

μια κυκλική προοπτική #3

uma perspectiva circular #3

- free art and free port -

The exhibition I am proposing references aspects of the institutional, economic, and methodological pressures exerted on contemporary art by global power systems. To briefly describe the premise of the exhibition, I will be presenting the work of young, Greek artists in a construction built to resemble a shipping container. The container itself will be composed of plastic and wood, and will exist as a mock-up of a potential steel and uv-protective glass container that will be constructed if the container and its paintings are bought. The containers, including all paintings in and around them, will be available for purchase for 200,000.00 (EUR) (not including shipping). The money generated from the sale will be portioned out in the following way: 100,000.00 EUR will be split equally among the artists in the exhibition. 50,000.00 EUR will be spent on the construction of the specialised container, and the remaining 50,000.00 EUR will be distributed in equal shares to selected project spaces in Greece. The use of the shipping container as the primary point of aesthetic reference, necessarily, evokes the aesthetics of logistics and commodity shipping, but it can also be understood as a reference to the practice of transporting artworks to free ports by collectors in order to avoid taxes. Thus, the methodology of display becomes, simultaneously, a methodology of critique.

The exhibition will have the potential for display on the way to three free ports, those of Singapore, Luxembourg and Geneva—all notorious tax havens. Given the unique legal status of free ports, and the restrictions on freedom of movement within these zones, the purchasers and potential viewers will be limited in their capacity to exhibit or visit the works. A contract will stipulate the responsibilities of the owner of a given container upon the purchase of the structure and the works inside (a sketch of the special container and a copy of this contract will be included in the exhibition materials). Most importantly within the obligations outlined in the contract, the buyer will be obliged to transport the container to one of the above listed free port cities and display it on its way to the final destination. As the free ports are not accessible by the public, the works will be displayed on the backs of flatbed lorries which will drive through the cities at approximately walking speed so that the exhibitions can be seen by other drivers and pedestrians. In this way, the widest possible audience for the exhibition can be reached and the traditional dynamics of exclusivity and elitism that often attend the display of art are subverted.

On the subject of the intellectual background of the work, Niklas' Luhmann's examination of economic systems and the power they exert over cultural systems is one of the key touchstones for the exhibition. Luhmann's work speaks of the migration of systemic logic, particularly the way in which economic systems have essentially "hacked" other systems and imposed their own imperatives upon them. This pernicious situation is at the heart of the various crises to which this exhibition hopes to speak. The exhibition also engages the work of Hito Steyerl who has used the free port as a site of metaphor, critique and possibility. In this exhibition, I am seeking to explore the permeability of given and (politically) constructed spaces. The free flow of goods and people, as mentioned above is one facet of this exploration, but I am also interested in the specificity of Greece as a site. The brutal economic conditions experienced in Greece are having a terrible impact on the country's population. The economic crisis is also, in my reading, a crisis of mobility: capital—now extremely fluid—moves freely, but populations are subjected to strictures of increasing onerousness. The psychological pressures this dynamic is producing in Greece is palpable, particularly in the art world, where fluidity and freedom of movement, thought, and expression are central discourses. I hope the work can make visible aspects of power dynamics that are often consciously obscured in the display and movement of art objects.

The exhibition is planned to take place in Athens in July 2017. Further details coming soon.



