

Thessaloniki biennale:7 of Contemporary Art

ΜΠΙΕΝΑΛΕ ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΗΣ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

Stasis #1: Art and labor

Saturday 30/11, 11:00 - 16:00

MOMus-Museum of Contemporary Art conference hall (Helexpo area, Egnatias 154)

This event aims to address historical and theoretical issues concerning the perceptions of artistic production under capitalism, the artistic and curatorial approaches and practices related to art as labor, as well as the working conditions, goals, policies and claims of artists and cultural workers.

11:00 - 11:10

Introduction: Louisa Avgita, Assistant Professor of Art History, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and member of the curatorial team of the 7th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art.

~ FIRST PART

11:15 - 11:45

Danielle Child, art historian, Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester.

Reconsidering Contemporary Artistic Practice as a Condition of Labor

[this talk will be in English]

This lecture will take as its starting point a question originating from the Biennale's concept: 'what does it mean to reconsider artistic practice as a condition of labour?' We might begin by asking if artistic practice can be understood as a condition of labour? Labour, as we know, is inherent to capitalism. It is central to the production of capital; labour creates profit. So how does this relate to artistic labour that was historically considered as unproductive labour (that is labour that does not produce profit through the creation of surplus value)? Although some would argue that artistic labour remains unproductive due to its relative autonomy from the mainstream work, in the contemporary period mainstream models of work have shifted. Capitalist work now embraces historically unproductive forms of labour (service work, artistic, socially reproductive and immaterial forms of labour). This paper then asks what happens to contemporary artistic practice when historically unproductive (i.e. immaterial) labour becomes a profitable form of work under neoliberal capitalism? Can artistic practice now be understood as a condition of contemporary labour and, in turn, the artist as worker?

11:45 – 12:15

Areti Adamopoulou, Associate Professor of Art History, University of Ioannina and **Louisa Avgita**, Assistant Professor of Art History, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Presentation of the 7th issue of the Criticism+Art magazine with the title "Art, Labor, Market", published by AICA-Hellas

The 7th issue of *Criticism + Art* (Kritiki & Techni) magazine entitled "Art, Labor, Market" has now been published after many years of waiting. As the editors of the issue, we present its concept, the included articles, as well as the background story of this issue, which is considered to be particularly relevant to a discussion about labour conditions in the field of culture. The authors of the issue are: John Roberts, Panayotis Mpikas, Louisa Avgita, Sophie Hope, Angela Dimitrakaki, Iro Katsaridou, Theano Dova, Julian Stallabrass, Areti Adamopoulou, Stella Anastasaki & Maro Psyrra, Thanasis Chondros & Alexandra Katsiani and Denis Zacharopoulos (interview).

12:15 – 12:45

Alexandra Antoniadou, Ph.D. in Art History, University of Edinburgh

Performance Delivery: Experience Economy and Devaluation of Artistic Labor.

The present paper investigates the perplexities of performance art's economy and the labor conditions under which artists are forced to work. Through the humorous yet sharp project Performers Xpress by Angeliki Avgitidou and Fotini Kalle, I will analyze performance art as a live experience and a specialized service and discuss the inability of artists to make a living from their artistic labor. The specific project successfully addresses two important and conflicting points in relation to the links between performance art and post-Fordism: first, the overvaluation of live experience and, second, the undervaluation of artistic labor. Through James Gilmore and Joseph Pine's analysis of experience and transformation economy, Bojana Kunst's analysis of the relationship between artistic work and artistic labour in the proximity of capitalism and Maurizio Lazzarato's thoughts on immaterial labour, this presentation examines the recent changes in the way performance artists work and the relationship between the new working conditions and the post-Fordist model of production.

12:45– 13:15

Elpida Karaba, art theorist and independent curator

Art Practices and affirmative ethics as a means of surviving in the globalized economy (of culture).

The paper examines the case study of the establishment of Temporary Academy of Arts (PAT) and its offshoot organization The Cultural Workers Association (SEP). They are two hybrid institutions focusing on the relationship between art, the systems of knowledge and the economy of culture. These hybrids are the products of late cognitive capitalism and the globalized economy. Their foundation concerns the setting up of a basic structure, reintroducing the issue of instituting and institutions, as well as our position towards them, perceived as central to the discussion of how we can make art today and how we perceive ourselves as working (gendered) subjects of the cultural industry. Against the fusion of art with activism — from which the trendy term artivism has emerged — one could suggest convergent articulations of art, activism, trade unionism, or other areas of action, in which new and unclassified subjects emerge, also including the subjects of immaterial

labour (for the control of these subjects a variety of diverse and oppositional forces are competing, leading either to these subjects' eventual submission to capitalism, or to some unexpected moves which could surprise some of its mechanisms, making its triggers louder). In instituting practices, such as PAT and SEP, that combine the symbolic with the mediated, and the literal with the tactical, art is positioned within a particular, situated, social and economic condition, seeking for affirmative ethics, insofar as claims within the field of art are not an introvert luxury. The field of art is a field whose material parameters are just as real and tangible as in all other fields.

~ 13:15 – 14:00: Q&A | COFFEE / LUNCH BREAK

~ SECOND PART ~ Interventions

14:15 – 14:35

Eva Mela, President of the Chamber of Fine Arts of Greece (EETE)

14:35– 14:55

Nikolaos Stavrakantonakis, Secretary of the Union of Greek Engravers (EEX)

The Union of Greek Engravers currently represents almost 60 active engravers who have chosen to operate collectively in order to create the conditions needed to promote their work artistically and commercially. For the vast majority, art does not provide a living for the artist. Therefore, one is forced to find other means of earning a living, an oppressing condition which does not even allow the artist to finance his/her art practice. In the last 30 years that UGE is active the Union is also bothered with the lack of resources. The lack of cultural policies makes state funding rather uncertain, hindering, thus, any serious attempt for planning. The commercial field of art is chaotic or, particularly for engraving, non-existent. Despite all that, UGE is one of the most active unions in the Greek art scene: it organizes at least one major engraving exhibition every year, a festival every 3 years which includes about 20 exhibitions from Greece and abroad, collaborating with major local and foreign institutions.

15:00 – 15:20

Konstantinos Palian, President of the Association of Visual Artists of Northern Greece (SKETVE)

15:20 – 15:40

Anna Despotidou, Assistant Professor of Commercial Law, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Legal advisor of MOMus

Works created by employees in the execution of employment contracts – Allocation of economic and moral rights, that emanate from Copyright, in these works (Art. 8 L. 2121/1993 “the protection of Copyright and Related Rights”).

My short intervention refers to the allocation of economic and moral rights, that emanate from Copyright, *between employers* who employ “authors” (=creators of original works) *and employees*, who create works within the scope of their employment or, more precisely, in the execution of their employment contract (definition shall be provided).

In this context, I shall focus on Art. 8 of the Greek Copyright Act (N. 2121/1993), according to which “when a work is created by an employee in the execution of an employment contract, the initial holder of the economic and moral rights in this work shall be the author (of the work). *Unless provided otherwise by contract*, only such economic rights, as are necessary for the fulfilment of the purpose/scope of the contract, shall be transferred exclusively to the employer” [*special application*

of the theory of the purpose/scope of the contract (art. 15 par. 4), that serves the protection of the interests of the author, as the weaker party in it].

Furthermore, I shall discuss the *different legislative treatment between* authors/employees who work in the private sector, on the one hand (par. 1), and those who create works under any work relation of the public sector, on the other (par. 2), and I shall emphasize the fact that, in any case, the so-called moral rights (such as the rights of paternity and integrity) remain with the author and can be exercised by him/her at any time, since they are inalienable.

Finally, I shall comment on the substantial difference that exists between the provisions of Greek Copyright Law, that apply to works made by employers, either in the private or the public sector, and the “works made for hire” doctrine, that has evolved in the context of U.S. Copyright Law. It should be regarded as a “difference” that reflects the –deeply rooted– philosophical disparities between the common and the continental law countries’ copyright law systems, the latter being more *author/human centered*.

15:40 – 16:00

Athina Ioannou, Project manager of the Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art

The “lost artworks”

How is an artwork defined, how is art defined, and what happens when these two happen together in the frame of a funded project? This is a presentation of specific artwork commissions, based on data collected during the organization of the 7th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art.

~ Q&A ~