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## 2nd Athens Biennale 2009

### HEAVEN

15 June – 4 October

The 2nd Athens Biennale 2009 HEAVEN is conceived as a multifaceted contemporary art festival that extends along the coastline of Athens, in the central areas of Palaio Faliro and Kallithea. XYZ, the founders and artistic directors of the Athens Biennale have invited a selected group of curators to contemplate Heaven, in a time that arguably is one of disappointment and conflict. The six exhibitions of the 2nd Athens Biennale 2009, designed by architect Andreas Angelidakis, take the form of autonomous approaches to this broad subject, that nevertheless communicate creatively and claim a degree of narrative cohesion. These six exhibitions are complemented by a series of performative events lasting all through the summer.

#### "Heaven\_Live"

curated by **Dimitris Papaioannou & Zafos Xagoraris**

- **Flisvos Building & Palaio Faliro Beach**

Temporary installations form successive theatrical scenes, screens and floating stages, while the spectators and the spectacle interchange, as residents and users of the aquatic limit are invited to attend actively in the configuration of communal spaces. New uses of the spaces are triggered, under the surface of the sea, in the street or in the roofs of neighboring buildings, without impeding the ones already existing.

Artists: **An Architektur, Nikos Arvanitis, Barking Dogs United, Broadcast Group, Eloisa Cartonera, Centre for Research Architecture - Goldsmiths College (Celine Condorelli, Angela Melitopoulos, Florian Schneider, Eyal Weizman), Cesare Pietroiusti & Matteo Fraternali, Coti, Errands, Filopappou Group, Tadeusz Kantor, Reijo Kela, Kollektivnye Deystviya (Collective Actions), Antti Laitinen, Tea Mäkipää, Jennifer Nelson & Dimitris Kotsaras, NSK, Lucy + Jorge Orta, Anna Ostoya, Palaio Faliro artists group, Superflex, Water Girls Water Boys [Urban Void, Nomadic Architecture Network, Flux Factory, Koharchitects], Krzysztof Wodiczko, Ykon.**

#### "World Question Center"

curated by **Chus Martínez**

- **Esplanade Building (next to Tae Kwon Do Court), Water Plaza, Faliron Olympic Complex**

The departure point of Chus Martínez's exhibition is to expand the limits of know through the development of working hypothesis; the exhibition is entirely dedicated to the radical importance of questions. Heaven could be understood as a space for mere speculation. It seems easy but is not. Nothing is more difficult nowadays than to escape the logic of the 'what for'. The logic of the show is simple: every one of the artists is requested to submit a work, a question, a thinking hypothesis in their own terms. Nonetheless, the show should be here conceived not from the artistic response to a topic, but as an assemblage of very different thinking logics. Logics that hopefully will help the viewer, but also the artists to develop further different interpretations of the near future.

Artists: **Alexis Akritchakis, Michel Auder, Thomas Bayrle, Erick Beltrán, Jef Cornelis, Roberto Cuoghi, Mariana Castillo Deball, Luke Fowler, Dora García, Andrea Geyer, André Guedes, Dorothy Iannone, Aris & Lakis Ionas / The Callas, Ferdinand Kriwet, Maria Loboda, Babette Mangolte, Rosalind Nashashibi & Lucy Skaer, Maria Pask, Lisi Raskin, Natascha Sadr Haghghian, Lasse Schmidt Hansen, Sue Tompkins, Kostis Velonis.**

### "Splendid Isolation, Athens"

curated by **Cay Sophie Rabinowitz**

- **Esplanade Building (next to Tae Kwon Do Court), Water Plaza, Faliron Olympic Complex**

As one of the curators invited to contemplate the subject of Heaven, Cay Sophie Rabinowitz oriented her approach to this immeasurably broad topic by naming her exhibition Splendid Isolation, Athens. Guided by an immersive approach rather than a topical or thematic one, her selection and presentation let the viewer ponder if and how creative activity, social practices, and aesthetic experience may be directed. "Splendid Isolation, Athens" includes a number of art works that employ some formal or structural principle, whether it be as rigid as scaffolding, as symbolic as a monetary exchange, as modular as blocks, or as flexible as narrative. For many artists in the show, some existent form—be it physical or immaterial, biographical or contrived, religious or scientific—offers a means by which to re-consider, re-form, re-imagine or even re-structure a momentary or lifelong place of inspiration.

Artists: **Lara Almarcegui, Anastasia Douka, Michael Gibson, Benita-Immanuel Grosser (Y8), Em Kei, Kalup Linzy, Miltos Manetas, Malcolm McLaren, Ryan McNamara, Martin Oppel, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Mai -Thu Perret, Angelo Plessas, Ry Rocklen, Willem de Rooij, Ettore Sottsass, Adrian Williams, Hsuan Hsuan Wu.**

### "For the Straight Way is Lost"

curated by **Diana Baldon**

- **Esplanade Building (next to Tae Kwon Do Court), Water Plaza, Faliron Olympic Complex**

Diana Baldon's exhibition is arranged around a framing device represented by the eight circles of the anti-chamber of heaven: the purgatory. According to Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, a mountain brings souls to heaven through a series of tests visualised in "gironi". Beyond being a geographically situated place, purgatory is a human condition, a process of purification or temporary punishment where souls of those who die depend on self-achievement, compassion and imagination to be prepared for redemption. However, her concept distances itself from Dante's epic poem simply using its structure as a tool to organise works inside what we could imagine is a horizontal representation Mount Purgatory, that is a vessel, or Nautilus shell that gets smaller and smaller as it grows to end up in a rabbit hole, which could stand for the Pearly Gate.

Artists: **Mark Aerial Waller, Athanasios Argianas, Athanasios Argianas & Nick Laessing, Rossella Biscotti, Adam Chodzko, Josef Dabernig, Martin Ebner, The Errorists, Elsebeth Jørgensen, Anja Kirschner, Domenico Mangano, Tom McCarthy, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Carolee Schneemann, Michael Stevenson, Julia Strauss.**

**"Hotel Paradies"**curated by **Nadja Argyropoulou**

- **Esplanade Building (next to Tae Kwon Do Court), Water Plaza, Faliron Olympic Complex**

Between the only common certainty that is death and the endless possibility that is after-life, there is a kind of terrible tension, the very spark of everything that is: Desire. In this light, Paradise can be understood as "Desire unleashed". Not as an idyllic place (island, garden, Arcadia) of bliss and innocence regained. As a monument constantly rising towards its ruination, as something equally rooted in and free of the land, as a paradox that punctures time, the Hotel Paradies is such a lair of Desire. The name derives from a rather common language corruption; one which serves as a starting and end point for the conceptual references of this exhibition. Paradies: This which lies next to and beyond death. It is therefore a name that invokes an era when no names existed.

Artists: **Kenneth Anger, Apophenia, Daniel Arsham, Zoe Beloff, Manfredi Beninati, Paul Chan, Savvas Christodoulides, Electronic Voice Phenomena, Zoi Gaitanidou, Yiannoulis Halepas, Haris Epaminonda & Daniel Gustav Cramer, International Necronautical Society (INS), Vassilis Karouk, Dionisis Kavallieratos, Joachim Koester, Sandra Kranich, Robert Kuśmirowski, Cristina Lei Rodriguez, Paul Noble, Saskia Olde Wolbers, Nikos Gavriil Pentzikis, Saprophytes, Markus Selg, Robert Smithson, Christiana Soulou, Jan Švankmajer, Alexandros Tzannis, Unknown Artist - Player of Shadow Theatre, Marie Wilson Valaoritis & Nanos Valaoritis, Jakub Julian Ziolkowski.**

**"How many Angels can Dance on the Head of a Pin?"**curated by **Christopher Marinos**

- **Esplanade Building (next to Tae Kwon Do Court), Water Plaza, Faliron Olympic Complex**

How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? is one of the six curatorial projects of the 2nd Athens Biennial. The exhibition traces the spiritual meaning of paradise more as a 'possibility' or 'promise' within the daily spectre of life and less as a redemptive phenomenon located in an afterlife. Divided into three sections, the exhibition features works which together explore the idea of a domesticated heaven: The first section is equivalent to reality enforcement and the way one remembers Paradise through a glass darkly; in stark contrast, the second section corresponds to psychedelic journeys, decadent dreams, theatrical gestures and utopian constellations; while the last one is symbolized by an overwhelming feeling of loneliness, a sense of foreboding melancholy as well as an irrepressible impulse of repetition.

Artists: **Bruce Baillie, Mieke Bal, Lydia Dampassina, Dora Economou, Angus Fairhurst, Harun Farocki, Leon Frantzis, Lothar Hempel, Andreas Kassapis & Giannis Skourletis, Panayiotis Loukas, Ursula Mayer, Kris Martin, Marc Nagtzaam, OMIO, Adrian Paci, Nina Papaconstantinou, Angelos Papadimitriou, Société Réaliste, Kostas Roussakis, Christian Tomaszewski, Mark Wallinger.**