

**SYMPOSIUM: The Performance of Lament as Production of ‘Cultural Intimacy’: From the Ritual of the Ashura to Contemporary Artistic Practices**  
**ATHENS SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS, 23 NOVEMBER 2019**  
**‘GIORGIO DE CHIRICO’ AUDITORIUM**

This symposium is being held as part of the research project ‘Performing Ashura in Piraeus: Towards a Shiite Poetics of “Cultural Intimacy” with Greek Embodied Practices of Religiosity.’ The project is co-organised by Marios Chatziprokopiou, performance theorist and postdoctoral researcher/teaching fellow at the University of Thessaly, and Foteini Tsimpiridou, social anthropologist and Professor at the University of Macedonia, in collaboration with the *Culture-Borders-Gender/LAB* of the University of Macedonia, and is funded by the Greek Research Centre for the Humanities.

This one-year research project (2019) explores the religious lament of the Ashura<sup>1</sup> as it is performed by the Pakistani Shia community in Piraeus. With their focus on the act of ritual self-flagellation, mainstream media reinforce local stereotypes of Shia community practices as apparently incompatible with Greek cultural values. Social representations of the Shiite as ‘barbaric Others’ are frequently evoked in public debate in order to support anti-cosmopolitan narratives that are Islamophobic and racialised. Confronted with such xenophobia and social estrangement, the Shiite attempt to articulate systematic counter-narratives of ‘cultural intimacy’ (Herzfeld 2005). They stress the similarities between their ritual lament and various embodied performances of faith from within the Greek cultural context, such as the Tinos pilgrimage (Dubisch 1996) or the Anastenaria (Danforth 1989).

The research project documents the community’s political struggle to promote, both discursively and practically, a multicultural vision of citizenship that is based on the embodied and affective aspects of subjectivity. At the same time, it explores the rich meta-symbolic character that the Ashura assumes in a migratory context, where it can become an idiom or a means of expressing and negotiating feelings of loss associated with the experience of displacement. At the same time, moving beyond the case of the Ashura, the symposium broadens the research focus by including examples of other performances of lament. It does so in order to examine how the claim to ‘cultural intimacy’ is re-articulated in diverse contemporary artistic practices: from photography and documentary to performance.

The one-day symposium ‘The Performance of Lament as Production of “Cultural Intimacy”: From the Ritual of Ashura to Contemporary Artistic Practices’ aims first of all to shed light on an issue which concerns not only social scientists and artists, but also the wider public.

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<sup>1</sup> Ashura is the day of mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the Prophet’s grandson and 3rd Imam. Imam Husayn led a revolt against the Omayyad Caliph Yazid A, and was finally beheaded in the battle of Karbala in 680 AD. This battle provides the central narrative around which Shia Muslims construct their political identity as migrants and their religious identification as a minority vis-à-vis Sunni Muslims in Greece. Ashura is commemorated every year through rituals of lamentation and public processions that include, in some cases, self-flagellation.

With these aims, the symposium includes perspectives and research by artists and anthropologists who comment on the performativity of faith in public space and its impact on the field of art. In so doing, the symposium raises ethico-political issues and reframes ‘cultural intimacy’ in contemporary environments of heterogeneity. In addition, the symposium explores the ways in which the performance of Shiite lament is related to other embodied practices of religiosity in Greece such as, for instance, the Anastenaria. Further, it investigates how Shiite lament is visually recorded beyond the limits of televisual lenses, inspiring major photographic and cinematographic works in the Eastern Mediterranean (for example in Greece, Turkey and Lebanon). Finally, taking this ritual as a point of departure, the symposium aims to broaden the discussion to include the connections between religious rituals and artistic performances, in order to problematise, both methodologically and epistemologically, the mutual relations between ethnographic and artistic research, representation and everyday life. It aims to do so by posing questions such as:

- How can the performance of a religious ritual contribute to the visibility of minority communities? What is the role of ‘spectacularisation’ in this process and how do the terms of the ‘spectacle’ vary across migrant and touristic contexts?
- How can an embodied practice such as ritual lament be recorded in the two dimensions of photography, video, or film? How, through their practice, do photographers and filmmakers come into dialogue with ritual structures?
- What is displaced in the production of ethnographic discourse when the experience of fieldwork is not transmitted in the form of a written text or through images and/or sound, but through the intangible medium of performance?
- What kind of ethnographic strategies do contemporary artists develop in their encounters with religious communities and their involvement with embodied practices of faith? What ethical and political issues emerge?
- What is at stake when the ethnographer stops simply observing a ritual practice understood as his or her ‘object of research’, and actively participates in it?

## **DETAILED PROGRAMME**

### **10:00: Welcome and Introduction**

Research Programme KEAE 2019, Chatziprokopiou/ Tsimpiridou

### **10:15-11:30: 1<sup>st</sup> Panel [Language: Greek] The Performance of Lament as Production of ‘Cultural Intimacy’: From Ashura to Anastenaria**

Moderator: Foteini Tsibiridou.

### **10:15-10:30 Foteini Tsibiridou (University of Macedonia)**

### **Mourning and Lament as Practices of Religious Faith in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Popular Beliefs to the Practice of Cultural Intimacy**

This paper explores the meanings of lament as a practice of religious faith and performance of cultural intimacy in the Eastern Mediterranean in three temporalities: the *longue durée* of the transition to monotheism, the middle timeframe of coexistence under the Ottoman Empire and the recent period of Western modernity. The emphasis on death and the

worship of deceased Saints include rituals and performances from believers, both Orthodox Christian and Muslim, that prove their faith. Deriving from the same long-standing, Abrahamic tradition, practices of 'ancestor worship' include rituals and embodied symbolic meanings, material passages and virtual simulation experiences. Moreover, under Ottoman rule, the connection of the religious calendar with pilgrimage festivities creates conditions of *communitas* not only within the community but also with different others. Under the status of cultural intimacy and coexistence, dominant and subaltern, mainstream and heterodox Christians and Muslims reframe the meaning of social capital and faith habitus. Through the grammar of the Protestant genre and ethics, Western modernity has hegemonically imposed the rationalisation of religion. Official religious bodies condemned those parts of religious processes which are incompatible with the written traditions of religious books, deprecating them as 'merely popular and pagan beliefs'. Mourning and lament rituals, as religious practices performed by believers, remained exotic for official discourse. At the same time, they served as a profound proof of faith through the engagement in intimate practices. As it concerns minorities and the socially excluded, illness and therapy, as well as immigrant Shiite ritual, this performative proof of faith urges us to investigate the relations of power and hegemony between believers and others. Additionally, within the perspective of post-Ottoman late modernity, we should explore the ways in which meanings of cultural intimacy are being reformulated when mourning and lament meet with performing arts.

**10:30-10: Miranda Terzopoulou (Academy of Athens)**

**Transforming that which is Immaterial and Invisible in Myths into the Visible and Apocalyptic in the Present: Gendered Asymmetries in Rituals of Lamentation**

Every ritual is the theatrical narration of an unsaid myth which is collectively performed, and which remains incomprehensible for the non-initiated. Great rituals are usually death rituals, and there is always at least one death at their mythical core. The calling-up of the concrete and usually unfair death provokes awe, pain, and protest in the performers. These feelings can be tamed only if the performers manage to domesticate this mute unknown; if they narrate it, if they identify with it, if they represent it through a ritual.

Music, a fundamental element of every ritual in the form of song, rhythm, or dance, enhances *communitas*, releases pain and transforms it into weeping, lament, ecstatic dance, possession. Music drives the performers, even if only fleetingly, to a different experience, to the transcendence of the self and the physical body. It also drives them to a different Knowledge: to the awareness of the dark, wild world within them, but also to the unfair and threatening real outside world which they are invited to restore, combatively, through the embodied expression of defeat, and by identifying with their ideal sacred prototypes.

**10:45-11:00 Marios Chatziprokoïou (University of Macedonia/ University of Thessaly)**

**Between the Politics of Difference and the Poetics of 'Cultural Intimacy': Performing Ashura in Piraeus**

This paper investigates the ritual of the Ashura as it is performed by a group of Shia Pakistani migrants in Piraeus, Greece, paying particular attention to the Greek political and

cultural context. Combining ethnographic fieldwork with archival research focused on the mediation of this ritual by Greek media and cinema, I highlight Greek neo-orientalist and islamophobic discourses on the ‘Asian excess’ or ‘backwards barbarity’ of ritual lament, and I relate these discourses to similar arguments that have been articulated in the Muslim world. These discourses are then juxtaposed with more tolerant points of view, and also with the arguments of Shiites themselves regarding the ‘cultural intimacy’ of their ritual lament with Greek embodied practices of faith. Finally, I examine how the interrelations between dominant ideas regarding the ‘national self’ and the discourses and practices of the Shiite migrant community of Piraeus are manifested in the symbolic uses of blood: from the murderous threats made by Neo-Nazi groups against them, to their cancelled project for a blood-donation campaign parallel to the Ashura.

11:00-11:30: Discussion

**11:30-11:45: Break**

**11:45-13:00: 2<sup>nd</sup> Panel [Language: Greek] Images of the Ashura in Greece: Photography, Television, Documentary**

**Moderator: Miranda Terzopoulou**

**11:45-12:00: Ashir Haider (journalist, representative of the Shiite Muslims Community in Greece)**

**Ashura and Shiite Visibility in the City of Athens: a Perspective ‘from Within’.**

This presentation relates the activities of the Shiite Muslim community in Greece from the end of the 1970s till today. I focus on the community’s struggles for political and religious visibility in relation to the ritual of the Ashura and to the Shiite faith more broadly, and refer to attempts to inform and sensitise ‘public opinion’. In addition, I analyse the reception of the Ashura in Greek media, tracing how this has changed over the last fifteen years.

**12:00-12:15: Tasos Vrettos (photographer):**

**To Give Body.**

A brief introduction to unplanned photographic journeys towards the *avaton* of the ecstatic body. Rituals, gestures and presences which resist representation.

**12:15-12:30: Elpida Skoufalou (filmmaker)**

**Rituals: Another Role.**

In theatre, actors tell stories through language, music, and dance; always in front of an audience. Following the British distinction between actors’ abilities in relation to acting (action on stage) and playing (relationship with the audience), a good actor is one who combines both. The rituals I follow in the film *I Heard God Crying* – the female lament in Livina, Albania, the celebration of the ‘Anastenaria’ and the Shiite Muslims’ lament ritual of the ‘Ashura’ – consist of the performers, the main story (visible or not), language, music and, in some cases, dance. Drawing on the ten years of research on different rituals of lament that I conducted for the purposes of this movie, I focus on the ritual transformation of participants through the functions of playing and acting.

**12:30-13:00: Discussion.**

**13:00-14:00: Lunch Break**

**14:00-14:25: Film screening *Ashura* (24', Köken Ergun, 2013).**

**14:25-15:40: 3<sup>rd</sup> Panel [Language: English] From Ritual Lament to Contemporary**

**Art: The Ethnographer as Performer**

Moderator: Vassiliki Lalioti (EKPA)

**14:25-14:40: Köken Ergun (Freie Universität Berlin)**

***Ashura* Rituals in Istanbul's Zeynebiye Neighborhood.**

There are approximately one million Caferi Shiites in Turkey, most of which live in Istanbul and the eastern border town of Iğdır. In Istanbul they inhabit a shanty town neighborhood in the outskirts of the city, which they started building in the late 1970s. The neighborhood is called Zeynebiye, referring to Hussein's sister Zeyneb who survived the Battle of Karbala. In his film *Ashura* (2011), scholar/filmmaker Köken Ergun has worked in close collaboration with the people of Zeynebiye, documenting their preparations for the Ashura ceremonies in 2010 which involves the staging of a ta'ziyah peculiar to this neighborhood and the isolated weeping ritual at the end of Ashura day.

**14:40-14:55 Sinibaldo de Rosa (Exeter University)**

**Ritual, Performance and Commemoration in Alevi Contexts**

Since the 1970s, in urban environments of Turkey and Europe, the *semahs*, core musical and movement practices in Alevi religious ceremonies (the *ayn-i cem* rituals), started to be adapted beyond their primary ceremonial contexts. Now learned and performed also by Alevi and non-Alevi actors and dancers in the context of theatrical events, the *semahs* became a summative emblem through which some Alevi traditions and tenets of beliefs have been divulged to wider Alevi and non-Alevi audiences. Presenting ethnographic material gathered during long-term and multi-sited fieldwork research, in this paper I pay attention to the pivotal role that the adaptations of the *semahs* in professionalised theatre and dance projects had for the contemporary 'explosion' of Alevi identities in Turkey and internationally. More than sketching the biography of a few Alevi charismatic figures who moved through both the performing arts industry and ritual leadership positions, I will question in what ways the dramaturgy of some of these artistic adaptations accomplished the demands of mourning and commemoration for some otherwise neglected Alevi deaths of the last decades.

**14:55-15:10 Bernard Muller (EHESS/ Cologne)**

**Ritual and Reenactment: Performance as a Vehicle for Research and Anthropology as a Medium for Social Acknowledgment**

In this presentation, I discuss research conducted in collaboration with Thierry Bonnot between 2003 and 2009 on the 'Martyrdom of Saint Reine'. This is a set of popular festive events which, for two days, transport a whole village and its surroundings to another time. The poster announcing the show, produced by the 'Amicale du Martyre', indicates that the event has been taking place 'since the year 866' on the Patron Day of the small village of Alise-Sainte-Reine in the Côte-d'Or (Burgundy, France). A rural scenography has developed around the figure of this country girl, that moves through the high points of her short life to her heroic

end as a martyr during Roman rule in 253 AD. In it, the village and the surrounding landscape become the scene of a historical tragedy. Thus on the last Saturday and Sunday of August one can witness a procession of the saint's relics, a mass, another historical procession and finally, the performance of the 'Martyrdom of Saint Reine'. The latter is a tragedy in three acts, written in 1877 by a Dominican father in the village that was likely built on the *oppidum* founded by the Roman legions at the Battle of Alesia. Caesar was victorious at Vercingetorix in 52 BC, and, since 1865, an enormous statue of him had loomed over. What is at stake in this re-enactment of a (supposed) historical event in a spectacular religious or pseudo-ritual (?) form, and to what extent does a method based on performance as a vehicle of research allow one to explore it?

**15:10-15:40: Discussion**

**15:40-16:00: Break**

**16:00-16:45**

**Keynote**

**Jalal Toufic (Hong Kong Baptist University)**

**'Āshūrā', or, Torturous Memory as a Condition of Possibility of an Unconditional Promise**

Al-Husayn, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad and the son of the first Shi'ite imam, 'Alī, was slaughtered alongside many members of his family in the desert in 680. This memory is torture to me. But, basically, one can say *this memory is torture to me* of every memory, since each reminiscence envelops at some level the memory of the origin of memory, the torture that had to be inflicted on humans in order to make them remember (Nietzsche). The memory that the yearly commemoration of 'Āshūrā' is trying to maintain is not only or mainly that of the past, but the memory of the future, that of the promise of the Parousia of the twelfth imam, the awaited Mahdī, notwithstanding the passage of a millennium since his occultation; as well as the corresponding promise of Twelver Shi'ites to wait for him.

**Moderator: Vassiliki Lalioti**

**16:45-17:45: Film screening *The Lamentation Series: the Ninth Night and Day* (60', Jalal Toufic 2005).**

**17:45-18:00: Break**

**18:00-19:30: 4<sup>th</sup> Panel [Language: Greek] Practices of Faith as Performative Material: The Performer as Ethnographer**

Moderator: Marios Chatziprokopiou

**18:00-18:15: Eva Giannakopoulou (visual artist/ performer)**

**Feminites and cults, performative practices and recording**

Based on an artistic perspective on anthropological fieldwork in 'contexts of worship', this presentation aims to explore the performative aspect of feminites, gender, and motherhood in private and public space. In what ways are the uncontrollable expressions of worship by Egyptians occupying the streets of Cairo during Umm Kulthum's funeral interwoven with the celebrations of a Neapolitan family in 1987, in the moment in which they realise that their football team has won the Italian Champions League? What might be the

performative place of documentation, and does the observer's position generate any disciplines or indisciplines? How are emotions and motherhood performed or depicted in conventional or unconventional spaces? Adopting a dialectical method that moves between the personal and political, we examine the performativity of femininities and motherhood, as a space of continuous negotiation and redefinition through the lens of moving images.

**18:15-18:30: Yannis Pappas (Visual artist/ performer)**

**Spatial Ataraxia**

The title of the artistic study 'Spatial Ataraxia' works as a metaphor (gr: transport, transmission or allegory) for the ascetics (gr: discipline, education or practice) and the epiphanies (gr: knowledge, revelation, surface). The aim of this presentation is to highlight the characteristics of the physically and the spiritual connectivity of the body and its environmental coexistence in order to achieve self-healing and its transcendental divinity. The analysis of the place identity which seeks to present the case of the sacred space of the Great Lavra Monastery (founded 972 A.D) through participatory observation, discourse analysis and mapping a range of physical and mental elements, suggests the empirical and effective emotional spaces that focus on the individual and collective ataraxia. Throughout participant observation, discourse analysis, mapping a range of physical cartographies and performative juxtapositions, is attempted the virtual rationalization of sacred spaces and lament practices.

**18:30-18:45: Konstantinos Ntellas (actor/ director)**

**Tackling Mourning in the Performative Space: Rituals of Lament as a Stage Function**

In 2015-16, I presented an ensemble of installations/performances under the general title INSOMNIA GRECA at the Municipal Theatre of Piraeus. Three wakes on three days of the year, on Christmas, Carnival Sunday and Holy Thursday, from midnight to 4 in the morning, with the idea of the stranger as overarching theme. The spectator could come to the theatre anytime and with a map (s)he could create her/his own trajectory through the spaces of the theatre and the corresponding actions. More than 100 artists participated in this trilogy, mostly on a voluntary basis. Taking INSOMNIA GRECA's wakes and, more specifically, the third 'Passion Wake' as a point of departure, this presentation briefly examines the idea of mourning in performative space through the incorporation of religious and popular rituals of lament as stage action.

**18:45-19:15: Discussion**

**19:15-19:30: Break**

**19:30-21:00: Film screening 'I heard God crying' (86', Elpida Skoufalou 2010).**

## PARTICIPANTS' BIOS

**Marios Chatziprokopiou** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Greek Research Centre for the Humanities, in collaboration with the University of Macedonia. He earned his M.A. in social anthropology (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales de Paris), funded by the French government and the Michelis Foundation, and his PhD in theatre and performance Studies (Aberystwyth University), funded by the Doctoral Career Development Scholarship. He teaches at the department of culture and creative media and industries at the University of Thessaly, and he has taught courses of anthropology, theatre and performance at the University of Patras, the Federal University of Bahia/Brasil, Aberystwyth University, and Panteion University. His articles appear in international edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals. His research and teaching interests focus on performances of migration and refugeeness, contemporary re-readings of ancient drama, performances of gender and sexuality, ritual performances of lament (emphasizing on Shia Islam), and on the interrelations between religious ritual and artistic practice.

**Köken Ergun** (born 1976, Istanbul) is a filmmaker and video artist. His works mainly deal with the different ways rituals are used to maintain communities and nation states. Ergun works collaboratively with his subjects over an extended period of time, and often involves contributions of ethnographers, historians and sociologists. Having studied acting at the Istanbul University, Ergun completed his postgraduate studies in ancient Greek literature at King's College London and in performance studies at Freie University Berlin. His films received several awards at film festivals including the "Tiger Award for Short Film" at the 2007 Rotterdam Film Festival and the "Special Mention Prize" at the 2013 Berlinale. Ergun's films are included in public art collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Museum of Contemporary Art Athens, Stadtmuseum Berlin and Kadist Foundation.

**Eva Giannakopoulou** grew up in Ithaca, Greece and she is currently residing in Athens where she works. In the past she has lived in Naples, Barcelona, Istanbul, Berlin and in other places depending on the circumstances. She has performed and exhibited in museums, institutions, galleries, festivals, impromptu stages and other public or unconventional sites in Greece, Mexico, Germany, France, Italy, Turkey and Serbia including Benaki Museum, Athens (The Same River Twice, 2019 and The Equilibrists, 2016, both organized by The New York Museum, New York and the DESTE Foundation), Athens Biennale 2018: ANTI and Athens Biennale 2015-2017 OMONOIA (2016), Material Art Fair (Mexico City, 2017), Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Berlin (solo show, 2015), MPA-B, Berlin (2015 and 2014), Excentricités 3 and 6 Performance Festival, Besançon (2015 and 2012), Action Field KODRA, Thessaloniki (2012), 3rd Art Biennale MIET, Thessaloniki (2011). She has co-curated and co-organised art projects and performative events, while in 2013-2014, she was a co-labourer of the MPA-B (Month of Performance Art, Berlin). In January 2019 she co-founds Most Mechanics Are Crooks, an artistic and curatorial band that aims to reclaim insincerity as a tool of progressive discourse.



**Sinibaldo De Rosa** is an ethnographer interested in experimental performances and pedagogies, body movement notation systems, collaborative research in dance and ritual, with a special focus on Alevi cultures, Turkey, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. His Ph.D. (University of Exeter/Cardiff University) awarded in October 2019. In the past, Sinibaldo obtained a PhD Grant from the Orient Institut Istanbul; a Diploma in Movement Notation: Laban from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et Danse de Paris (2015); a Research Master's in Area Studies (specialization: Turkish) from Leiden University (2013) and a Bachelor's degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Bologna (2007). Thanks to two Erasmus scholarships he also studied Sociology at Marmara University (2006) and Social Anthropology at the Middle East Technical University (2010-2011).

**Ashir Haider** is a journalist born in Pakistan and based in Athens, Greece. He is the representative of the Shiite Muslim Community in Greece since 2015. In 2017, he was appointed by the ministry of education and religious affairs as an assistant member for the governing committee of the Islamic Mosque of Athens.

**Vasiliki Lalioti** is tenured assistant professor of anthropology of performance at the Department of Music Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She studied History and Archaeology in the University of Crete and Social Anthropology in the University of Durham. She has conducted ethnographic research in Athens, Crete, Volos, San Jose (Costa Rica), and the title of her thesis is "Social memory and ethnic identity: ancient Greek drama performances as commemorative ceremonies". Her research interests include: performing arts (theatre, music), popular culture, politics of memory, social movements, posthumanism and technology, digitality.

**Bernard Muller** has been educated as an anthropologist (PhD 2000). His focus are research devices, inspired by the ethnographic field, as they develop today in and outside scientific institutions, with a particular interest in staging processes as research formats. Specialist in the cultural history of West Africa (Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana), his comparative research is also developing in other fields (Europe and Brazil) and focuses more specifically on the relations between art and ethnology today. Since 2003, he has been directing a seminar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris) and is a researcher member of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Social Issues (IRIS) in Paris. He also develops cultural programs, lecture series, exhibitions, multimedia installations, and mediation activities. In association with the Institute of Ethnology and the Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde Leipzig, he has been running since 2015 the teaching and research program 'Museum on the couch—Reflexive and creative explorations

in the ethnographic collections'. He coordinates the CURIO platform, a (co) Laboratory in art based research ([www.curioweb.org](http://www.curioweb.org))

**Konstantinos Ntellas** (Piraeus, 1976) is an actor and director. He studied at the Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens, and at the V. Diamantopoulos Acting school, whilst he also studied piano, ud, traditional percussion and byzantine music. Indicative recent works as a director: Sophocles's Antigone (Mittelfest festival Italy 2019 and Small theatre of Ancient Epidaurus, Athens and Epidaurus Festival 2018), F.G. Lorca's "Bloody Wedding, an existential tragedy" (Athens 2017, Ex maquina theatre), "The Greek Vampire reloaded" (Athens, Ioannina, Dimititsana, Tinos, in collaboration with Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation), "INSOMNIA GRECA" (Piraeus Municipal Theatre). He traditional dances since 1998, and he is a member of the dance group of the Athens Greek Lyceum, where he participated in performance at Odeon of Herodes Atticus, Paris, Kairo, Beijing, Shanghai, and Morocco. He taught in educational programmes of the Onassis Cultural Centre ((Youth festival 2019), at the Epidaurus Lyceum (2017), and elsewhere.

**Yiannis Pappas** is a visual and performance artist based in Berlin. Throughout Pappas' work runs a deep fascination for the relation between space and the human body in natural and urban environments. Underscored by a critical interest in space, as sites of physical and symbolic enactment, his artistic work and research explore how different places are sustained collectively and individually throughout history. Yiannis studied sculpture and photography at the Athens School of Fine Arts and at the University of the Arts in Berlin (UdK). Awarded by the Academy of Athens and by the Greek State Scholarship Foundation (IKY) he completed the artistic and scientific MA "Space Strategies" at the Academy of Arts Weißensee in Berlin. His art-based researches have been assigned by the Goethe Institute and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) through interdisciplinary projects in Asia and Middle East. His resonant and visual language includes video work, photography, performative, and installative practices, all of which bear the signs of Pappas' anthropological and phenomenological approach toward his subjects. He's been invited to exhibit internationally through Europe, Asia, Middle East, South and North America (Biennale of Architecture Venice, Bangkok Art Biennale, Athens Biennale, Berlin Biennale and more) while he attracted the attention of the worldwide press (CNN, New York Times, Art Forum etc).

**Elpida Skoufalou** was studied Economics at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Theatre at the Art Theatre (Theatro Technis) Karolos Koun, Music and History of Art at the Sorbonne University. She has worked as a theatre and film director and as a critic in film, radio and TV. She has taught History of Cinema, Media and Acting at the Art Theatre (Theatro Technis) Karolos koun, as well as translated numerous plays. Her film "I heard god crying", under the auspices of Unesco, on ecstatic rituals has been shown in festivals around the world. At the 2012 Olympic Games in London and at the 2015 Special Olympics in Los Angeles she directed the performance entitled "Sisyphus" with the Golden Olympic medalist,

Ioannis Melissanidis. She is the artistic director and the film director of Athens University cultural site yougoculture. She is the mother of three children.

**Miranda Terzopoulou** is a folkstudies scholar/ethnologist (Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, Academy of Athens). She has studied and recorded numerous forms and aspects of Greek folklore, especially of Greek traditional music and Greek rituals, working with various ethnical, linguistic, and religious groups, both inside and outside Greece. She records and videotapes whatever is necessary for her research, and has formed an important archive of rare optical-acoustic material. The main object of her research is folk rituals about divine female figures and the world of symbols related to women in general, as they are found in narratives and songs; moreover, music as a structural element in customary rituals as well as a communication code, symbolic systems, means of narration, the place of women, and marginal groups. She has worked on the Greek Romani, both Christian and Muslim, and she has also conducted a long-term research about Muslim heterodoxy (Alevism, Bektashism, Sufism) in Thrace and Turkey, which has presented in the first international conferences on these subjects.

**Fotini Tsibiridou** is Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece, Acting Head of Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Acting Director of the Laboratory for the Study of Culture, Borders and Gender (Lab/CBG <http://cbg-lab.uom.gr/en/>). She has studied at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS –Paris France) from where she holds a Ph.d in Ethnology and Anthropology (1990) and a Master in Ethnology and Anthropology (1985). She has done extensive fieldwork in Greece among the Pomak and other populations in Thrace, in Turkey and various countries of the Middle East (The Sultanate of Oman). Since 2008 continues her basic fieldwork research on gender, citizenship, religion and politics of resistance in Istanbul and other Balkan and Mediterranean cities. Her research interests focus on power relations and political economy, ethnic minorities, religion and gender issues, Balkan, Middle East and urban ethnography.

**Jalal Toufic** is a thinker and a mortal to death. He was born in 1962 in Beirut or Baghdad and died before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois. His most recent book is *What Was I Thinking?* (e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2017). His books are available for download at his website: [www.jalaltoufic.com](http://www.jalaltoufic.com). Most of his videos are available for viewing on Vimeo. He was a participant in the Sharjah Biennials 6, 10, and 11, the 9th Shanghai Biennale, the 7th Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture (Shenzhen), *A History: Art, Architecture, and Design, from the 1980s until Today* (Centre Pompidou), etc. In 2011, he was a guest of the Artists-in-Berlin Program of the DAAD; and in 2013–2014, he and Anton Vidokle led Ashkal Alwan's third edition of Home Workspace Program, based in Beirut. He was the Director of the School of Visual Arts at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (Alba) from September 2015 to August 2018, and he is currently a Professor at the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing at Hong Kong Baptist University.

**Tassos Vrettos** is a photographer, born and based in Athens, Greece. His most recent solo exhibitions include: Worth)ship. Tassos Vrettos. The Benaki Museum Athens Αθήνα (11/'15 – 1/'16), Les Recontres de la Photographie, Arles, France (2016), MOMus 2016) ·Homo Ludens, public installation - City Link, Athens (2015). In addition he has most recently participated in the following group exhibitions: Les Recontres de la Photographie, Arles, France (2016), Shared Sacred Spaces, MOMus 2016) “HELL AS PAVILION” - Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); “BIA(?)” - CAID, Athens (2013). His photographic work has appeared in foreign periodicals such as Zoom (Italian & international editions), Creative Camera, Officiel, Jardin des Modes, Janus, etc., and a great number of Greek magazines. He has worked for music companies and advertising campaigns and collaborated with many dance companies. Photographic material resulting from his collaboration with set designer Dionyssis Fotopoulos appeared in the art book Revelations (Adam Publications, 1989-1990). Tassos Vrettos is the founder of Studio Vrettos: <http://www.studiovrettos.gr>