

Christodoulos Panayiotou *Act II: The Island*
27 September 2019 - 5 January 2020



Christodoulos Panayiotou, *Act II: The Island*, 2008, Folded theatre backdrop. Courtesy the collection of Nicos Pattichis.

Camden Arts Centre is pleased to present the first major UK institutional exhibition of work by the celebrated Cypriot artist Christodoulos Panayiotou (b. 1978, Limassol, Cyprus). This major solo exhibition will survey the breadth of Panayiotou's practice, bringing together works made over the last 10 years, many of which have not been shown in the UK before. Informed by his interest in anthropology, archaeology and cultural histories, and drawing on his background in dance and theatre, Panayiotou will activate Camden Arts Centre with a series of poetic spatial interventions, as well as a number of new commissions.

Encompassing a wide range of media, including sculpture, painting, photography, found objects and installation, Panayiotou reveals hidden narratives held in the visual and material records of history and time. Like an archaeologist, his works uncover obscured and forgotten stories of places, objects, traditions and events, transforming the world into a theatre in which the myths that unite and divide us are acted out. Panayiotou engages with the ancient and the modern to explore the ways in which simple gestures can act as subversive counterpoints to homogeneous narratives. Natural stone mosaics, gilded icons, paper-pulp, mineralogical curiosities and the photographic archive of a Cypriot

newspaper; all become materials and motifs for his seductive, affecting and highly charged works.

The exhibition's title *Act II: The Island* is taken from one of the oldest works in the show: a folded theatrical backdrop that depicts a tropical island - an archetypal, fantastical place. For Panayiotou, the act of concealing the image of an idealised landscape, alluding to it in name only, opens up a space of potential narrative in the imagination of the audience - one that might evoke associations of paradise, escape and solitude, as well as isolation and fear. In the context of the exhibition's location in London, it might seem also to touch on the turbulent status of the 'British Isles' as we approach Brexit, with all its attendant discourses of nationalism, identity and self-determination; as well as the complex political history of Cyprus as a previous British colony and a still conflicted zone, caught between the cultures and histories of so-called east and west.

These concerns are touched upon in other works, including a series of large-scale, monochrome paintings produced from thousands of demonetised, pulped, Euro banknotes; and *Independence Street* (2012) - a monumental work consisting of dismantled electricity poles which once supported the powerlines that supplied power to the island; remnants of the British colonial infrastructure left behind after independence, uprooted and returned to the UK. Despite addressing more universal themes of politics, nationhood, religion, imperialism and oppression, Panayiotou's work also speaks through the most personal and private of gestures and interventions, returning again and again to the lost, the overlooked, the marginalised and the neglected.

For further information, interviews and images please contact:

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Notes to editors:

About Christodoulos Panayiotou

Christodoulos Panayiotou (b. 1978, Limassol, Cyprus) lives and works in Paris, France and Limassol, Cyprus where he initiated and runs an exhibition space - The Island Club. In 2019 he collaborated on the conception of the Emma Kunz - *Visionary Drawings* exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery and in 2015 he represented Cyprus in their national Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, Italy. Concurrent with *Act II: The Island* at Camden Arts Centre, Panayiotou will have an exhibition at Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Selected solo exhibitions include: Casa Luis Barragan, Mexico City, Mexico, 2017; CCA Kitakyushu Gallery, Kitakyushu, Japan, 2017 & 2013; Nürnberg Kunstverein, Nuremberg,

Germany, 2016; Point Centre for Contemporary Art, Nicosia, Cyprus, 2015; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 2013; Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg, 2013; CAC Brétigny, Brétigny-sur-Orge, France, 2012; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, USA, 2012; Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig, Germany, 2011; Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland, 2010; Cubitt, London, 2010. His work has also been included in a number of group exhibitions in institutions worldwide including: Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2018; Museo de Art Contemporânea de Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil, 2018; 8th Melle Biennale, 2018; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2018; 14th Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France, 2017; 13th Sharjah Biennial, 2017; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France, 2017; Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico, 2017; Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2017, 2016, 2012; Firstsite, Colchester, UK, 2015; Museion, Bolzano, 2014; 8th Berlin Biennale, 2014; Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand, 2014; Migros Museum, Zürich, 2014; 7th Liverpool Biennial, 2012; dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, 2012; CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, 2012; Joan Miro Foundation, Barcelona, 2011; Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2011, 2010; Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, 2010; Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2010; Ashkal Alwan Center for Contemporary Arts, Beirut, 2010; Artist Space, New York, 2009; MoCA Miami, 2009.

About Camden Arts Centre

Camden Arts Centre (Registered Charity Number 1065829) is a place for world-class contemporary art exhibitions and education. Founded by artists in 1965, it continues to be a space for the most vital and diverse mix of practices and ideas, with an international reputation for supporting artists at key points in their careers, championing excellence and fostering an open and inclusive environment of ambition, innovation and risk.

Through a regular programme of exhibitions, artist residencies, off-site projects, performances, talks and educational projects, we ensure that Camden Arts Centre remains one of the UK's most dynamic and respected spaces to see, make and talk about art and ideas.

Opening times:

Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 6pm

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Closed Mondays.

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