

THE CYPRUS PAVILION  
BIENNALE ARTE 2017

Exhibition: 13 May—26 Nov. 2017  
Preview: 10, 11, and 12 May

Associazione Culturale Spiazzi,  
Castello 3865, 30122 Venezia  
Boat Stop Arsenale  
Open: Tue–Sun 10:00–18:00

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Thu. 11 May, 19:30  
Venue to be announced

Πολλοί ξένοι—  
*Many Strangers*  
On the occasion of the  
exhibition opening,  
the Cyprus pavilion  
hosts a special night.  
Neoterismoι Touma-  
zou preside over  
the event and set its  
theme: Πολλοί ξένοι—  
Many Strangers.  
The night will see the  
group's associates Guy  
Gormley (*Enchante*)  
on decks and Patrick  
Cole and Polyxeni  
Savva making unique  
appearances.

Fri. 12 May, 18:00  
Sat. 13 May, 11:00  
The Cyprus Pavilion  
During the opening  
days, Mirene Arsanios  
and the Neoterismoι  
Toumazou perform  
readings of their writ-  
ings in the exhibition.



la Biennale di Venezia

57. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

# Cyprus in Venice

## Polys Peslikas

### the future of colour

Special guests: Mirene Arsanios,  
Valentinou Charalambous, and Neoterismoι Toumazou

Curated by Jan Verwoert

Colour once was key to politics and trade in the Mediterranean. Fabric manufacturing, medicine, painting, and cosmetics alike depended on pigment supplies and colour binding agents like alum. Main alum resources lay in the Eastern Mediterranean. So Rome banned alum imports to curb Constantinople's influence. Yet, despite the embargo, around 1500 the agent was still in circulation via the Venetian trade network, including Cyprus.

*The Future of Colour* takes this story as the point of departure for invoking the spirit of unstoppable exchange—in the key of living colour. Today's political imagination seems to be stuck in apocalyptic scenarios of cultures at war (West vs. East). We rarely ask what it could mean for life to continue and our exchanges to create a future. Rejecting the false securities of catastrophic thought, the show pays homage to the vibrant insecurities of life and the trade of ideas, via painting and its sister arts.

Polys Peslikas was born in Limassol, Cyprus, in 1973. He lives and Works in Nicosia and Berlin.

To defy the endgame is to grasp past and future, West and East, as a fluid continuum that invites movement. This is the challenge Polys Peslikas has set himself. His new paintings, shown in the pavilion, draw on fragments of historic imagery. Peslikas zooms in on details of Venetian paintings and Modernist collages. He extracts colours, patterns, and ornaments that resonate across time. Mixing these ingredients, Peslikas performs an alchemy that liquefies time. A 500 year difference dissolves into the rhythm and rhyme of tonalities and textures. No occident, no orient, but an ocean of undulating forms, layered colours and differentiated details here come to define the world.

In opening up the horizon of experience, Polys Peslikas' paintings set the stage for hosting further artistic exchanges. A series of cartoonishly oversized newspapers provide the platform for these transactions, conducted by three parties, invited as special guests:

Nicosia-based, internationally active, artist group Neoterismoï Toumazou (Maria Toumazou, Marina Xenofontos, Orestis Lazouras) are named after the local novelty shop of one member's grandfather. Importing and exporting influences, they trade in many languages: poetry, performance, design, music and fashion. In her stories, Beirut born, New York based writer Mirene Arsanios interlaces biographies and histories. Her new piece of writing, *Emergency Kids*, finds her revisiting memories of Cyprus where she briefly lived, before returning to Beirut at the end of the civil war. Places and words, remembered from childhood coalesce into one another, and the time is always now. Legendary ceramic artist from Famagusta, Valentinos Charalambous joins the conversation. Having travelled, made and taught art, for decades, in Baghdad and Limassol, he has been an inspiration to many, with stories to tell and a love louder than bombs for the arts of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The show invokes the spirit of the Eastern Mediterranean as a zone where routes cross, travellers meet and trade in a poetic knowledge that may render past and future in fresh colours.

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