

PI ARTWORKS LONDON



Still from Necklace of Time (working) Nancy Atakan and Kalliopi Lemos. 2019

Nancy Atakan and Kalliopi Lemos: *It still is as it always was*

20.2 - 28.3. 2020

Pi Artworks is delighted to announce *It still is as it always was*, the first joint exhibition by Nancy Atakan and Kalliopi Lemos; artists who have established considerable international reputations for work rooted in storytelling, identity and the female experience. The exhibition will feature the premiere of the collaborative film, 'Necklace of Time', several new individual works, as well as a special performance based on 'Necklace of Time' to be staged at the opening.

In 'Necklace of Time', Lemos and Atakan enter an eternal, poetic world where they engage in a ritual-like performance. Wearing heavy golden necklaces adorned with colorful jewels referencing Ottoman designs and reminiscent of Byzantine armour, the artists engage in the task of removing the jewels and replacing them with small embroidered words chosen to reflect their lived experiences - birth, love, friendship and marriage.

The genesis of this collaboration came through a shared interest in female and familial stories in which women are often the 'keepers' of cherished memories and stories passed down through the generations. Shared memories are a precious inheritance assuming acute importance during the transition from one significant life stage to another; from youth to maturity.

At each stage we both attain and lose something important and in 'Necklace of Time', this is given tangible form in the ritual act of adornment and substitution embodied by the elaborate necklaces worn by Lemos and Atakan. As mature women, the artists realize they no longer need the materialistic adornment they might have desired in youth. Now only memories of experiences and relationships remain valuable and these rich experiences gain

further currency through the act of being shared; the 'jewels' handed on to their daughters and granddaughters, just as they were once imparted to them.

'The diamonds, the rubies and the gold of all the precious moments that I lived, oh my little one, they should grace you now. You are the one to carry them forward because you are the future!'

From 'Necklace of Time' by Nancy Atakan and Kalliopi Lemos.

These inevitable stages mimic the natural seasons, or the transition of day to night noted by T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*; the 'shadow at morning striding behind you', transforms to the 'shadow at evening rising to meet you'. Contemporary western culture has placed an excessive value on youthful femininity but in appreciating the experiences and opportunities of young and old women alike, we begin to address a universal need for equality rooted in feminism.

"Collaboration has been a wonderful process for us; founded on a mutual admiration of each other's work, as well as an enduring and supportive friendship, in many ways it has echoed some of the themes we have explored in 'Necklace of Time'. We have combined our strengths, shared ideas, and learnt from each. As women and artists, we wanted to give a voice to the unexplored experiences and feelings of women, shared with love, poetry and beauty to create a rich, multidimensional exhibition". Nancy Atakan and Kalliopi Lemos

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Nancy Atakan (B. 1946, USA)

Nancy Atakan is an active figure in the Istanbul arts scene as an artist, teacher, art historian, and art critic since 1969. Often autobiographical, she concentrates on topics such as the relationship between image and word, the meaning of belonging, gender politics, memory, and globalization as they relate to her personally. All of her work involves research, collaboration and dialogue as it incorporates observations of current events and references to history and culture. Permeated with touches of lightness, historical narratives and weighty issues within her work are brought closer to everyday life. As a part of her art practice, she co-founded the Istanbul based art initiative/project space, 5533.

Selected exhibitions; Shades of Time, Riksidrottsmusett, Stockholm (opening January, 2020); Forward March, SALT Beyoğlu, Istanbul (2019); Making a Shift, Galleri Box, Göteborg (2019); Under the Radar: 5533 , ISCP, Brooklyn (2018); A Community of Lines, Pi Artworks, Istanbul, (2017); Sporting Chances, Pi Artworks London (2016); Dream and Reality - Modern and Contemporary Women Artists from Turkey, Istanbul Modern Museum, Istanbul (2011); Istanbul Next Wave, Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, (2009-2010). Nancy Atakan is represented by Pi Artworks.

Kalliopi Lemos (B. 1951, Greece) Kalliopi Lemos is a London-based sculptor, painter and installation artist. She studied painting and printing at Byam Shaw School of Art, University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins, where she also pursued post-graduate studies in painting. Lemos creates site-specific installations that often focus on human rights, the issue of increasing global undocumented migration and female oppression.

Some of her most acclaimed projects include the trilogy exhibition Crossings in Eleusis (2006), Istanbul (2007) and in front of the Brandenburg Gate (2009) as a celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the three-part exhibition Navigating in the Dark (2011), Benaki Museum, Athens, Mosque of Ibrahim Khan, Crete and at the Crypt of St. Pancras Church, London. Lemos is also known for her public art which has frequently focused on subjects including women's human rights, like her exhibition I Am I Between Worlds and Between Shadows in 2013 that was presented in Istanbul as a parallel event of the 13th Istanbul Biennial and was extended until 2015 due to popular demand. Since 2016, her ongoing series of large-scale sculptures in steel, Tools of Endearment have been prominently installed in London and France. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Bound', ATOPOS, Athens (2019), 'All is to be Dared', Gazelli Art House, London (2018), 'Pledges' Museum of the History of Migration, Palais de la Porte Dorée, Paris (2017) and also at Château des ducs de Bretagne, Nantes (2017) and 'In Balance', Gazelli Art House, London (2016). Lemos' large-scale public work Seven Entrances (14m X 6m) was selected to be included into Eleusis 2021 - European Capital of Culture and will be installed in 2020 permanently in the city, with the aim to be the focus of interaction with the communities of Eleusis. Kalliopi Lemos is represented by Gazelli Art House