

COLORS & minds

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EMΣΤ

National Museum
of Contemporary Art Athens



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ARTISTIC INITIATIVE



OCTOBER 2023 - MAY 2024

An Experiential Artistic Programme Raising Awareness
for Young People in the Psychosocial Sector

ARTWORK¹



Vlassis Caniaris, *HOPSCOTCH*, 1974

Environment: 6 human figures, 9 suitcases,
1 cage, a tar paper base and a hopscotch chalk drawing
155 x 440 x 600 cm

Vlassis Caniaris, one of the most important artists of post-war art in Greece, created *Hopscotch* (1974) as part of the series of works entitled *Immigrants* (1971-76), first developed in Paris and later in Berlin thanks to a grant from the organization DAAD (1973-75). It was presented in a traveling exhibition entitled *Gastarbeiter-Fremdarbeiter* (Guest workers – Foreign workers) which was presented at numerous German institutions between 1975 and 1976. Caniaris, who since the late 1950s lived in Rome and Paris, returned to Greece in 1967 after the military coup, but left again two years later.

Hopscotch is an environment consisting of headless dummies standing on a court with the design of the game "hopscotch" where instead of numbers, various words have been inscribed in chalk that allude to stages and mechanisms of labor immigration policy. Caniaris focuses on diverse stories, voices, gestures, as well as everyday objects relating to the working and living conditions of "guest workers" – the immigrants who worked in Western European countries under the context of transnational agreements since the late 1950s. The work reflects the uncertain reality of territorial displacement, social exclusion, national identity and contested citizenship.



Having as a tool the processing and understanding of the conceptual aspects of the specific work, the participants of *Colors & Minds* will shape, through the individual and group artworks they will create, a new artistic vision based on the connection between modern reality and contemporary art. At the same time, their individual expression, co-creation and interaction are elements reinforced by the structure of the 8 workshops and inspired by Vlassis Caniaris' *Hopscotch*. The workshops will allow the participants to become experientially familiar with contemporary artistic means and to approach social issues such as exclusion, identity, reality, experience, personal history and collective experience. Through concepts inherent to those that Caniaris introduced in his work, the participants will draw inspiration to develop a shared field of artistic creation that is welcoming, open and more friendly for all.

The works created by the participants of *Colors & Minds* will be exhibited in a three-day presentation at EMΣT in May 2024.



¹ Tina Pandi, text from the permanent exhibition guide
ENTER EMΣT: Collection & History, A short guide, Athens, EMΣT, 2020

1. WHAT IS COLORS & MINDS?

An experiential artistic programme aiming to raise awareness for young people in the psychosocial sector.

Its goal is to promote an understanding and acceptance of the world around us through the deployment of the visual arts.

It will involve young people from different population groups (students from the Athens School of Fine Arts, the Art and Psychotherapy Centre and volunteers) as well as recipients of mental health services.

It is jointly organized by the following entities: EMΣΤ | National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth (SKEP), Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY) and the voluntary artistic initiative Talks & Crafts headed by the artist Marina Tsironi.

2. WHAT WILL WE DO TOGETHER AT COLORS & MINDS?

The participants of the educational programme will be invited to approach the various conceptual aspects of an artwork drawn from EMΣΤ's collection, through different artistic perspectives (drawing, photography/video, sculpture, installation, performance and text).

3. WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF COLORS & MINDS?

To familiarize young people with the psychosocial sector through artistic co-creation together with mental health recipients.

To introduce participants to contemporary art through an experiential approach to various artistic perspectives.

To jointly shape the world around through cooperation and creation, with the ultimate aim of creating a more friendly society for all of us.

4. WHICH ARE THE ORGANIZING ENTITIES?

EMΣT | National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens is the leading national institution for contemporary art and visual culture in Greece and one of the leading institutions in Southern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. For the Museum, art and visual culture make up significant transformative factors in education, knowledge production, alternative narratives and is a driving force for spreading values of progress and emancipation in society. With visual art as its main vehicle, EMΣT promotes practices that develop reflection, understanding, inspiration, and critical thinking and foster enthusiasm. At the same time, it aims to sensitize people around art and its connection to the mental health sector.

SKEP - Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth is a nonprofit organization established in 2008 in Athens, Greece, striving for a barrier-free and rights-based Inclusive Society. SKEP's people have dedicated themselves to fighting social exclusion and the lack of visibility of people with disability, envisioning an all-inclusive society where everybody feels accepted and useful. Through Diversity Awareness Educational Programmes, SKEP battles to deconstruct stereotypes and reshape attitudes towards diversity, starting from the early school years all the way to society as a whole. The ultimate goal is to coexist harmoniously in a constantly changing and evolving world.

EPAPSY - Association for Regional Development and Mental Health was founded in 1988, proposing an alternative model of providing integrated psychiatric care and health in the community, based on the principles of Social Psychiatry and Psychosocial Rehabilitation. Today, it is one of the largest non-profit providers of mental health services in Greece, having the scientific and administrative responsibility for many residential Psychosocial Rehabilitation Units, Mobile Mental Health Units and Day Centers. EPAPSY also regularly intervenes with scientific articles, speeches and interviews in the national media around the promotion of mental health in the community/society.

5. A FEW WORDS ABOUT TALKS & CRAFTS

Talks & Crafts is a voluntary artistic initiative headed by the visual artist Marina Tsironi, which encourages the coordination of presentations and workshops by contemporary artists and creators, with the aim of «translating» their work into a visual artistic exercise. Its purpose is to use art to sensitize the general population around the psychosocial sector, to raise awareness and to enhance the creative well-being of mental health service recipients.

Marina Tsironi is an honors graduate of the School of Fine Arts of the Department of Visual and Applied Arts, Florina. Her practice focuses on connecting Art and Mental Health through purely visual practices and artistic projects. She has attended certified psychology seminars and her artwork has been presented in renowned art venues.

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*"I found I could say things with color and shapes
that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for."*

Georgia O'Keeffe

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