

PRESS RELEASE

THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAS BECOME THE RULE

group show

Participating artists: Despina Flessa, Maria Kriara, Manolis D. Lemos,
Nikos Markou, Yorgos Prinos, Lefteris Tapas

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As Giorgio Agamben argues the state of emergency has become the rule. Like a new kind of governance.

The Italian philosopher explored Walter Benjamin's concept in order to reflect upon the enforcement of power and the oxymoron of the legalization of lawlessness, that is the separation of law from law itself. In the socio-historical period we live in such threats appear more real than ever.

The show aims to de-contextualize the famous quote from the context of law and political theory and invite the viewers to reflect upon this new state, the threat of being under a constant state of emergency.

What will be the reasons that will force citizens to change their typical behaviour and will order governments to implement emergency plans in the future? What is the relation between the violence of lawlessness and violence brought by the legal order? How close (or how far) are we from an environmental or climate change related state of emergency? How protected are we from economic developments in our financial system? How developed is our sense of urgency when facing a long-term problem? What happens generally when we risk the exception to become the rule? And what is dreaming in these dystopian scenarios and in life in general ?

Manolis D. Lemos

Liquid Dreams (Spring in Greece) No2

Archival pigment print on cotton paper mounted on dibond, 178x129cm

Courtesy of the artist and CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens

Liquid Dreams (Spring in Greece) is a series of inkjet prints of scanned flowers from the Greek countryside sourced from the region of the Peloponnese. *Liquid Dreams (Spring in Greece)* is a continuation of his *Liquid Logos* series. The artist uses wild flowers that typically grow in the Greek flora and presents them emerging from a dark background like oil, distorted almost like an oil spill in the sea. There is no digital manipulation in photoshop other than the natural distortion of the images as the artist choreographically moves his hand and flowers on the scanner surface. The poetic title and its double meaning create an ironic, dreamy metaphor for the future of the country and proclaim the longing of spring, as a long-awaited time of prosperity. The symbolism of the objects is reduced to plain form, to a beautiful abstract pattern and the randomness of the pattern as it is captured in the scanner mirrors the randomness of the way our economies function and their reliance and interdependence to the randomness of oil sourcing.

Maria Kriara

Crack poems

Digital Print On Matt Photographic Paper, 29,7x21cm each

Courtesy of the artist and CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens

Kriara's work aims to unfold as a kind of phenomenological tour through images and selected phrases of ephemera of the past. They all manifest whether and how the narrative capacity of fragments (both as images and text) can provide insight into a broader current historical context. Her works invite the viewers to reflect upon everyday language and recent greek history in order to revise memory, grand narratives, myths and collective nostalgia. For the work *Crack Poems* the artist has sourced ready-made phrases used in advertising and various articles from 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s British and American newspapers and magazines. They are texts that look like poems, without necessarily being composed as such. Kriara's works alter, "erase" or strip off images and words from their dominant, historical or sentimental connotations and create compositions that function as an heterotopia; a place where there is an atmosphere of urgency, as alarming, contradictory, disturbing and intense as our world today.

Yorgos Prinós

Red Hood, New York

Archival pigment print on fine art paper mounted on dibond, 50x33cm

Courtesy of the artist

Yorgos Prinós works predominantly in photography and explores issues of power and violence at the intersection of human psychology and politics. His photos capture city scenes or humans in urban space while devising suggestive and elliptical narratives using found footage from media or the internet. In his portraits of humans the photographer often appears to capture his subjects in an unknowing moment, still or moving, yet restless, in a time gap between oblivion and awareness. What is the relation between the violence of lawlessness and violence brought by the legal order? After countless examples of police violence towards blacks in recent years in America, Prinós' *Red Hood, New York* functions almost like an archetypal image, an image associated with an extremely long negative line of charges, claims and events featured in the news and associated with racism, assaults, shootings and civil rights violations.

Nikos Markou

Kifissos

Archival pigment print on fine art paper mounted on dibond, 175x140cm

Courtesy of the artist and Citronne gallery, Athens

Cephissus or Kifissos was a river god of ancient Greece and one of the three main ancient rivers. Originating from the southeastern slopes of Parnitha and the northwest of Penteli it runs through Attica crossing the city. Once upon a time there were such rivers with riverbeds, slopes and banks on both sides. Rivers from which rain water flowed, rivers that started from the surrounding mountains and poured into the sea. Today, there are no longer real rivers in Attica and certainly today's Kifissos differs immensely from what it used to be. Kifissos' basin area occupies about 381km², drains about 70% of the basin's waters and its length reaches 30km from Kryoneri, while the total length of its many contracting branches exceeds 150km. Many of the waters of Kifissos were exploited by the Athenians with gullies and millers, moving the watermills that were in its course. Kifissos today, from Parnitha to Metamorphosis, is still a river. However, from Metamorphosis onwards it is a sewage and waste canal for the big city with small factories and larger industries throwing their sewage to the river with unknown environmental and health consequences to the city. In his exploration of the area, the artist encountered days where the river resembled a bubble bath of industrial foam flowing down its waters. There are a few parts

however that this last Athenian river still retains some of its beauty. Markou comments on the environmental urgency we face in our time and portrays this utopia, the unknown part of Kiffisos that resembles a jungle and yet rests in the centre of our city. A dreamy place full of plane trees, bushes with raspberries, reeds and ridge forming dense vegetation. A place where in the summer the lilies and the blackbirds still sing and many strut their nests in the low vegetation. A place to be alert and to dream.

Maria Kriara

San Precario

drawing, pencil and graphite on paper, 68x51cm

Courtesy of the artist and CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens

Kriara selects her subjects with an interdisciplinary curiosity for images and for any kind of visual representation or documentation (texts and illustrations) deriving from the history of art and multiple other printed or online sources e.g. encyclopedias, science essays, manuals, anatomy atlases, graphic novels, historical records, archives and movies. *San Precario* is inspired by the 2017 Iranian film *No date, no signature* and is drawn upon an image from a firefighter's manual that demonstrates the ability of a new material invented by NASA to be flammable yet remain fireproof or fire-resistant.

The title of the work *San Precario*, relates to the word *precariat* that in sociology refers to the social class formed by people with no job security or no prospect of regular employment. The term is a neologism obtained by merging *precarious* with *proletariat*. The young *precariat* class became a serious issue the past fifteen years in Europe. In October 2004, libertarian and syndicalist collectives from across Europe gathered at Middlesex University at "Beyond ESF" (a critical reference to the European Social Forum that was being held in London at the same time) in order to give life to a unified European May Day of precarious and migrant workers called EuroMayDay. A dozen of Western European cities joined the EuroMayDay network that has since gathered several times to discuss common actions against precarity and against the persecution of immigrants, and particularly the segregation of undocumented migrants in detention centers all over Europe, the full adoption of the EU directive on temporary workers, cyber and queer rights, as well as a European minimum wage and basic income. *San Precario* was created by the Chainworkers and emerged as a saint at the Milanese space Reload on the 2004 EuroMayDay. The saint's first public appearance was at a Sunday supermarket opening on February 29, 2004. Since then, he stands as the patron saint of all precarious workers, a *détournement* of the Catholic concept of patron saints, yet a powerful symbol and metaphor for those lacking in any predictability, job security, material or psychological welfare.

Despina Flessa

Remains

Graphite on clay, Variable dimensions

&

Fold

graphite on paper, 80x100cm

Courtesy of the artist and Zoumboulakis gallery

In her works *Remains* (sculpture) and *Fold* (work on paper) Flessa uses graphite to cover and metamorphose in an almost alchemical manner paper and clay into a dark silver surface that resembles metal or steel. In the installation spread on the gallery floor she has created a mysterious sculpture made of clay that has a polished, metallic, almost precious finish. Through a painstaking process Flessa initially made the forms out of clay after a Palaeolithic fossil found in the Peloponnese. She then covered them with multiple layers of water-soluble graphite and then created the shinier parts by drawing them with harder pencils. Similarly in *Fold*, a work on paper that resembles a palimpsest (a manuscript page from which the text has been scraped clean or washed off so that the page can be used again for another document) the surface is treated in a way that looks, heavy, metallic, perhaps even cast. The artist's oeuvre is not about the process of drawing or the time invested to produce each work but rather about memory and history and the way they function as ungainly processes of constant accumulation and reoccurrence. *Remains* may have been made after fossil animal bones, yet it strikingly also resembles human remains and/or even worn out war-machinery and bullets. As a result, forms that were made intuitively after something ancient or prehistoric exhale a sense of timelessness that also includes elements from other times, making Flessa's works look like archaeological finds sourced from the past or perhaps the very near or distant future.

Manolis D. Lemos

We Used To Care (Cosmic Dust) No2

Archival pigment print on cotton paper, 68x94cm

Courtesy of the artist and CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens

The work is a scanner-generated photographic image from the artist's collection of marble remnants. Since 2008 Lemos has been collecting stones thrown at or thrown by the police during the Athens riots in and around Syntagma square. The collection expanded immensely in 2011. The marble pieces derive mostly from pavements and stairs and in some cases even from the walls and columns of some of the 5star hotels that stand around the square. They are violently

smashed during police conflicts by black block members using a large hammer, then thrown and eventually broken in smaller pieces when they hit the ground.

The past few years, demonstrations of such large scale and tension have started to fade away in Greece, giving way to a feeling and atmosphere of numbness and depression. Yet the image of Athens as riot city is obviously well maintained, being somewhat commodified. Lemos' work is thus also ironic, providing a double commentary, that of emergency and that of the romantic remnants (marble as a material with a certain historical weight in Greece) of a more bold and audacious past of Athens.

Lefteris Tapas

Shooting Star

Archival pigment print on paper, 43x31cm each

Courtesy of the artist and CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens

Lefteris Tapas' *Shooting Stars* is an ambiguous and deeply political visual poem. His country Cyprus is an island country in South Eastern Europe and the third largest and third most populous island of the Mediterranean sea, located south of Turkey, west of Syria and Lebanon, northwest of Israel, north of Egypt, and southeast of Greece, it is an odd specimen of land, people and cultures, with a rich history and an alluring colonial past, caught between the East and the West. Invaded, brutally divided and separated into two since 1974 the country remains under a constant state of emergency. Military service is mandatory to all men in the Republic of Cyprus. They are obliged to serve the National Reserve Army spending several days a year in a military campus (usually 3-4 times a year until their early 50s) and are required to carry their guns home as regular reservists. The phrase '*In total darkness you are invited to examine your existence in the world. Who you are and what makes you human*' has played around like a tune numerous times in Tapas' head throughout the years. At some point, he started producing sketches and then drawings and then prints of the shooting stars he had observed during his evening duty shifts in the army. These nocturnal skylscapes serve as an alternative diary of the time spent.



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Lefteris Tapas

Archipelago

Installation made of 7 islands, paper pulp, graphite, natural earth pigments, brass shelf, various sizes

Courtesy of the artist and CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens

With a series of little islands made with papier-mâché in such a way that they simulate rocks and soil -an emotional material packed with symbolism- the artist explores issues of identity and metamorphosis while also trying to deal with the trauma of the past. The production process is a space of contemplation for Tapas. All works are hand-made, painted or cut-out by hand with care and attention. Each island is made entirely of pulp, graphite and rare natural earth pigments mined from various quarries of the island - some of which are currently banned and/or abandoned. For the creation of the paper pulp, the artist used pages from *Phileleftheros* newspaper (the largest daily paper in Cyprus) which his father has been reading and collecting (as historical evidence) for over 30 years. Through his reflection on the island's rich history and culture, with all its geographical and political peculiarities, with stories of friendliness, discomfort and hostility, ghosts as well as allies, Tapas moves from the regional to the universal in a way that makes his work *Archipelagos* neither entirely a record, nor a construct of his imagination but a place to reflect and contemplate on the future.