



IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

BENAKI MUSEUM, PIREOS STREET ANNEXE

Organization: Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin - Istanbul Modern, Istanbul - Benaki Museum

Opening: 22 May 2009, 20:00

Duration: 23 May 2009 – 26 July 2009



The Benaki Museum in collaboration with the Greek Festival present in Athens, the travelling exhibition “In praise of shadows”. This international exhibition is a collaboration of the Benaki Museum, Istanbul Modern in Istanbul and Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin. Paolo Colombo is in charge of the concept and curating of this exhibition on shadows, shadow theatre and silhouettes, which is based on old and contemporary folk tales and on simple narratives expressed with an economy of means. Before travelling to Athens, the exhibition was displayed in Dublin from November 5, 2008 to January 4, 2009 and in Istanbul from January 22nd until May 5th 2009.

The title of this exhibition comes from a lecture delivered by William Kentridge at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 2001, a title that the artist culled from a pamphlet written by Junichiro Tanizaki in 1935.

At the heart of this exhibition, and its central metaphor, are the shadow theatre traditions from Greece and Turkey, and their character Karagiozis, an ever-hungry trickster who lives through hundreds of adventures and misadventures along with a varied set of other characters.



This exhibition explores the formal analogies and the conceptual references that a new narrative spirit in contemporary art shares with shadow plays and the influence that this traditional art form has had on the world of art today.

The exhibition brings together key works by eight contemporary artists and two master filmmakers from the first half of the twentieth century: illustrations inspired by opera by South African artist William Kentridge which are among his key works; playful drawings and collages of Jockum Nordström; drawings, silhouette installations and videos by the well-known African-American artist Kara Walker; Silver Bear awarded puppet animation, films, hand-made puppets by Katariina Lillqvist; most celebrated and still topical films of the pioneering German filmmaker Lotte Reiniger who's source of inspiration is Karagöz and who created the first silhouette films in the 1920's; the unique works of Ladislav Starewitch, one of the most well-known filmmakers of the 20th century and the master of stop-motion technique; the independent theatre of Andrew Vickery, the video of Haluk Akakçe, the videos of Nathalie Djurberg made with clay-animation technique and the drawings in which Christiana Soulou reflects the human conditions.



The exhibition is curated by Paolo Colombo, formerly Curator at the MAXXI-Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo in Rome (2001-2007), Director of the Centre d'art Contemporain in Geneva (1989-2000) and Curator of the 6th Istanbul Biennial. Paolo Colombo has also curated exhibitions on artists such as Gilbert and George ("The General Jungle", 2006), Ed Ruscha (2004), Ilya and Emilia Kabakov (2004), Francis Alys (2003), Alighiero Boetti (Venezia Pavillion, 2001), Kara Walker (49th Venice Biennale, 2000), Christopher Wool (1999), William Kentridge (1999), Pipilotti Rist (1996), Ugo Rondinone (1995) and Rosemarie Trockel (1994).

The exhibition will be accompanied by a beautifully illustrated catalogue, with essays by the curator of the exhibition, Paolo Colombo and by William Kentridge,

Lewis Hyde, Metin And, Enrique Juncosa, Evamarie Blattner, François Martin, Carolina López Caballero.

The exhibition at the Benaki Museum was coordinated by the art historian Polina Kosmadaki, in collaboration with Myrto Kaouki, while Maria Throuvala was in charge of the program's administration and management.

The presentation of the exhibition "In praise of shadows" coincides with the realization of Athens' contemporary art fair ART-Athina (21-24 May) and is part of its parallel events. The simultaneous inauguration of these two events as well as the collaboration with the Greek Festival and the association with its activities constitute the exhibition a reference point to the various cultural events taking place in Athens during the summer 2009.

The project was realized with the support of the European *Culture Programme 2007-2013*.



SUPPORT



COMMUNICATION SPONSORS



Benaki Museum
Pireos Street Annex
Pireos 138
Tel.: 210 3453111
www.benaki.gr

Opening Hours
Wednesday, Thursday, Sunday:
10.00-18.00
Friday, Saturday: 10.00-22.00
Monday, Tuesday: Closed