

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF H.E. PRESIDENT OF GREECE KATERINA SAKELLAROPOULOU

Department of Performing
and Digital Arts



Τμήμα Παραστατικών
και Ψηφιακών Τεχνών



HAITI GREECE 1821-2021. JOURNEY TO FREEDOM/RESPECT

The exhibition honours *Haiti's* contribution to the Greek Revolution and is co-organised by the Municipality of Nafplio and the Department of Performing and Digital Arts (DPDA), University of the Peloponnese.

Haiti was the first country to recognise Greece's independence by sending a letter in 1822 written by the President of the time, Jean-Pierre Boyer, to "the citizens of Greece" including Adamantios Korais. The exhibit is inspired by this important historical event but also by the myths associated with it. Its value lies in the opportunity to explore little-known facts about the Greek revolution both within and outside Europe's borders and from a historical as well as a contemporary perspective. Also, it opens the way towards learning about a faraway and unknown country with which, however, we share powerful bonds in common revolutionary struggles for freedom.

The exhibition is the result of a co-ordinated inter-departmental academic effort between the University of the Peloponnese, Department of Performing and Digital Arts and the University of the Aegean, Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering. It also proudly constitutes a cultural production of regional Greece. The two departments are based in Nafplio and Syros, respectively, while the preparation of the exhibition in Nafplio relied exclusively on local human resources. It was initially presented in its original form in Spetses in early August at the Ecclesiastical Museum and curated by the visual artist Leda Papakonstantinou who also originally conceived of the endeavour.

The exhibition was re-designed and enriched with new exhibits for its presentation in Nafplio. The new form includes work by students and invited artists, such as Leda Papakonstantinou and the Greek-American performer Theodora Skipitares. Of particular interest is the co-operation of some students from the Department of Performing and Digital Arts with young Haitian artists. The exhibition is polymorphic and includes visual art, installations, animation, video art and video performance. An important historical document in the Nafplio exhibition, which inspired the artists, is the first translation into Greek and publication of the of the letter written by Boyer (1861) as well as the original manuscript, both on generous loan from the National Library of Greece.

The 1822 letter documents the admirable act of solidarity by *Haiti* towards Greece. The two university groups have interpreted the 1822 letter in distinct ways. By placing it within a historical and mythological framework, the University of the Aegean suggests new readings of the revolution expanding hellenocentrism; whereas the Department of Performing and Digital Arts explores the contemporary meaning of the revolutionary declaration. The letter is related to social and political issues, from gender and race to the ability of citizens to intervene in the social and political arena. The students' works from the Department of Performing and Digital Arts also demonstrate eager interest in becoming acquainted with modern *Haiti*.

The students embraced this endeavour with great enthusiasm which we hope to convey by presenting their artwork in the public sphere. By retrieving from obscurity this 1822 foundational letter, we wish

to honour *Haiti* in Nafplio, one of the most important sites of the Greek revolution, with the youth of today as our guides.

Nafplio, October 2021

Marina Kotzamani

Exhibition Contributors

Project Conception, Haiti-Greece

Leda Papakonstantinou

Exhibition Curator (Nafplio)

Marina Kotzamani

Collaborating Universities

Department of Performing and Digital Arts, University of the Peloponnese

Curator, Marina Kotzamani, Departmental Chair (DPDA), Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Studies (DTS)

University of the Aegean, Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering

Curator, Florentia Oikonomidou, Associate Professor

Exhibition Design

Dimitris Psychogyios, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly

Collaborating Staff, Department of Performing and Digital Arts

Course: “Visual Arts Performance I: Theory and Applications” (Course Lecturer: Dr. Vasilis Psarras, Spring Semester)

Course: “Dance II: Dance and Society” (Course Lecturer: Dr. Stella Dimitrakopoulou, Spring Semester)

Invited Artists, Department of Performing and Digital Arts

- Aimilia Valvi and Dimitra Liakoura, *Uniform or how to form a unity*. Description: Dress-sculptural synthesis mixed media installation, textile, digital printing.
- Stella Dimitrakopoulou, *Wish*. Description: video performance.
- Ioanna Lioutsia, *Every handshake is politics*. Description: video performance.
- Katerina Papageorgiou, *And vice versa*. Description: videoperformance.
- Maria Papagiannaki, *Se yon istwa men ansanm – A Story of Solidarity*. Description: Textile, coffee beans, performance for camera (presented also as installation).
- Maria Saritsami, *Diadromi ii: Our path.../Description: performance, textile composition (presented also as installation).*
- Eμmanuel and Maksaens Denis, *Re*. Description: video performance.
- Bill Psarras, *Islet*. Description: site performance for candle, light, poetry, Morse code.
- Mayco Jean Baptiste, *Bienfaits et méfaits d ‘Haiti*, poem. Description: video.
- Theodora Skipitares and Shraddha Tiwari, *JOUTE*. Description: video animation.

**Collaborating Lecturer/Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering
University of the Aegean**

Course: Studio I: Drawing-Color (winter semester 2020) and Studio II: Drawing-Color (spring semester 2021). Lecturer: Florentia Oikonomidou.

Invited Artists, Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering

- Leda Papakonstantinou, *Creature of the Revolution* /46 X 65,5 cm, digital print, 2021.
- Florentia Ikonomidou, *The small boat that traveled*/ 71 X 46 cm, digital print, 2021.
- Chryssa Bezirgiannidou, *Haitians* /48 X 34 cm, digital print, 2021.

Exhibition Videos / Director: Exhibition trailer (Nafplio)

Dr. VasilisPsarras

Sponsors

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National Library of Greece



Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation



Thanks to

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