



6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art

Introduction

The Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, first inaugurated in 2007, is organised in collaboration with the Greek State Museum of Contemporary Art. Following ten years since its inception, the 6th Thessaloniki Biennale is scheduled to take place from September 30, 2017 until January 14, 2018. Visitor figures have averaged at approximately 55,000 since the first edition of the Biennale, with the number of attendees rising steadily each edition. Importantly, the Biennale has assumed the responsibility of bringing together Thessaloniki's various artistic sectors, be these museums, educational organizations or other creative groups and communities, while simultaneously providing a further international voice to Greece's artistic scene.

Although tested by the current social conditions and the downsizing of available financial resources, the forthcoming Biennale is to be executed using the Museum's own resources -its manpower and collaborative relationships- to take full advantage of the region's existing cultural capital, as well as the wealth of Thessaloniki's architectural heritage. The core aspiration of the 6th Biennale is to cultivate a model of co-curation, to diffuse contemporary art throughout the city, and to utilise synergies with like-minded institutions and foundations in Greece and abroad that have already made notable efforts to support and promote contemporary artistic creation under the present socio-political circumstances.

Thematic Framework of the Thessaloniki 6th Biennale

Title: Imagined Homes

Home, as an imagined construct, constitutes the thematic core of the 6th Thessaloniki Biennale. The terms 'hearth' (*hestía*) and 'home', here refer to notions not only of residence, but also of community and homeland, a place where one feels safe and accepted, has one's roots, and develops the core of one's social and family relationships.

Today, however, for much of the world the above notions are uncertain, with thousands of people obliged to leave their homelands for other, hopefully safer, places. These notions therefore exist only within the imaginary, as constructs, projections and expectations.

The scale and the specific characteristics of the violent displacements witnessed in recent years, and of others throughout history, have radically transformed the concepts of home and destination. These changes are not only reflected in migrating populations, themselves becoming part of an international diaspora, but also in the host environments, which are often altered to receive and incorporate their new residents.

The hearth we carry within us when we are dislocated by choice or by force therefore **constitutes a constantly reshaping imaginary construct**, seeking to correspond to the urgency related to one's very survival.

Taking today's increasing immigrant influx as its starting point, the 6th Biennale focuses on the fluidity and continuous redefinition of the notion of 'home'. The **lived experience of the past** plays a crucial role in the research, artistic choices and exhibition design, weaving a historical tapestry related to the concept of 'home'. Equally important is the **notion of the future**, in particular with relation to living conditions, co-existence, and the development of cultural frameworks. The internet and social media also remain important thematic interests for the 6th Biennale, representing intangible but influential realities with regard to the formation of identities, communities and practices of familiarising the exotic.

The topics upon which the research and formation of the artistic, educational, and exhibition programs are based are therefore: the contemporary diaspora; identities; the emerging feelings of familiarity; new practices of assimilation, acceptance, and co-existence that correspond to alternative understandings of gender, religion, family, and community in the widest sense possible.

Five axes form the profile of the 6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, produced and organized by the State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece (SMCA).

1. The Biennale rests on its own capital

- It works with a new curatorial team consisting of the Art Historians of the State Museum of Contemporary Art, and is not curated by an external curator as it has been previously.
- It is spread across the city, exploiting the richness of the architectural heritage of Thessaloniki.
- It takes advantage of its ten years of experience and has forged synergies in Greece and abroad with like-minded institutions and foundations that share the same concerns and that have made notable efforts to support contemporary artistic creation in times of crisis.

2. The Biennale is present, despite the radical shrinking of the available financial resources

Although only 20% of the funding provided to the previous three Biennales has been made available (approx. € 1 million over two years), the SMCA curators made the decision that this would not stand in the way of the Biennale's evolution. The Biennale has assumed the responsibility of bringing together Thessaloniki's various artistic sectors, be these museums, educational organizations or other creative groups and communities, while simultaneously providing a further international voice to Greece's artistic scene.

3. The Biennale launches open calls for artists

For the first time on such a large scale the selection of almost 50% of the artists participating in the 6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art was made following an open call by the curatorial team. It is noteworthy that 1,352 proposals were submitted

from Greece and abroad, which proves that the Thessaloniki Biennale has become established in the consciousness of the art world in an encouraging way.

4. The Biennale launches an artists' residency program

This is the first year that the Biennale launches an artists' residency program. Eight artists chosen by the SMCA curators are being hosted in Thessaloniki with the support of collaborating institutions to produce works specifically to be included in the main exhibition of the 6th Biennale. The program launched on May 25, 2017 is underway.

5. The Thessaloniki Biennale collaborates with the Çanakkale Biennale

The 6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art collaborates with and hosts works of art from the Çanakkale Biennale, which were not presented in the first place. This is an artistic collaboration between the two neighboring Biennials that share common challenges along with contextual and conceptual parallels.

The 6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art program is divided into main and parallel programs. The **main program** includes the main exhibition, the performance festival, the artists' residency program, events, exhibitions by the Movement of the 5 Museums of Thessaloniki, and educational activities for children and adults.

The **parallel program** includes self-funded exhibitions / actions that are presented under the auspices of the Biennale.

Venues: The main exhibition will be broken down into modules, taking place at the **State Museum of Contemporary Art's site at the Moni Lazariston**, the **Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki at Warehouse B1** located in Thessaloniki port, in premises within the **Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art**, as well as in the **Agioritiki Estia**.

As with previous editions, the 6th Biennale will also utilize other museums and public spaces in Thessaloniki, including architectural monuments and archaeological sites.

The Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art is co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Regional Development Fund).

Organizational Framework of the 6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art

Organizing Institution: State Museum of Contemporary Art

Board of Administration

President: Andreas Takis

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SMCA Director: Maria Tsantsanoglou

Director of the 6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art: Syrago Tsiara, CACT director

Project Manager: Athina Ioannou, director of SMCA administrative services

Curatorial Team: Domna Gounari, Areti Leopoulou, Thodoris Markoglou, Yannis Bolis, Eirini Papakonstantinou, Maria Tsantsanoglou, Syrago Tsiara, Angelica Charistou, SMCA art historians-curators

Evi Papavergou, Katerina Paraskeva, SMCA Educators

Advisory Committee: Giorgos Divaris, Thouli Misirloglou, Maria Tsantsanoglou, Syrago Tsiara, Elli Chryssidou



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The project is co-financed by Greece and the European Union

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ΦΑΝΤΑΣΙΑΚΕΣ ΕΣΤΙΕΣ
IMAGINED HOMES

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ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ
Ε.Π. Περιφέρειας Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας



ανάπτυξη - εργασία - αλληλεγγύη

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ & ΑΘΛΗΤΙΣΜΟΥ
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