A part of the Biennale of Western Balkans, the project Weaving Europe / Weaving Balkans critically examines topics related to weaving, a craft associated with the history of Epirus and Balkans. Weaving is also seen as a metaphorical scheme that describes the construction of the European identity and citizenship, that may be seen as constantly changing rather than having a concrete meaning or referring to an undeniable and continuous historical reality. The metaphorical expression Weaving Europe / Weaving Balkans raises the the need to scrutinize the conceptual, political and social threads that weave together the European project.

The exhibition takes place at Mekeio, a place that is linked organically to the concept of the exhibition, as it functioned as a Female Fostering House and then as a Professional School, with courses for sewing, weaving, embroidery and carpeting.

(The full version of the curatorial text can be accessed through the webpage, link above)

Efthymia (Efi) Kyprianidou

Artists participants

1. Azra Akšamija (Bosnia - Herzegovina)

Azra Akšamija is an artist and architectural historian, Director of the MIT Future Heritage Lab and an Associate Professor in the MIT Art, Culture and Technology Program. Akšamija investigates the politics of identity and cultural memory on the scale of the body (clothing and wearable technologies), on the civic scale (religious architecture and cultural institutions), and within the context of history and globalization. Akšamija’s recent academic research focuses on the representation of Islam in the West, destruction and restoration of cultural heritage in the Balkans and the MENA region. This research informs her artistic practice, which translates cultural heritage from different contexts towards the development of new methods for preservation and creation of future heritage. Her work has been published and exhibited in leading international venues such as at the Generali Foundation Vienna, Valencia Biennial, Gallery for Contemporary Art Leipzig, Liverpool Biennial, Museums of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Sculpture Center New York, Secession Vienna, Manifesta 7, the Royal Academy of Arts London, Jewish Museum Berlin, Queens Museum of Art in New York, London...
Biennale, 54th Art Biennale in Venice. In 2013, she received the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for her design of the prayer space in the Islamic Cemetery Altach, Austria.

2. Klitsa Antoniou (Cyprus)

Klitsa Antoniou was born in Cyprus and studied at the Wimbledon School of Art, St. Martin's School of Arts (MFA), the Pratt Institute (MFA) and the University of New York (DA). In 2014 she completed her Ph.D. in Art History/Theory at the Cyprus University of Technology. She attended plenty of seminars, symposia and conferences throughout Greece, China, Italy and Bosnia & Herzegovina and won a series of awards and honorary distinctions. She is Professor of Fine Arts at the Cyprus University of Technology and an interdisciplinary artist, with more than 20 international solo exhibitions. Her work has been exhibited in major museums such as: Herzliya Museum of Israel, Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Palais du Rhin / Drac, Strasbourg, Arte Contemporanea Pinerolo, Torino, Andersson Sandström, Sweden Exhibit Gallery, Antrepo, Espace Commines, Paris, Pulchri Studio, The Hague, Quanzhou China, Bozar, Belgium, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sarajevo, Skåneskonstförening, Malmö, Sweden, Petach Tikva Museum, Museum of Lethe, Sweden etc. In 2018 she was selected through an international competition to represent Malta at the Biennale of Venice in 2019.

Parallelotopias: Horizon Line (2012)

3. Gioula Chatzigeorgiou (Cyprus)

Gun-Aid (2014)
Gioula Chatzigeorgiou was born in Pafos and graduated with honours from the Athens School of Fine Arts. She maintains a significant international presence as she took part in the 25th Biennale of Sao Paulo Brazil "Open 2003" representing Cyprus at the 6th International Exhibition of Sculpture in Venice, Making Words, Poets Machine, 53rd Venice Biennale Italy, 25th Alexandria Biennale Egypt, 12th Cairo Biennale, "Bida Seville Biennale" Spain, as well as Onassis Foundation Athens, International Exhibition Sculpture and Object XLII Bratislava, Bozar Expo Brussels, Terra Mediterranea- In Crisis Nicosia, Cicaf Fe "The Little Land Fish", Istanbul, National Portrait Gallery of Washington USA, Antrepo Exhibition Venue, Turkey and others. She also participated in the International Festival of Art and Technology at the Ileana Tounta Gallery (1998), the Future Part in Amsterdam (1998), the Mediterranean Meeting of Young Artists (1999), the exhibition "Poisons" in Gazi with Maria Marangou, curator (2002), Art Athina (2002), the exhibition "I expect your news" at the Museum of Gounaropoulos in Athens. She has organized two solo exhibitions, in 2002 at the Alekton Gallery, and in 2003 at the Athens Art Gallery. In 2010 she represented Cyprus at the Cairo Biennale and at an international Exhibition in Istanbul. She lives and works in Athens.

4. OPA (FYROM)

I WILL NOT MAKE ANY MORE POLITICAL ART, video (2014)

OPA (Obsessive Possessive Aggression) is a collaboration founded in 2001 by visual artists Slobodanka Stevceska and Denis Saraginovski. Both of them live and work in Skopje and studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje. OPA had solo exhibitions in FYROM, Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia, France, Germany, USA and the Netherlands and have exhibited widely in group exhibitions and festivals such as Transmediale, Berlin; Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin; Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Transeuropa - European Theatre- and Performance Festival, Hildesheim; Freewaves' Biennial of New Media Arts, Los Angeles; I Had a Dream, Kunstraum Baden, Switzerland; Victory Obsessed, Zamek Culture Centre, Poznan; etc. OPA received residency fellowships in Estonia, France, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, as well as the Dragisa Nanevski Award (AKTO Festival of Contemporary Arts, Bitola, 2010) and the Young Visual Artists Annual Award DENES (2004). OPA is co-founding member of the Kooperacija Initiative (2012-2015).
5. Andreas Savva (Κύπρος)

Andreas Savva was born in Kyrenia, Cyprus. A refugee since childhood, his practice is defined by his social and political views that are often imbued with skepticism in relation to capitalistic societal values. His in-situ installations or units as he defines them are categorized by a different set of dominant materials ranging from rope (series Opportunist (1993-) to money bills as main material (1995-) with the series ¥€$ using the symbols of the three most powerful currencies at the turn of the millennium. More recently, Savva has developed a body of painting with extremely smooth surfaces in response to the vast but infertile information emanating from the pervasive use of the flat screen of the Internet. He have participated in group and solo exhibitions at gallery FrançoiseHeitsch, Munich, Cork Vision Centre, Ireland, gallery a.antonopoulou, Omi International Arts Center, New York (cur.: Moukhtar Kocache); Paphos archaeological museum, Paphos (cur.: Niki Loizidi) and No Words, Larnaca Municipal Gallery, Larnaca (cur.: Tonia Loizou), CAMP Contemporary Art Meeting Point, Athens (cur.: Lina Tsikouta) and Art-Athina, International Contemporary Art Fair of Athens.
6. Christos Avraam (Cyprus)

A map of Truth and Beliefs (2017)

Christos Avraam graduated from the Fine Arts School and from Yannis Psychopedis’s Workshop. He holds a postgraduate degree (with a scholarship) from the same faculty. The work of the artist has so far been exhibited in group exhibitions in Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia. He has been honoured with the 2012 Visual Art Award for "The Unknown Lover" (painting by Christos Avraam – poetry by Marina Kostas). His works are at the Plyos Museum in Russia, in the Saatchi Gallery and in private collections in Cyprus or abroad. His work has been included in the list for the 50th anniversary of the Republic of Cyprus.

7. Kyriakos Kousoulidis (Cyprus)

Consolation (detail, 2017)

Kyriakos Kousoulidis is a visual artist with a degree in Philosophy and Computer Science. He graduated from the Athens School of Fine Arts and the Workshop of Yannis Psychopedis, and received a postgraduate diploma from the Goldsmiths University of London in Creative Computation. His work has been exhibited amongst others at the V & A Museum, London, Tinshed Gallery London,
8. Nikos Gyftakis (Greece)

Nikos Gyftakis was born in Athens, Greece in 1981. He studied Artistic Research at Konstfack University in Stockholm, Painting and Stage-setting Design at the School of Fine Arts, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Music at the National Conservatory of Athens, Greece. In his record he has four solo and many group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. Among others, Art Athina 2016 Platforms project “The waiting room”, “Compassion: on the phenomenology of being ill” curated by Dr. Efi Kyprianidou & Penny Monogiou at Bethanien Projektraum in Berlin-Germany, “Portraits and landscapes of Greece” at Europahuset, for the cultural opening of the Greek EU Presidency in Stockholm-Sweden and “Ante Mortem” curated by VagitiUltimi, Palazzo Duchi D’ Acquaviva in Atri-Italy. In 2014, he participated in the 5th “Maiden Tower”- International Art Festival in Baku, Azerbaijan and in 2012, he was shortlisted in the international competition “Surrealism Showdown”, Saatchi Gallery. He is a member of the “Compassion” arts collective. He has also created the stage-setting and paintings for several movies and theatrical shows and at the same time he has been curating art exhibitions and teaching Art. Nikos Gyftakis currently lives and works in Athens, Greece.

Efi Kyprianidou (Cyprus)

Efi Kyprianidou is an adjunct lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Open University of Cyprus. Her main research areas are Philosophy of Art, Aesthetics, and Arts Management. She has published papers in reviews and books, and she is editor of the volumes Weaving Culture in Europe (Nissos, 2017) and The Art of Compassion (Nissos, 2018). She has also curated art exhibitions in Cyprus, Greece, Germany and Great Britain, and she is the scientific consultant and head curator of the Virtual Museum of Modern and Contemporary Cypriot Art.
Myrto Voreakou (Greece)

Myrto Voreakou is an architect with postgraduate studies at room-design-culture issues in the National (Metsovian) Technical University of Athens and cultural management at the Open University of Cyprus. Her research focuses on the spatial dimension of the narrative concept. Her texts have been included in collective publications, while she created the architectural design of the exhibition Weaving Europe in the Cultural Capital of Paphos in 2017.

Parallel activities:

1. WEAVING 0.1.: Crafting and Performing Computational Code

   How weaving may contribute to contemporary discussions concerning coding and programming? Towards this, we will first elucidate the originating relationship between weaving and electronic computers. Then, performative coding practices will be presented, related to weaving, which will give the opportunity to discuss how such practices may contribute to discussions concerning the aesthetic aspects of code, the creation of Commons, and open design.

   Dates: Friday, October 12, 18:00-19:15
2. Resetting Homeland, Lotus Eaters

Lotus Eaters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR9B0sgrd6s&t=31s
https://www.facebook.com/resettinghomeland/

Mekeio is hosting the interactive performance of Lotus Eaters “Resetting Homeland” (2017), in the dorm rooms of the School.
What do we call homeland? How do you curry your homeland aboard? In order to live overseas do you have to become a deferent man? How do you structure an identity between two countries? Which is your past? What about dreams. SPACE The setting of the performance is the ‘non—space’ a communal dormitory. People sleep collectively but during their sleep they dream alone. Dreaming has become the last line of defense to hold ones individuality; the space is a sacred land, protecting the one’s origin and identity, or the very lack of them. It is a dual setting built to accommodate both the material space that the body rests in and an imaginary space, which sets the mind free to dream.
Viewers wear headphones lying on the beds, where hundreds of young women where lying every night for nearly a century, finding a shelter away from their homes. Throughout the narration, the audience members, in their artificial “sleeping” state, will be confronted with sensory (tactile, olfactory, and gustatory) stimuli produced by the performers. Once the narration is over, the lullaby will be once again sung by one of the performers while the other “rouse” the audience members and escort them to the exit.

*The performance is a proposal of the Municipal Theater of Ioannina to the Biennale of Western Balkans.*
*Dates: Saturday- Sunday, October 13-14, 9 performances each day for 6 participants each.*