

— PHOENIX ATHENS —

Opening: 23 July

Duration: 24 July - 23 August

Out of the Cube and Into the Green is a group exhibition which examines a less conventional approach to spatial, social and ecological factors in both contemporary art and Athenian society. The exhibition features new works by Stefanos Kornilios Mitsis Poiitidis and Pavlos Paliouras Of Nilware, Vasilis Galanis, Karl Heinz Jeron, Ioanna Lin, Eleni Tsamadia and DimitriYin.

The exhibition takes place at Phoenix Athens Gallery in the aftermath of the Covid 19 Pandemic, reveals the manner in which the “native” ecologies of cities, suburbs and the entire planet has been overlooked and mismanaged with stunning efficiency. The garden or κήπος in Greek is a sacred part of both classical and modern Greek heritage and continues to be a sanctuary that offers respite, healing and inspiration as well as dialectic references for the development of new ideas. The 2nd part of the title for this exhibition is named since human creativity, science and human understanding is so largely inspired and informed by nature. The term “Green” also refers to the uninitiated or inexperienced, and in some cases as well, those who would be jealous of others.

Each artist shares a different approach to understanding a world delimited by conventional thought and habit. The primordial soup of Jeron’s Cryptid sculptures and accompanying illustrations provides a fascinating model of living vs. nonliving interactions and a way to reflect further on the metaphysical energies contained by both objects and beings. Vasilis Galanis’ tongue in cheek synthesis of Haeckel’s zoological illustrations are informed by ecology and the arresting yet seductive morphology of coral-an organism which may be defined as both plant and animal. The virtual constructions in AI of a surreal museum and its Athenian environs created by the Nilware team (Stefanos Mitsis Piitidis & Pavlos Paliouras), create a paradoxical and telling universe in which a museum resembling the Guggenheim has been placed in an dystopian Athenian landscape. Ioanna Lin’s six meter long panoramic of the city of Athens attests to the strength of her “craft” and demonstrates how the idealism and adoring “gaze” of others can elevate and broaden our appreciation of the familiar. Dimitri Yin’s work is a nod to craft, ecology and the diligent resilience of working Greeks providing insight into our notions of labour, ecology and utility.

The works allow us to rediscover the idea of nature and the self as things that can be harnessed, cultivated and better understood through speculative or case-specific models for analysis and creative practice. This exhibition offers a new precedent for reevaluating our relationship with nature and to re-imagine the gallery as a public space where discussion around ecology, utility and engaged practice are indeed cultivated and given a chance to thrive.

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Curatorial Notes:

There has also been a historic divide between art and ecology, as if for whatever reason, these things are not compatible and this exhibition seeks to blur these lines and demonstrate how art is as relevant to ecology and the preservation of [human] life on this planet, and conversely as well the ways in which ecology is vital as well to the arts.

Despite the obvious toll on human lives, the quarantine measures made life for both humans and many other organisms more liveable with respect to air quality, Co2 emissions, diminished sound pollution and the resurgence and return of both flora and fauna to both urban and suburban areas. The “lockdown” as it would be called would put a moratorium on the activities of museums, galleries and many cultural institutions and this would reveal that these could not be relied upon exclusively as a source-point for art. Artists would continue to create work, thus contributing to society and culture despite this. Out of the Cube and Into the Green takes stock of these realities and gives the public an opportunity to reflect on this further, to explore how artists rebound from difficult times and continue to serve as heralds of creativity.