, Berlin (2006) / 1η Biennale της Θεσσαλονίκης HETEROTOPIAS (2007).

Καλλιόπη Μηνιουδάκη

Η Καλλιόπη Μηνιουδάκη είναι ιστορικός τέχνης (μοντέρνας και σύγχρονης) με ειδίκευση στη φεμινιστική τέχνη, θεωρία και ιστορία τέχνης, καθώς και στην αμερικανική και ευρωπαϊκή avant-garde της δεκαετίας του 1960. Βρίσκεται στην πορεία ολοκλήρωσης της διδακτορικής της διατριβής στο Institute of Fine Arts of New York University (ως υπότροφος του Ιδρύματος Αλεξάνδρου Ωνάση και ως Lila Acheson Wallace fellow). Έχει δουλέψει σε διάφορα μουσεία στη Νέα Υόρκη (συμπεριλαμβανομένου του Museum of Modern Art), έχει διδάξει ιστορία τέχνης στο NYU και στο Seton Hall και είναι τακτική συνεργάτης στο περιοδικό *New York Arts Magazine* ως κριτικός τέχνης. Επίσης είναι ερευνητική σύμβουλος και μια από τους συγγραφείς του καταλόγου της πρώτης έκθεσης για τις γυναίκες καλλιτέχνες του κινήματος της Pop art, που πρόκειται να διοργανωθεί από τη Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery της Φιλαδέλφειας (2010). Το άρθρο της *Pop's Ladies and Bad Girls (Οι Κυρίες και τα Κακά Κορίτσια της Ποπ)* θα δημοσιευτεί το φθινόπωρο του 2007 στο *Oxford Art Journal*, ενώ μια σύντομη έκδοση με θέμα τη δουλειά της Niki de Saint Phalle είναι αυτή τη στιγμή υπό έκδοση στις ΗΠΑ.

Sophia Petrides

Born in Greece, currently lives and works in New York City and Berlin. She completed a BA in Sculpture at the Parsons School of Design, New York City in 1992. She also has a Bachelor of Political Sciences from Pantio University of Athens and a degree in Literature and Photography from Deere College, Athens. She has presented solo exhibitions in the US ("Poetics of Intimacy", Photography, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York, USA 2006 / "Multi-media Installation", DHG Gallery, Los Angeles, USA 1999 / "Non Fiction", Fine Arts Gallery, San Francisco, USA 1996), and two in Korea ("My Envy" Multi-media Installation, Cais Gallery, Seoul, Korea, 2006). She has also taken part in group exhibitions in the US, Europe, Korea, Brazil, Japan and Greece (including: "Three collections", Daelim Contemporary Museum, Seoul, Korea, 2007 / "The world's 10 most remarkable contemporary photographers", Gallery H, Seoul, Korea, 2006 / "Scarecrow", Video Installation, Averof Museum, Metsovo, Greece, 2006 / "Women in the Bedroom", Photo Installation, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York, USA 2006 / "Documenta USA 5", Museum of Contemporary Art, Michigan, USA 1998). Her work belongs to collections in the USA, Europe, Asia (Japan, Korea, China) and Australia.

Danae Stratou

Born in Athens. She studied Sculpture in Central St. Martins College of Art and Design in London, graduating in 1988. Since 1998 she has regularly participated in shows in Museums and Biennale exhibitions internationally. Her works belong to museums and private collections in Greece, France, USA, Britain and Egypt. Selected group and solo exhibitions: "DESERT BREATH", Land art project, D.A.S.T. Arteam, Egypt (1997), "48th Venice Biennale", Greek Pavilion (1999), "1st Valencia Biennale" (2001), "Art Paris", Carousel du Louvre, Paris (2002), "Memories of Nature". Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh USA (2000), "Synopsis I - Communications". National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (2000), "Open 2000: III International Exhibition of Sculptures and Installations", Venice Lido, "Transcultures", *The River of Life*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (2004), "SEE THROUGH", Zoumboulakis Galleries, Athens (2005), "Caravansarai", Tbilisi, Georgia (2005), "Scarecrow", *Introspec*, outdoor

Installation, Averof Museum, Metsovo, Greece, 2006, "CUT - 7 Dividing Lines", Zoumboulakis Galleries, Athens (2007), "1η Thessaloniki Biennale: HETEROTOPIAS" (2007)

Evanthia Tsantila

Born in Thessaloniki. She has been living and working in Berlin since 1998. In 1997 she graduated from the Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts, where she studied under Yiannis Kounellis. In 1999 she represented Greece in the 48th Venice Biennale. She has participated in solo and group shows in Greece, Germany and elsewhere: ATOMA, MUAR - State Museum of Architecture, Moscow, Russia (2001) / FAMILISTERE I, KW Kunstwerke, Berlin, Germany (2002) / COSMOPOLIS I, State Museum for Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece (2004) / Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2004) / DOUBLE VISION, Prague Biennale, Czech Republic (2005) / URBAN REALITIES-FOCUS ISTANBUL, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany (2005) / THE GRAND PROMENADE, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece (2005) / Volksbuehne am Rosa Luxemburg Platz, Berlin, Germany (2006) / 1st Thessaloniki Biennale - HETEROTOPIAS, Thessaloniki, Greece (2007).

Kalliopi Minioudaki

Kalliopi Minioudaki is a modern and contemporary art historian, specializing on feminist art, theory and art history as well as on the American and European avant-gardes of the 1960s. Currently an advanced level doctoral candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts, of New York University (as an Alexander S. Onassis and a Lila Acheson Wallace fellow), Minioudaki has worked at various museums in New York (including the Museum of Modern Art), has taught art history at NYU and Seton Hall, and is a regular contributor to *New York Arts Magazine* as an art critic. She is also a research consultant and coauthor of the catalogue of the first exhibition on women Pop artists organized by Roselwald-Wolf Gallery, Philadelphia (2010.) Her article *Pop's Ladies and Bad Girls* will be featured in *Oxford Art Journal* in fall 2007, while a short book on the work of Niki de Saint Phalle is currently under publication in the US.

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Συνεργάτες Έκθεσης: Exhibition collaborators:

Επιμέλεια Έκθεσης: Δάφνη Ζουμπουλάκη Curating: Daphne Zoumboulakis
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