

## **“Critical Convergence: Greek Contemporary Artists in dialogue with the (recent) past”**

### **Curated by:**

- Elena Papadaki, Lecturer (Curation and Digital Arts), University of Greenwich (School of Design), London
- Stamatis Schizakis, Curator (New Media and Photography), National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens Greece / PhD candidate, University of Sunderland (Centre for Research in Art and Design: Digital Art / Curating), Sunderland UK

### **Description / Rationale:**

Through the technological evolution of the past two decades, there has been an identification of technological mediums so that today, functions such as the recording, processing and reproduction of sound, image and text for communication, entertainment and information purposes are realised through the use of similar digital tools. The “digital convergence”, as is the established term within theoretical discourse about technology, art and the media, merely constitutes the most recent name given to define the advanced form of the integration and hybridization tendency already inherent in audiovisual media. Nevertheless, a critical glance at this concept will reveal that no medium is ever totally identified with another and that, although some parts of information survive such a transmigration, some elements equally get lost in the process. Consequently, the false perception of absolute identification opens the path for the distortion of the sensorial and sociological reality and of history overall.

Whilst watching the works of the present screening programme, the above-mentioned concerns have greatly informed and enhanced our understanding of this condition and final selection. They have as a common denominator the combination of manual, analogue and digital techniques in order to create implicitly or explicitly political narratives. Through the changing lens of successive technologies, often in line with the respective implications of their adoption, the artists in the programme examine recent and historical crises in Europe and the Middle East; crises on a political, moral, and technological level. This is often achieved with the creative use of original archival material and its integration within the momentum of each respective work. Through this practice, the works operate on multiple levels: in terms of the social and political aspect of their subject-matter, they function both as historical evidence and as its interpretation. At the same time, due to the coexistence of multiple media, the aforementioned historical evidence highlights, evaluates and transcends the limits and capacities of each individual medium.

**List of works (in order of appearance):**

1.

**Stefanos Tsivopoulos**

*Untitled (The remake)*, 2007

HD Digital Video

Colour, Sound

Duration: 14'

[Courtesy of the artist]

In this video, we are witnessing the remake of a news broadcast from the period of the military junta (1967-1974), which coincides with the development of state television and the subsequent spread of mass media culture in Greece. Starting off with original archival material from the period, Tsivopoulos reconstructs and records with contemporary technological means the process of preparing for the news broadcast, focusing on the –now-obsolete technical equipment. He also integrates archival material from the Apollo 11 moon landing, military parades, and the news presenters themselves. The inner contradictions of the work raise questions about the apparent dimension between technological evolution and the ideology that promoted it.



2.

**Michalis Arfaras**

*Wochenschau*, 1982

Digitised 16mm film

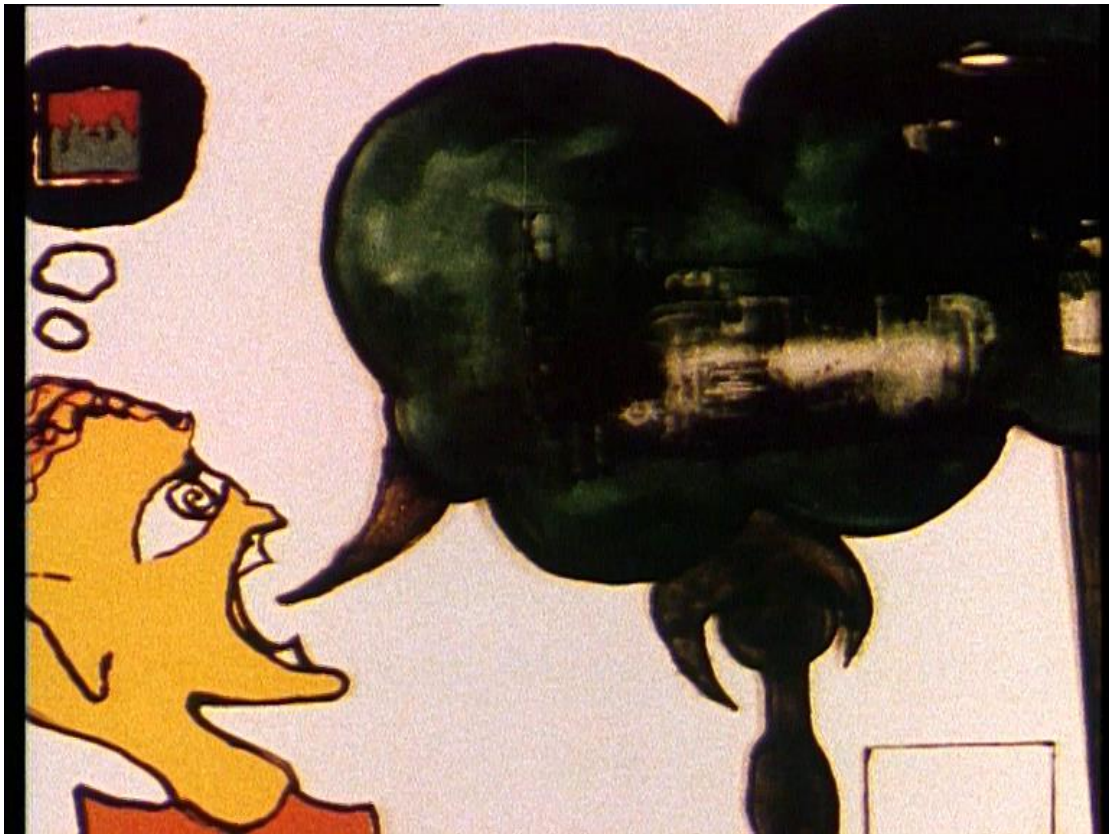
Colour, Sound

Music: The sluts

Duration: 23' 37"

[Collection of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST) – Courtesy of the artist]

In his first film, Michalis Arfaras combines printmaking, animation, a random motion picture together with punk music and aesthetics, thus overturning the static being of the still engraved image and undermining the hypothetical reality of the news documentary. Initially unrelated to each other, all of the above elements gradually acquire a common rhythm and coexist by creating a joint narrative.



3.

**George Drivas and Maria Antelman**

*Business and Pleasure, 2002*

Digital Video

Colour, Sound

Duration: 3'

[Courtesy of the artists]

4.

**George Drivas and Maria Antelman**

*Am I just an ordinary processor?, 2002*

Digital Video

Colour, Sound

Duration: 4'

[Courtesy of the artists]

5.

**George Drivas and Maria Antelman**

*GPS: Global Positioning System, 2001*

Digital Video

Colour, Sound

Duration: 2'

[Courtesy of the artists]

In this series of short digital videos, which constitute the collaborative output of the two artists nearly two decades ago, we prophetically witness the black mirror of the present ubiquitous smart technology. Using the aesthetics of computer systems of the time, and creating relationships and contrasts between text and image, the artists compose a series of short ambiguous narratives.



6.

**Eleni Kamma**

*Yar bana bir eğlence. Notes on Parrhesia*, 2015

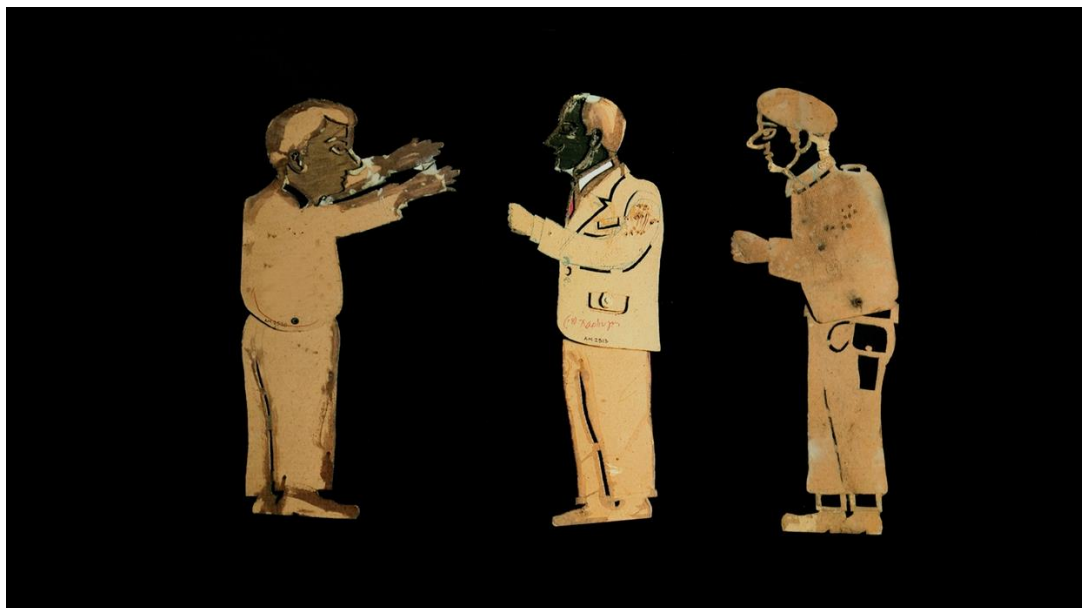
HD Digital Video

Colour, Sound

Duration: 37'24"

In co-production with Jubilee and Network center for contemporary Art Aalst  
[Courtesy of the artist and Jubilee]

Through the research on the history of shadow theatre and Karaghioz's parrhesia, multiple levels of allegory emerge. These concern not only the political crisis but also the competitive claim of truth by different media: the shadow theatre, film, and the digital video of the work itself.



7.

**Dionisis Kavallieratos and Sifis Lykakis**

*Artistique*, 2005

Digital Video

Colour, Sound

Duration: 52''

[Courtesy of the artists]

A short masterpiece moving between sculpture, performance and video, where the dynamic and subversive use of the comic element allows multiple readings of an instantaneous event.

