

JANNIS VARELAS

Salted milk, the fire is Blue

opening: September 7, 7pm

duration: September 8 – Oktober 29, 2022

opening speech: Angela Stief, Chief curator for Contemporary Art, Albertina and Director Albertina Modern

Salted milk, the fire is Blue is an exhibition dealing with the process of understanding oneself and the world around them, by observing and recreating some of the basic cognitive activities of life. Seeing, hearing, eating, leaking, standing, moving; Activities that no one has managed to escape from even during the very early stages of their existence and everybody suffers from their great impact on the subconscious.

Salted milk, the fire is Blue is an exhibition about the things that already happened and the things that will happen again.

In his 5th exhibition with Galerie Krinzinger Jannis Varelas presents a new body of work. Its core consists of eight paintings, depicting staged scenes with a certain dose of an inescapable reality, where people are engaged in rather strange situations. A man is sitting, three people are standing, some others are gazing towards a vague horizon while others look as if they are involved in some kind of a post mortal ritual, ordinary situations with an ongoing *off* element of time and space. It is like the inhabitants of the paintings find themselves in a psychological landscape of their own psyche, experiencing their identity in the form of space. The concepts of the indoors and the outdoors become one, the shadows indicate that the light is maybe coming from somewhere else. Maybe somewhere outside, where the reality of the viewer stands and gives light to this rather strange imagery while creating a strong bond, reflecting the idea of the self in the form of a scene.

Salted milk, the fire is Blue presents three new multimedia installations. In *War faces/ the Revenge of Noh*, the artist protagonists in a four-channel video installation where he transforms his face with the pressure of his own hands, wearing intense looking faces that bring to mind the intensity of the masks of theater Noh.

In *The Preacher*, two paintings that carry the archetypes of heaven and hell stand at the edges of a wooden stage that resembles the shadow of a bridge. Opposite to that lies its acoustic reflection, a free standing speaker that echoes the chanting of a children's choir combined with the sermon of a preacher.

In *The ice-cream tower*, various paraphernalia and relics that the artist used in older works and performances (*'Destroying Elvis'* 2016, *'Bank Robber – Don't Forget Your Kata'* 2017, *'Aunt Klara'* 2018 among others) create the artist's memory map and a mnemosyne atlas of his own path. A three-channel video shows elderly people eating ice cream, each one of them organizes their own narration based on the simple act of licking. This pure action will be reenacted on the evening of the opening, where an ice cream man wearing Jannis Varelas' face will be offering pistachio gelato to the visitors, inviting them to be part of an ice-cream eating ritual.

Born in 1977 in Athens, Greece, lives and works in Athens, Vienna and Los Angeles.

Exhibitions (selection)/ solo: Marlows' Dreams, The Breeder, Athens, GR (2022); Double-Blind, The Breeder, Athens, GR (2021); The Island, Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki (2020); Jannis Varelas, Tennis Elbow, New York, US (2019); Anima I, The Benaki Museum, Athens, GR (2019); Our House, Galerie Forsblom, Stockholm (2018); The Pomegranate Circus / Under the Chair, Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki (2017); Monster, Onassis Cultural Center, Athens, GR (2017); Black Frames, Special Commission for Onassis Cultural Center, New York, US (2017); Common People, James Fuentes LLC, New York, US (2016); A Duck and a Crutch, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna (2016); New Flags for A New Country / Destroying Elvis, Onassis Cultural Center, Athens, GR (2016); New Flags for a New Country, The Breeder, Athens (2015); Sleep My Little Sheep Sleep, Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati, US (2012); Brown Box and the Broken Theater, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna (2012); The Oblong Box, Kunsthalle Athena, Athens, GR (2011); *group: Mr Robinson Crusoe stayed home*, The Benaki Museum, Athens, GR (2021); *On The Level Or The Man Who Fell Out Of Bed*, Krinzinger Schottenfeld, Vienna (2021); *Distorted Portrait*, Space K Seoul, South Korea (2020); *Supergood- dialogues with Ernesto de Sousa*, MAAT Museum, Lisbon (2018); *Instructions for Happiness*, 21er Haus, Vienna (2017); *Fireflies in the Night Take Wing*, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, Athens, GR (2016); *Ametria*, based on an idea by Roberto Cuoghi, DESTE Foundation and The Benaki Museum, Athens, GR (2015); *Kunstraum Innsbruck*, Innsbruck (2014); *See What Sees You*, curated by Franz Graf, 21er Haus, Vienna (2014); *Hell As Pavilion*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); *Paper - works from the Saatchi Collection*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK (2013); DESTE Prize 2011, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens (2011); *Lebt und arbeitet in Wien III: Stars in a Plastic Bag*, curated by Xenia Kalpaktsoglou, Raphaela Platow, Olga Sviblova and Angela Stief, Kunsthalle Wien (2010); 12th Cairo Biennial, Cairo (2010); *Skin Fruit: Selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, US (2010); New Orleans Biennial Prospect 1, curated by Dan Cameron, New Orleans (2008); *Destroy Athens*, 1st Athens Biennial, Athens, GR (2007).

Collections (selection):

The AMMA Foundation Collection, Mexico
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki
Belvedere Museum, Vienna
The Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece
The Onassis Foundation Collection, Athens, Greece
The Dakis Joannou Collection, Greece
Irene Panagopoulous Collection, Greece
The Zabudowicz Collection, London
The Saatchi Collection, London
The Hort Family Collection, New York, USA
Gilbert and Doreen Bassin Collection, New York, USA
Oliver Frankel and Carole Server Collection, New York, USA