

PARALLEL EVENTS:

JULY 14, 2018 | 20:00

PINA BOUNCE: TRUMPETANCY

SOUND PERFORMANCE BY THALIA IOANNIDOU

JUNE 27 – JULY 1, 2018 | 19:00-21:00

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR KIDS 6-12 YEARS OLD BY

CHRISTIANNA ECONOMOU

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades – Municipality of Kouphonisia and the President of the Municipality Mr. Antonis Kovaïos for his significant help in the realization of this exhibition.

CREDITS

The exhibition *Constellations in the dirt* was realized by NEON Organization in collaboration with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades

Curated by: Fanis Kafantaris & Irene Kalliga

Exhibition Coordination for the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades: Stefanos Keramidas

Exhibition production and design: Fanis Kafantaris & Irene Kalliga

Exhibition Assistant: Efi Syrigou

NEON working team: Kostas Chatzigeorgiou, Alkistis Dimaki, Irini Kiachtypi,

Antonis Panaousis, Nafsika Papadopoulou, Apostolos Papapostolou

Art mediator: Konstantinos Kotsis

Workshop: Christianna Economou

Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades working team:

Consulting architect for the building: Ioannis Mitsoulis, Petrina Papaevangeliou

Administrative support: Pavlos Fylaktos, Fotini Fotopoulou

Museum guard: Kyriaki Eptaimerou

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Translation: Alexis Kalofolias, Giorgos Karampelas

Art Handling: Move Art

Technical Support for the sound performance: Gianni Gaitanidis

Constellations in the dirt

Contemporary art exhibition

CURATORS' NOTE

*Χείρες άπειροι έργατών άνασκάπουνι τά έρεβώδη τής γής σπλάγγνα
καί έκ τοϋ σκότους έξορύττοντι τό φώς.**

*Innumerable hands of workers excavate the dark guts of the earth
and out of darkness carry up the light.*

* The closing sentence of an article in the *Patris* newspaper, welcoming the founding of the Archaeological Museum in Syros. *Patris* newspaper, 11 November 1900.

Finding may be called any object from the recent or distant past, which, having previously existed in an unapparent state, is at some point discovered. This probably sounds tautological, but something may be called a finding only after its discovery. Material or immaterial, exclamations of surprise follow its first detection, and its eventual excavation, while sometimes brief and unintentional, might also be the result of long and systematic research. Either way there is common ground - the features that make the finding sentimentally significant.

But what lies ahead for the finding "after", and how does it reach "now"? In this search, a crucial perennial interest appears in the understanding of the past through its works. Archaeology as a science, practice and literary field that explores the earth, digs the ground and investigates the formation of civilizations, promises not just to bring to light findings of an unspecified geological time, but also to evaluate them, to integrate them into narratives, or even to dissipate existing narratives by influencing our perceptions in the present. Here, the archaeological finding is the medium, while the body of researchers and archaeologists is the translator between finding and observer; it provides the finding with a description. Thus, what averts the rejection of the finding is the value projected to it, either by structured groups of people or for individuals alike.

The title *Constellations in the dirt* proposes a course that reverses the one of the excavation; it denotes a descending: the stars' descent to earth, where their meaning is produced. Often visible in the sky, yet light-years away, the stars "reach" the earth in the guise of constellations as an invention of logical discourse - such as the Pole Star or the constellation of Andromeda. The stars are woven together into a narrative through their naming, denoting this way the cultural significance of their existence. Could this framework describe the fragments excavated by the archaeologist who interprets them and integrates them into a narrative? How important is it whether findings are visible or remain buried, and what is the role of the archaeologist? Is it possible to for a finding to be stripped of all descriptions?

In a place like Greece where the archaeological past has been decisive in constructing its identity, looking at the "Early Cycladic" island of Keros, which is visible from the exhibition building (the Archaeological Collection of Kouphonisi), the artworks presented in *Constellations in the dirt* attempt a dialogue about the *finding* in contemporary culture:

Alongside the archaeologist Oscar Broneer's film on the importance of archaeological sites for the post-war recovery of Greece, stands Theo Michael's archaeological diorama, of dubious authenticity, as groups of images from Vangelis Vlahos' photo archive about the rescuing practice of foreign archaeologists in Greece develop throughout the exhibition. The vague memory of space around the sculptural imprint of an object is presented in Kostas Sahpazis' work, coexisting with Thalia Ioannidou's sound composition and its uncertain survival in time as a finding. The traces of a contemporary culture are imprinted in Vasilis Papageorgiou's marble epigraphic-like fragments and in Hypercomf's collection, a symbol of bodily memory made of varied parts of clothes, along with the dematerialized archive of crumpled A4 paper sheets in Konstantinos Kotsis' digital environment. Finally, Malvina Panagiotidi's time-sensitive piles of valuable and useless findings, stand next to Kostas Roussakis' work about the position and the "NOTHING" (ΤΙΠΟΤΑ) as a zero-degree meaning between the object and its spectator – two newly commissioned works by NEON Organization. All the artworks are in line with the exhibition's call to its visitors to wander around the archaeological findings of Kouphonisia, coming full circle by opening the exhibition to the island.

Fanis Kafantaris & Irene Kalliga

We would like to thank NEON Director, Elina Kountouri, for trusting this exhibition to us and for her continuing support in making our curatorial idea a reality. Also, we thank the artists for kindly offering their works, as well as the D.Daskalopoulos Collection. Special thanks to Efi Syrigou and all the NEON Team for their significant help and last, we thank Stefanos Keramidas and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades for a fruitful collaboration.

OSCAR BRONEER

Triumph Over Time: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens in Post-War Greece, 1947

In an attempt to mobilize global interest in the support and promotion of Greece and its archaeological treasures abroad, in 1947 the American School of Classical Studies at Athens produced, as part of its sponsorship campaign, the film *Triumph Over Time*, directed by the archaeologist Oscar Broneer. The film is an emphatic record of the post-war shift in the meaning of archaeological sites in Greece, from historical remnants to cultural capital, equating contemporary Greece with its ancient past.

HYPERCOMF

Hypercomf 1st, 2017

Hypercomf is an artistic identity and an imaginary corporate profile that creates compositions from used textiles. Each textile is chosen on the grounds of its ability to represent a bodily memory at a particular point in time, and to convey a personal character or a mass culture. These textiles are sewn together to create a new object with a redefined practical and intellectual function, a process that alludes to *spolia*: the incorporation of architectural debris from ruined buildings in new structures.

THALIA IOANNIDOU

Pina Bounce: Trumpetancy, 2015/2018

According to Thalia Ioannidou, "*Trumpetancy* is a bucolic narrative of love, improvisation, noise and milieu, between a trumpet and a multiFX amplifier, high up in Mount Giona, central Greece". The ambiances, the melodies and the noises of the trumpet and its processors become the set and the dramatic elements of a narrative, where the listeners can immerse themselves and experience a personal story, a journey. Through this journey, one wonders how the connection of sound and music with a place can survive in time and become a finding.

KONSTANTINOS KOTSIΣ

Archive4, 2013 – (ongoing project)

Archive4 is a digital archive of scanned crumpled white printing paper sheets, of the internationally recognized and ISO-standardized A4 size, with their respective log sheets. Each paper sheet, receives a unique gesture that affects its form, stressing its material substance which, at the end of the archiving process, is dematerialized and transformed into Megabytes of an android application. Using this contemporary way of storing information, the work brings into question the object and the manner of work of future archaeologists.

THEO MICHAEL

Masterman, 2009

Mastermind is an archaeological diorama that attempts to call into question the scientific authority and mechanisms of historiography. It is comprised of seemingly valuable objects from archaeological excavations, the bronze head, coins and ceramic fragments, while their casing, an old wooden display case, confounds expectations about archaeological and museographical practice. One cannot help but question the authenticity and history of these objects. Are they a forgotten treasure, or a composition of touristic paraphernalia that create a fictional story?

EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES OF CYCLADES

The exhibition of contemporary art *Constellations in the dirt*, a synergy of the **Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades** and NEON Organization, which takes place this summer at the building of the Archaeological Collection of Kouphonisi, is a project with special symbolisms for the local community and the particularly important archaeological capital of the region.

To start with the latter, we should note that the island complex of Ano and Kato Kouphonisi, Keros, Daskalio and Antikeri has a significant aura for our conceptions of Early Cycladic culture. It is not just the almost automatic connection between Keros and the sculpture of the famous Cycladic figurines; it is a complex archaeological narrative – in many cases a rather uncomfortable one, due to the sweeping effects of the illicit excavations and trade of antiquities during the 20th century – that influences every activity in these islands. Recent research by the British School at Athens in Keros and Daskalio, as well as the significant tourist and building activity in Ano Kouphonisi, which have led to interesting discoveries about the history of the island, emphasizing the dimension of a fascinating palimpsest with spectacular phases of prosperity.

The intensity of the archaeological legacy in this cluster of islands has left clear traces in the collective memory of the community of Ano Kouphonisi – not just because of the decades of archaeological and research activity in the nearby, dominant Keros, but also because of the evident coexistence of present-day activity with archaeological remains. This everyday "experience" of the local community has led it to form a strong connection with the surrounding archaeological capital, and at the same time to a declared purpose of highlighting and communicating this capital to the numerous visitors of the island. The transfer of the old elementary school of Ano Kouphonisi to the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades in order to develop an Archaeological Collection open to the public is a clear indication of this purpose, as is, of course, the contribution of the Municipal Community in the preparation of this museum space and the production of the present exhibition.

The last few years, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades has been systematically pursuing its engagement with the local communities, an active communication with tourist populations, and the adoption of new modes of expression. In this context, with the preparation of the Archaeological Collection of Kouphonisi still in process, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades, in collaboration with NEON, presents an inaugural exhibition of contemporary art, which takes as its starting point the archaeological wealth of the islands and creatively reinterprets the cultural capital of the place and its inhabitants. Thus, a contemporary, individual materiality welcomes the rich, everlasting materiality of the locality.

With *Constellations in the dirt*, the Ephorate opens up to contemporary art in order to emphasize the power of timeless creation and the need for a conversation between a "sanctioned" past with contemporary artistic expression – an interaction destined to have only positive results for both parties. This purpose is not restricted to Ano Kouphonisi alone, but will express itself during this summer in various other archaeological sites and museums in the Cyclades. We invite you to attend and actively participate in these events!

Stefanos Keramidas
Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades

MALVINA PANAGIOTIDI

The serpent's tears, 2018

The work *The serpent's tears* consists of three wax sculptures: piles of valuable and useless remnants and fragments of various objects and temporalities. The wax volumes are lit during the exhibition, equating and dematerializing the various findings embodied in them and, thus, cancelling their different temporalities. In her research at the intersections of cultural history, oral tradition and anthropology, Malvina Panagiotidi focuses on neglected elements of contemporary culture and on the fluidity of collective memory.

VASILIS PAPAGEORGIOU

Paramythias (II, III, V, VI), 2017

The *Paramythias* series of works are digital prints on marble of various 1980s and 1990s logos from the automobile industry and its subculture, a material found in the display case of a car- and bike-shop on Paramythias Street. The choice of specifically formed broken marble slabs as a base for imprinting these everyday symbols alludes to ancient epigraphic activity and at the same time stands as a comment on long-lasting characteristics of marble and its ability to culturally validate the content and the form of the work as an important finding.

KOSTAS ROUSSAKIS

One two three nothing, 2018

For a few hours, at Ammos beach of Kouphonisia, with the island of Keros as a background, Kostas Roussakis creates a structure out of formwork timber that supports the word ΤΙΠΟΤΑ (NOTHING). Then ΤΙΠΟΤΑ is disassembled and vanishes. It survives as a photographic memory of the artist and it is transformed into a bench – a viewpoint – at the same beach. This ΤΙΠΟΤΑ utters the point zero of discourse, practice, and theory: the absence of meaning. With this work, the artist tries to replace the archaeological interpretation and theory that lies between the viewer and the object observed (here, Keros) with ΤΙΠΟΤΑ (NOTHING).

KOSTAS SAHPAZIS

Cut In Slices/Negative, 2015

The process of constructing a form is at the heart of Kostas Sahpazis' practice. The materials – tires, bronze, wires – while retaining all of their primary features, coexist and are united. The resulting organic fragile forms call the viewer to engage in a process of observation and recognition of materials, compositions, as well as the imprint of a missing space. The worn-out matter in Sahpazis' work produces a new potential object to be decoded by the viewer.

VANGELIS VLAHOS

Foreign archaeologists from standing to bending position (3 posture exercises), 2012/2018

Having compiled an archive of photographic material collected from foreign archaeological institutes in Greece, Vangelis Vlahos presents groups of images depicting archaeologists at work. The sequence of motions created by their bodily postures is presented as a form of "exercise", and functions as a universal bodily code that emphasizes the archaeologist's role as the active subject of the archaeological act. At the same time, the choice to show foreign archaeologists in Greece stresses the complicated relationship of archaeology with the construction of Greek national identity, drawing links with the contemporary socio-political conditions in Greece.

NEON ORGANIZATION

NEON is a nonprofit organization 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 programs of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art.

For NEON, rich archaeological testimony is a challenge and an invitation to find ways to express the timelessness of creation. This collaboration, our first with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades, comes at a point when NEON wishes to broaden its presence beyond the urban landscape, following the imprint of our classical culture in a two-way dialogue with contemporary creation.

The exhibition *Constellations in the dirt* is a journey to the timeless character of art, taking as its point of reference the archaeological "finding" and its position in the present. Contemporary Greek artists converse in front of the landscape of Kouphonisia and Keros, while the exhibition itself invites the visitor to wander around Kouphonisia and search for sites of archaeological interest.

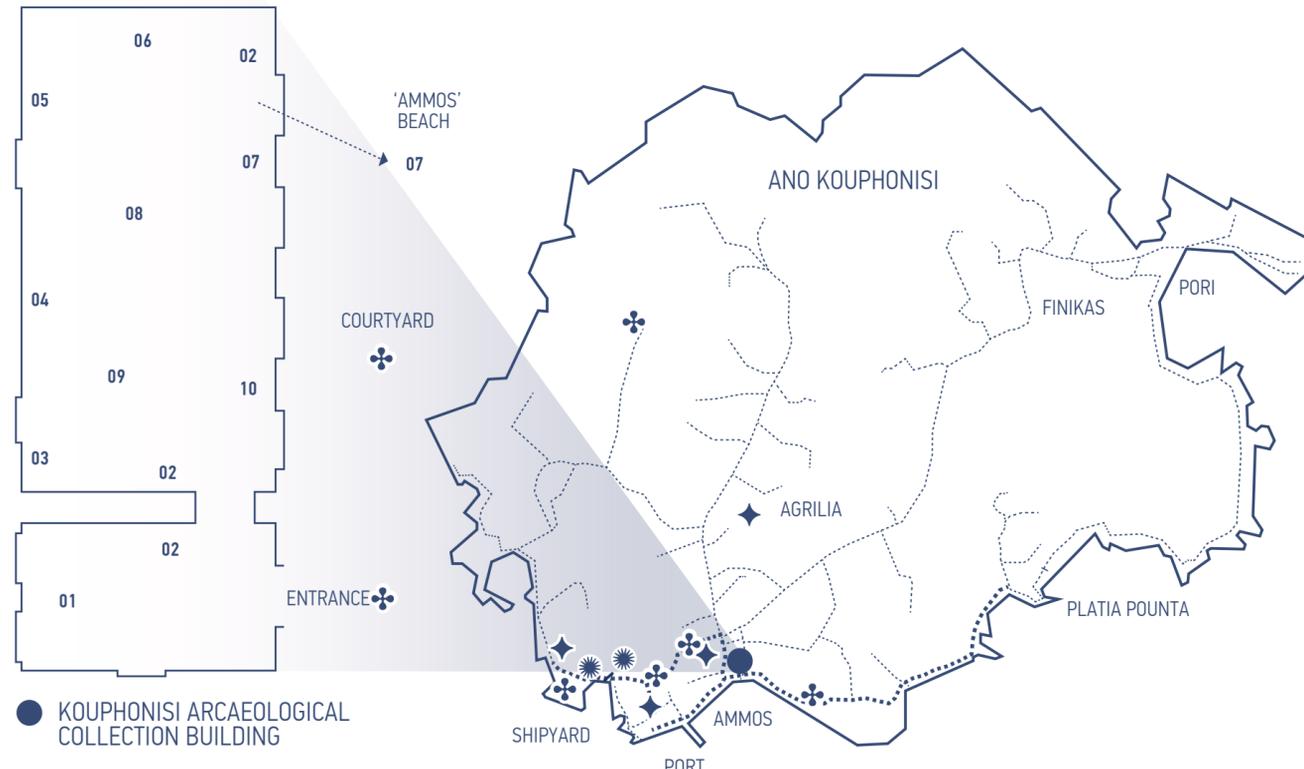
The building of the old elementary school will soon become the "Building of the Kouphonisi Archaeological Collection". We are extremely proud that the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades has given us the opportunity to add a different dimension to this place, on the verge of its new use.

My warmest thanks to the Ephor of Antiquities of Cyclades, Mr. Dimitris Athanasoulis, for his trust in the ability of contemporary art to bring out new expressions of our cultural heritage and also to Mr. Stefanos Keramidas, for his constructive collaboration and scientific contribution. Special thanks for their support and collaboration to the Municipality of Naxos and Small Cyclades Islands, the Municipal Community of Kouphonisia, and especially to the President of the Municipal Community, Mr. Antonis Kovaïos.

Finally, my warmest thanks to all the artists in the exhibition for their participation in this endeavor; to the curators of the exhibition, Irene Kalliga and Fanis Kafantaris, for their visionary response and their respect to this particular place and time; as well as to production assistant Efi Syrigou for her substantial contribution.

Elina Kountouri
Director NEON

- 01 **THEO MICHAEL**
Masterman, 2009
100 x 90 x 70 cm
Courtesy of the artist
- 02 **VANGELIS VLAHOS**
Foreign archaeologists from standing to bending position (3 posture exercises), 2012/2018
3 groups of photos, digital print on photographic paper
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist
- 03 **THALIA IOANNIDOU**
Pina Bounce: Trumpetancy, 2015/2018
Sound installation, four channels*: two pairs of 3" monitor speakers
Duration variable
Courtesy of the artist
* Based on *Pina Bounce: Trumpetancy*
ORL Records & Paraphernalia/noise-below.gr. 2015.CS40 tape/digital
- 04 **VASILIS PAPAGEORGIOU**
Paramythias (II, III, V, VI, VII), 2017
UV print on marble
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist
- 05 **KONSTANTINOS KOTSIS**
Archive4, 2013 – (ongoing project)
Android application
Android developer Vasilis Fouroulis
Courtesy of the artist
- 06 **HYPERCOMF**
Hypercomf 1st, 2017
Cotton fabric, felt, knitwear, embroidery, wetsuit fabric, jeans, snapback hats
147 x 171 cm
Courtesy of Hypercomf
- 07 **KOSTAS ROUSSAKIS**
One two three nothing, 2018
Formwork timber, steel nails, single slides, slide-viewer, fluorescent lamp
Dimensions variable
Commissioned by NEON Organization
- 08 **MALVINA PANAGIOTIDI**
The serpent's tears, 2018
Paraffin wax, pigment, wick, metal
Dimensions variable
Commissioned by NEON Organization
- 09 **KOSTAS SAHPAZIS**
Cut In Slices/Negative, 2015
Tire, bronze, cables
30 x 57 x 67 cm
Courtesy of D.Daskalopoulos Collection
- 10 **OSCAR BRONEER (ASCSA)**
Triumph Over Time: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens in Post-War, Greece, 1947
Digital film copy, 42'
Produced by: Margaret Thompson & FOX Studios
Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA)



POINTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

ANO KOUPHONISI

Many archaeological remains – structures, graves, and movable finds – of the Cycladic culture, the Roman, and the Byzantine era have been found within the limits of the present-day settlement and its immediate surroundings.

KATO KOUPHONISI

Settlements of the Bronze Age as well as a settlement of the Geometric Period (c. 700 BC) have been found in the island.

KEROS

The island of Keros had been an important centre during the Early Cycladic Period (3rd millennium BC). The excavations point to the existence of a sanctuary with pan-Cycladic reputation, where special rituals were taking place. Architectural remains from this period, graves, and evidence of metalworking exist in various places of the island. Extensive evidence of occupation from later historical periods (classical period, Byzantium, modern times) has been also revealed throughout the island.

DASKALIO

During the 3rd millennium BC (3000-2000 BC), the islet of Daskalio was a part of the island of Keros, forming a small peninsula with two wind-sheltered harbors. That was the location of the main settlement of Keros. Archaeological research has shown that during these early times an important centre had been formed, with impressive architecture, metallurgical workshops and intense commercial activity.

- ◆ Archaeological remains of the Bronze Age / Cycladic Culture (3200-1100 BC)
- ☀ Evidence of occupation during the Roman period (AD 150-350)
- ✚ Architectural remains of the Byzantine period (AD 350-1453)

