



BACK TO ATHENS 9 COMEBACK

June 29–July 3, 2022

Since initiation, Back to Athens Festival has called upon Athenians to re-inhabit the city center, to think differently about everyday life in Athens, its buildings, routes, history and culture, inspired by the work and projects of the artists. This year's edition of 'Back to Athens' entitled 'No apocalypse now, a review' proposes a return to an allegorical interpretation of Athens.

To simple yet fundamental values and social structures, by revisiting democracy and other influential practices and documents from Plato and Aristotle, to Locke, Rousseau and Kant. Not with the intent of embracing past references, but in relation to the possible development of new social contracts of emerging societies and their future coexistence. Georg Georgakopoulos, Fotini Kapiris, Christian Rupp

COMEBACK is the curatorial contribution of widmertheodoridis for Back to Athens 9 comprising five Swiss artists that work in various art forms. Jordanis Theodoridis and Werner Widmer devoted special attention to artists that use a subtle language articulating human failure, technology and imperfection. The presumptuous dream of managing the creation has forced human kind many times to fail, rethink and try better. What if to rethink needed only a (re-) collection of already existing, but neglected information—rather than developing new ideas and tools?

ckö collect for their works often material from do-it-yourself stores that constitute a welcoming playground and an open source for their inspiration. 'Ingrid', a sound and light installation, made of 32 vertical fluorescent tubes brightens up the space. The fine, subtle hum of the tubes fills the air and creates an atmosphere of mysticism. With its warm light the look-alike lighthouse counterparts the steady advancing strive for perfection and optimisation. ckö, the art collective works mainly in the fields of architectural sculptures and moving objects. To occupy public space with art and motion is their main field of action.

Ursula Palla mostly works with video, objects and extensive installations that deal with projection and construction of human reality and nature. 'Welcome to the Jungle' made of chrome-plated steel letters marks the beginning of nature and the end of the human-made world. Each letter is a classification, defines an intellectual territory and stands for a limitation: Where begins order and where does it end? The mirroring steel letters dissolve with the surrounding background and the voids question human order and authority.

Scanderbeg Sauer's photographs of the energy plant Chavalon document how large-scale projects can be overrun by changing environmental, economic and political conditions. Chavalon began operating with crude oil in 1965 and went out of service in 1999. Plans were drawn up to develop a gas power station on the same site. However, due to new environmental laws this plan was never executed and the plant remains in an unaltered—now abandoned—state. In their iconic photographs, Scanderbeg Sauer reveal the vulnerability and the unlasting nature of this once promising electric energy plant.

Ernst Thoma worked in electronic music, sound design and multi media applications. The template for the video was the romantic painting 'Lake Lucerne and the ruin of the Castle Neuhabsburg with a stormy atmosphere' (1852) by Robert Zünd. For the animation many details of the subject had to be filmed on various windy days and in a variety of light conditions. The material was superimposed and then digitally applied on the original image. The Romantic era stands for the radical departure from the noise of the industrialisation and has till today not lost its fascination. Then as now, nature offers safety, security and inspiration—especially in disturbing times.

Werner Widmer's extraordinary love for sugar cubes has gained him wide recognition. His proficiency to melt visual and tactile elements is only excelled by the unnumbered work steps that are needed to create these images of sugar. Trained as an industrial designer he often uses repetitive graphic elements in his motifs. In his new work Werner Widmer has laid out innumerable sugar cubes in a pattern of timeless beauty that has been created thousands of years ago. The meander, a decorative border that recalls the twisting and turning path of the Maeander River stands for infinity and unity. And yet, time and history have left their marks on this immortal design.

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