

Press Release:



ARCHITECTURE OF ENJOYMENT

ARTISTS

Rachael Champion
Bobby Dowler
Gabriel Hartley
Sofia Stevi
David Ben White

ARCHITECTS/DESIGNERS

Anton Alvarez
Greece is for Lovers
Christopher Green
Remploy
Studio LW
Variant Office

Curated by Marcelle Joseph

OPENING RECEPTION: 8.30 – 11.00PM, THURSDAY, 9TH OCTOBER 2014

10TH OCTOBER – 1ST NOVEMBER 2014

FOKIDOS 21
An Artist-Run Space in Athens, Greece
Fokidos 21
Ampelokipoi
11526 Athens

Opening Hours: Thursday – Friday, 4-8pm, Saturday 1-5pm or by appointment

Email: fokidos@gmail.com

Image above: **David Ben White**, *The Future*, 2014, mixed media, 122 x 178 cm.

Fokidos 21 is pleased to present *Architecture of Enjoyment*, an exhibition of contemporary art and design made by an international selection of artists, architects and designers, curated by Marcelle Joseph.

Inspired by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's forgotten manuscript entitled *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment* written in 1973 and published for the first time in 2014, this exhibition will feature the visual art of five artists displayed alongside chairs and a side table designed by six designers or architects. In this text, Lefebvre argues for a "concrete utopia" removed from the everyday, the workplace and the market economy as well as all things political and governmental, seeking to conceive of a new space centred around enjoyment. Using the city of Benidorm along Spain's Mediterranean coastline as a point of departure, Lefebvre sought to extend the notion of architecture to include furniture, gardens, parks and even landscapes and to obliterate the monotony of repetitive elements in twentieth-century architecture co-opted by the powers of capitalism.

In this exhibition, replacing the Costa Blanca high-rises of Benidorm with an artist-run space in the Mediterranean city of Athens, each of the five artists have been paired with a designer or architect to create their own mini- architectural "environment of enjoyment".

Rachael Champion's large-scale, dramatic site-specific installation on the roof terrace, consisting of a carefully orchestrated arrangement of industrial materials (steel tubes and rubble sacks) and ecological matter (turf and blue mulch) and questioning humanity's relationship with the natural world, is paired with a chair made out of coloured lay-flat hose and steel by the London architectural practice Variant Office, creating an otherworldly urban garden of sorts – a place for reflection while enjoying the skyscape of Athens.

Bobby Dowler's new abstract object paintings in striking Mediterranean colours were created during a residency in Tuscany at the Villa Lena and hang in front of a studio stool made by artist Christopher Green from found wood and realised in the aesthetic and pragmatic spirit of Italian furniture designer/artist Enzo Mari. The stool sits next to a side table made by designer Anton Alvarez, using his *Thread Wrapping Machine*, a machine that creates objects by binding pieces of material, such as wood, steel or plastic, in thousands of metres of thread while coating them in glue. One imagines a viewer, perched on Green's studio stool with a demitasse of espresso resting on the Alvarez side table, peering out through Dowler's monochrome sky blue painting.

Gabriel Hartley's tentacled and twisting sculpture sits astride his studio chair, covered in layers of paint, and gazes upon Hartley's rich, highly impastoed abstract painting that incorporates some of the same robust hues as the chair, lending a time-based performative element to the work and enabling his three-dimensional work to become the central figure of this architecture of enjoyment, glancing out into a swirling mass of bold linear brushstrokes, applied in layers using a combination of oil, spray paint, ink and resin to convey a beguiling mixture of flatness and depth. The chair was made by disabled people employed by the now defunct Remploy at one of its former specialised factories subsidised by the UK government.

Sofia Stevi's thirty-six small-scale collage sculptures made from cast plaster, found objects and other materials act like punctuation marks scattered around and place under the legs of three classic swivel stools designed by Greece is for Lovers with a Greek twist. The seat of these stools is made from a massive pebble stone found on the Aegean coastline by the designers. Stevi has become increasingly interested in the idea of manual reproduction and the lightness, clarity and historical value of plaster as a material. In this environment of enjoyment, Stevi's diminutive artworks become other stones on the beach and the found objects encased in them are

transformed into other treasures found in the sand such as shells or fossils while the stools stand tall and unwavering, not unlike the Mediterranean cypress trees overlooking the beachscape.

David Ben White's functional sculpture, inspired by the ubiquitous Greek architecture found in the Cycladic islands that is painted white to reflect the harsh summer sun, sits on a side table illuminating two other wall-based works by the same artist. One of these paintings depicts a boat moving through the waves with a modernist chair at the helm. The installation as a whole alludes to ambiguous territories with external elements brought inside and internal elements brought outside. White's work is juxtaposed with Studio LW's chairs modeled on the stage set design of artist Sonia Delaunay from a 1926 film called 'Le P'tit Parigot', directed by Rene Le Somptier. This collaborative environment nods to the utopian idealism of modernist architecture and design as well as the balmy Mediterranean climate that has been enjoyed by Greeks throughout their country's long history.

Artist Biographies:

Rachael Champion (born 1982, New York) lives and works in London where she graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art from the Royal Academy Schools in 2010. Champion has been awarded the *Arts Foundation Award* for sculpture (2013) and the *Red Mansion Art Prize* (2010). In 2012, she was the Camden Arts Centre 'Artist in Residence'. In 2015, Champion will install a permanent installation on Sarvisalo, the Zabłudowicz Collection's outpost in Finland. Champion's work has been exhibited at a number of recognised international spaces including Modern Art Oxford, UK; Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Socrates Sculpture Park, New York, US; Bold Tendencies Sculpture Project, London; Enclave Projects, London; Horatio Junior, London. In 2013, Champion's ambitious, site specific work *Forced Landscape* was installed in Derbyshire as part of the Wirksworth Festival. Champion is represented by Hales Gallery in London.

Bobby Dowler (born 1983, London) lives and works between London and a changing list of European cities that have recently included Athens, Berlin and Paris. His works have been exhibited at Shoot The Lobster, New York; Bold Tendencies, London; New Art Centre, Roche Court, Wiltshire, UK; Sculpture al Fresco II at Great Fosters, Egham, UK (curated by Marcelle Joseph); Middlemarch, Brussels; Fokidos 21, Athens; Fokidos off-site in St Moritz, Switzerland; and Hannah Barry Gallery in London. He co-founded Fokidos 21, an artist-led project space in Athens, in 2013, and Poetry Readings and a Poetry Press, Friary Road House in London in 2010. Dowler also initiated Lyndhurst Way, an artist run-squat that existed in Peckham in 2006-2007. He is represented by the Hannah Barry Gallery in London.

Christopher Green (born 1983, Dorset, UK) currently lives and works in London. Most recently his works have been exhibited at Fokidos in St Moritz, Switzerland (2014), Middlemarch, Brussels (2014), Shoot The Lobster in London and New York City (2013) and the New Talent section of Art Brussels (2013). In 2011, Green co-founded L.I.E (Library of Independent Exchange), a roving independent arts reference library, the core aims of which are to develop discussion and exchange by making its ever increasing collection accessible to the public through the project's curated programme of events, exhibitions, commissioned artworks, and publications. He is represented by the Hannah Barry Gallery in London.

Gabriel Hartley (born 1981, London) lives and works in London. He holds a BA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London and a Post Graduate Diploma in Fine Art from the Royal Academy Schools, London. Recent solo exhibitions include those at Foxy Production (New York, 2014 and 2012); Brand New Gallery (Milan, 2013); Praz-Delavallade (Paris, 2012); Swallow Street (curated by Sarah McCrory, London, 2009) and a two-man show at Josh Lilley Gallery (London, 2011). Selected group exhibitions include *Open Heart Surgery*, the Moving Museum, London (2013); *Young London*, V22, London (2011); *Newspeak: British Art Now*, Saatchi

Gallery, London (2010); *Jerwood Contemporary Painting Prize*, Jerwood Space, London (2009); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, UK touring exhibition (2008 and 2007); and *John Moores Painting Prize*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (2008). Hartley is represented by Foxy Production in New York.

Sofia Stevi (born 1982, Athens) is a Greek artist living and working between Athens and London. She has exhibited recently in a solo show curated by Alma Zevi in Venice at Marignana Arte in 2014 and the following group exhibitions: *Mixed Four*, Fokidos in St. Moritz, Switzerland (2014); *Entrée*, Middelmarch, Brussels (2014); *The London Project Goes North*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK (2013) and *Paint as You Like and Die Happy!* Fokidos 21, Athens (2013). In 2003, Sofia graduated from Vakalo School of Art and Design of Athens, while from 2007 to 2009 the artist frequented a Communication Design Masters course at Central St Martins College in London. In 2013, she curated a series of talks at The Wapping Project, London on epicurean philosophy "The Icarus Project: challenging the way we see the world". Stevi also co-founded Fokidos 21, an artist-led project space in Athens. Stevi is represented by Marignana Arte in Italy.

David Ben White (born 1965, London) lives and works in London where he studied at Central St Martins and Chelsea College of Art. In 2011, he was selected for the Bloomberg New Contemporaries show, and in 2012, he was the winner of the Clifford Chance/University of the Arts Sculpture Award for which he created the exhibition *Temples to the Domestic* at the London offices of Clifford Chance in Canary Wharf. White has exhibited his work extensively in the UK as well as internationally, including recent solo shows in Vienna in 2013 at Kerstin Engholm Gallery and in London in 2009, 2008, 2007 and 2006 at studio I.I.

Architect and Designer Biographies:

Anton Alvarez (born 1980 in Uppsala, Sweden) is a Swedish-Chilean designer currently based in Stockholm. A recent graduate of the Royal College of Art's Design Products MA, Alvarez originally studied fine art and cabinetmaking before completing an Interior Architecture and Furniture Design course at Konstfack, the University College of Arts, Craft and Design in Stockholm. Alvarez's work focuses on the design of systems and the creation of tools and processes for producing products. Alvarez's work has been exhibited internationally, including at MUDAC, the Design Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. He is represented by Gallery Libby Sellers in London.

Thanos Karampatsos and Christina Kotsilelou, or **Greece is for Lovers**, are Athens-based product designers who comment on Greek habits and customs with equal measures of humour, irony, nonchalance and extravagance. Playing with materials and ideas, they have been producing and exhibiting their products worldwide since 2006, including in Athens, New York, Milan, Berlin, Belgium, London, Hamburg, Gwangju, Korea, Stockholm, Paris, and Los Angeles. For more information, please visit their website, greeceisforlovers.com.

Emma Leslie (born 1971 in Stoke-on-Trent, UK) and Rhiannon Wilkey (born in London) are **Studio LW**, a design partnership based in London. Both are recent graduates from the Building Crafts College where they studied Fine Woodwork. Leslie originally studied Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University (BA Hons). She was the winner of the Carpenters Craft Award in 2013 and received the George Pysden Award. Wilkey previously studied Psychology at Bristol University before becoming a furniture designer and maker. She has completed several private commissions alongside her work with Studio LW. Together they have shown in design exhibitions in London, and have been commissioned by institutions in London such as the ICA, Royal Society of Portrait Painters, and Stuart Shave/Modern Art. For more information, please consult their website, studiolw.co.uk.

Variant Office is a London-based architectural practice founded by Patrick Macdonald, Ashvin de Vos and Daniel Fitzpatrick. With roots in spatial design, they bring together many years' experience in architecture, design, planning and construction to secure the success of a wide variety of projects focused on the production of highly crafted experiences, objects, buildings and spaces. One of the practice's recently completed projects is the North Park Hub building, the first of the Olympic Legacy projects, which was awarded the 2014 Civic Trust Award and the Selwyn Goldsmith Award for Accessibility. For more information, please visit their website, variantoffice.com.

Notes for Editors:

Fokidos 21 is an artist-led project space hosting exhibitions of contemporary art in a private apartment in Athens. It is a non-profit initiative, showcasing the work of Greek and international artists. Open by appointment only. For more information, go to www.fokidos.co.uk or email on fokidos@gmail.com.

Marcelle Joseph is an independent curator and author based in London. As the director of Marcelle Joseph Projects, a nomadic curatorial platform founded in 2011, she has produced and curated an impressive oeuvre of exhibitions at a variety of locations from the Gallery Café at the Royal Academy of Arts, London to pop-up galleries in the East End of London. Since 2011, Marcelle has also been the in-house curator at Great Fosters Hotel, the former royal hunting lodge of King Henry VIII in Egham, Surrey, where she has curated five shows in the house and grounds of this magnificent, historic Grade I-listed property that dates back to 1550. Marcelle is also the executive editor of *Korean Art: The Power of Now* (Thames & Hudson, 2013), a survey of Korean contemporary art showcasing 120 artists, museum and gallery directors, curators and collectors from Korea. For more information, go to www.marcellejoseph.com or email on info@marcellejoseph.com or call on +44 7971 580 572.