



HELLENIC PARLIAMENT

NEON

Athens, 12 May 2021

PRESS RELEASE

**A collaboration between the Hellenic Parliament and NEON
Cultural Programme of Contemporary Art 2021
Portals | an exhibition of contemporary art
Curated by Elina Kountouri, Director, NEON & Madeleine Grynsztejn,
Pritzker Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
former Public Tobacco Factory – Hellenic Parliament Library and Printing House, Athens
11 June – 31 December 2021**

NEON and the Hellenic Parliament are delighted to announce the opening of *Portals* on 11 June in the renovated spaces of the former Public Tobacco Factory – Hellenic Parliament Library and Printing House. Inaugurating the new public cultural centre gifted by NEON to the Greek State, the group exhibition will feature 59 artists from 27 countries with 15 new site-specific works commissioned by NEON.

The exhibition comes as we commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence, whilst at the same time countries and societies the world over are reeling from the pandemic. In this framework, *Portals* aspires to convey the messages, ideas and visions of contemporary artistic creation, investigating the new reality forming through the prism of change and disruption.

The exhibition is inspired by an article from 2020 by the novelist Arundhati Roy¹, who sees the pandemic as a “portal, a gateway between one world and the next”. Acknowledging that the rupture created by the pandemic individually and collectively opens a portal, it is up to us to negotiate our transition through it. According to Roy, “we can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world”.

Portals takes place in the NEON-renovated building of the former Public Tobacco Factory, which emerges as a modern cultural hub, open to all. In this space, artists from both Greece and across the world express the pluralism of ideas and address the concept of the collective and our cultural understanding of history and politics, public space and our communal past, present and future.

The exhibition explores contemporary reality and pays tribute to a world in need of healing and unity. The 59 participating artists with different backgrounds and origins, create artworks using various media – installation, painting, sculpture, photography and performance – exploring topics such as Movement, the Communal, Connection and Home.

Among them, 15 new commissions by NEON, created especially for the Tobacco Factory, enrich and analyse the concept of the exhibition. The 15 artists creating new commissions are: **Anastasia Douka, Brendan Fernandes, Elif Kamisli, Panos Kokkinias, Chrysanthi Koumianaki, Glenn Ligon, Maria Loizidou, Teresa Margolles, Ad Minoliti, Duro Olowu, Gala Porras-Kim, Michael Rakowitz, Alexandros Tzannis, Adrián Villar Rojas and Danh Võ.**

To accompany the exhibition, NEON will develop cultural and educational programmes dedicated to the building of the former

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

Tobacco Factory and its history, created in collaboration with the respective departments of the Hellenic Parliament. The programme which will include public events and discussions will be free and open to all.

Alongside the physical exhibition, an online 'portal' will be also available. NEON's free mobile app will provide access to self-guided tours, photographs and information about the works and the participating artists. Users will also be able to find out about the parallel programme, and schedule their visits to the Tobacco Factory safely and in accordance with the health authorities' advice. The app will be available for iOS and Android smart phones.

This exhibition is part of the Cultural Programme of Contemporary Art 2021 and is the outcome of the collaboration between the Hellenic Parliament and NEON, marking the 2021 anniversary year. *Portals* aspires to highlight in Greece and abroad the ability of democratic institutions to face today's emerging societal challenges through the lens of contemporary artistic creation.

The collaboration between the two bodies was announced on 14 December 2020 by the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Constantine Tassoulas, NEON's Founder, Mr. Dimitris Daskalopoulos and NEON's Director, Ms. Elina Kountouri, during an event in the Senate Hall of the Hellenic Parliament.

Participating Artists

1. **Nikos Alexiou** (Rethymno, Greece, 1960 - Athens, Greece 2011)
2. **El Anatsui** (b. 1944, Ghana)
3. **Dimitrios Antonitsis** (b. 1966, Athens, Greece)
4. **Kutluğ Ataman** (b. 1961, Istanbul, Turkey)
5. **Kostas Bassanos** (b. 1961, Kamena Vourla, Greece)
6. **Vlassis Caniaris** (1928 - 2011, Athens, Greece)
7. **Joana Choumalí** (b. 1974, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)
8. **Eirene Efstathiou** (b. 1980, Athens, Greece)
9. **Apostolos Georgiou** (b. 1952, Thessaloniki, Greece)
10. **Jeffrey Gibson** (b. 1972, Colorado Springs, CO, USA)
11. **Robert Gober** (b. 1954, Wallingford, CT, USA)
12. **Vangelis Gokas** (b. 1969, Corinth, Greece)
13. **Sonia Gomes** (b. 1948, Caetanópolis, Brazil)
14. **Felix Gonzalez-Torres** (Guáimaro, Cuba, 1957 - Miami, FL, 1996)
15. **Shilpa Gupta** (b. 1976, Mumbai, India)
16. **Kapwani Kiwanga** (b. 1978, Hamilton, Canada)
17. **Jannis Kounellis** (Pireus, Greece, 1936 – Rome, Italy 2017)
18. **Louise Lawler** (b. 1947, Bronxville, NY, USA)
19. **Liliane Lijn** (b. 1939, New York, NY, USA)
20. **Tala Madani** (b. 1981, Tehran)
21. **Steve McQueen** (b. 1969, London, UK)
22. **Sidsel Meineche Hansen** (b. 1981, Skanderborg, Denmark)
23. **Marisa Merz** (1926 - 2019, Turin, Italy)
24. **Alex Mylona** (1920 - 2016, Athens, Greece)
25. **Nikos Navridis** (b. 1958, Athens, Greece)
26. **Toyin Ojih Odutola** (b. 1985, Ile-Ife, Nigeria)
27. **Maria Papadimitriou** (b. 1957, Athens, Greece)
28. **Dimitris Papaioannou** (b. 1964, Athens, Greece)
29. **Cornelia Parker** (b. 1956, Cheshire, UK)
30. **Adam Pendleton** (b. 1984, Richmond, VA, USA)
31. **Solange Pessoa** (b. 1961, Ferros, Brazil)
32. **Francis Picabia** (1879 –1953, Paris, France)
33. **Ed Ruscha** (b. 1937, Omaha, NE, USA)
34. **Dana Schutz** (b. 1976, Livonia, MI, USA)
35. **Paul Mpagi Sepuya** (b. 1982, San Bernardino, CA, USA)
36. **Elias Sime** (b. 1968 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
37. **Christiana Soulou** (b. 1961 Athens, Greece)
38. **Do Ho Suh** (b. 1962, Seoul, Korea)
39. **Anna Tsouhlarakis** (b. 1977, Lawrence, KS, USA)
40. **Adriana Varejão** (b. 1964, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
41. **Erika Verzutti** (b. 1971, São Paulo, Brazil)
42. **Daphne Wright** (b. 1963, Co. Longford, Ireland)
43. **Myrto Xanthopoulou** (b. 1981, Helsinki, Finland)
44. **Billie Zangewa** (b. 1973, Blantyre, Malawi)

Artists presenting new site-specific commissions:

1. **Anastasia Douka** (b. 1979, Athens, Greece)
2. **Brendan Fernandes** (b. 1979, Nairobi, Kenya)
3. **Elif Kamisli** (b. 1981, Eskisehir, Turkey)
4. **Panos Kokkinias** (b. 1965, Athens, Greece)
5. **Chrysanthi Koumianaki** (b. 1985, Crete, Greece)
6. **Glenn Ligon** (b. 1960, New York, NY, USA)
7. **Maria Loizidou** (b. 1958, Limassol, Cyprus)
8. **Teresa Margolles** (b. 1963, Culiacán, Mexico)
9. **Ad Minoliti** (b. 1980, Buenos Aires, Argentina)
10. **Duro Olowu** (b. 1965, Lagos, Nigeria)
11. **Gala Porras-Kim** (b. 1984, Bogotá, Colombia)
12. **Michael Rakowitz** (b. 1973, Long Island, NY, USA)
13. **Alexandros Tzannis** (b. 1979, Athens, Greece)
14. **Adrián Villar Rojas** (b. 1980, Rosario, Argentina)
15. **Danh Võ** (b. 1975, Vietnam)

For more information, please visit www.neon.org.gr

NOTES TO EDITORS

NEON is a non-profit organisation 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 programmes of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art.

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Melissa Emery | SUTTON

E: melissa@suttoncomms.com | T: +44 (0)20 7183 3577