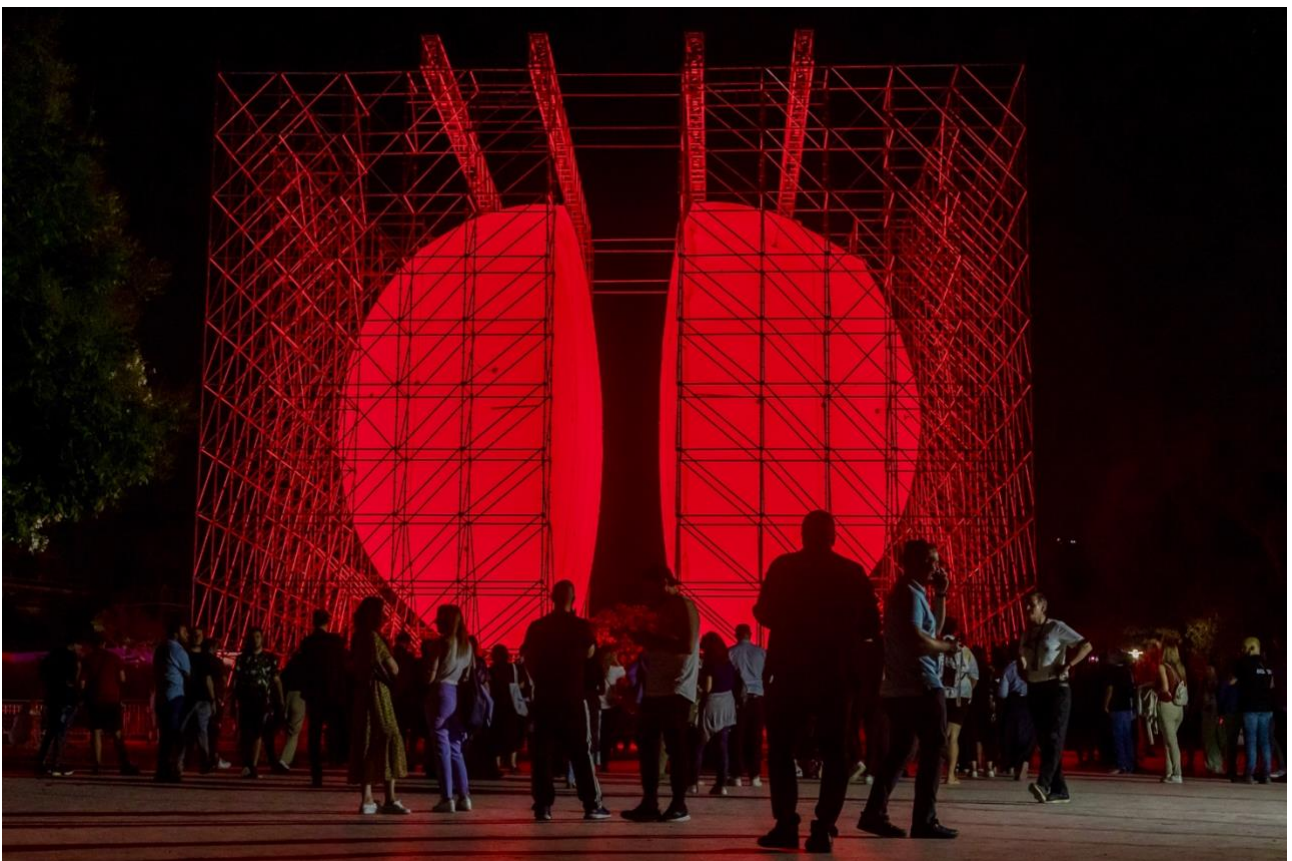


PLÁSMATA: BODIES, DREAMS AND DATA

Extended until July 10, 2022 | Pedion Areos Park, Athens, Greece | open every night, 18:00 – 23:00

Onassis Stegi, with the UK's FutureEverything, presents Europe's biggest immersive open-air contemporary art exhibition drawing over 4000 people a day to one of Athens' largest public parks



Divided, SpY 2022, © Pinelopi Gerasimou

Onassis Culture in Athens has joined forces with the Manchester-based cultural agency FutureEverything to combine art and nature, architecture and design in an urban regeneration project that started with a public park. The initial idea was simple: to help restore a civic green space where residents could exercise during lockdown and where culture would be accessible to all of the diverse local communities, free of charge.

The concept of staging large-scale, immersive, nocturnal open-air exhibitions stemmed from the desire to create a public, outdoor cultural hub and provide safe access to it at night, as a respite from the heat of the Athenian summer. With 25 new large-scale works by a range of major international artists – mainly site-specific commissions – ‘Plasmata’ transforms one of Athens’ largest public parks into a kind of ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’ of art and digital culture, by turns engaging, entertaining and thought provoking. Today over 3000 people a day are visiting this exhibition in a park that few visited before the pandemic. The public response has been so strong that the exhibition has been extended until 17 July.

Onassis Culture invited FutureEverything to collaborate on ‘Plásmata’ because of their shared interest in urban regeneration and in reinventing Athens as a space for digital innovation and debate about how the digital world impacts the personal and public realms.



Eclipse, Tony Oursler © Stelios Tzetzias

Co-curator **Afroditi Panagiotakou**, Director of Culture at the Onassis Foundation, comments: ‘Art has the capacity, out of magic one might say, to function better in spaces it doesn’t often frequent. And public space gives art the opportunity to embark on a dialogue with all of us, reminding us that we are so many and aware of so little; but also, taking us by surprise, startling us, provoking us to think in a different way, liberating us from our fixed assumptions, comforting our fears, soothing us.’

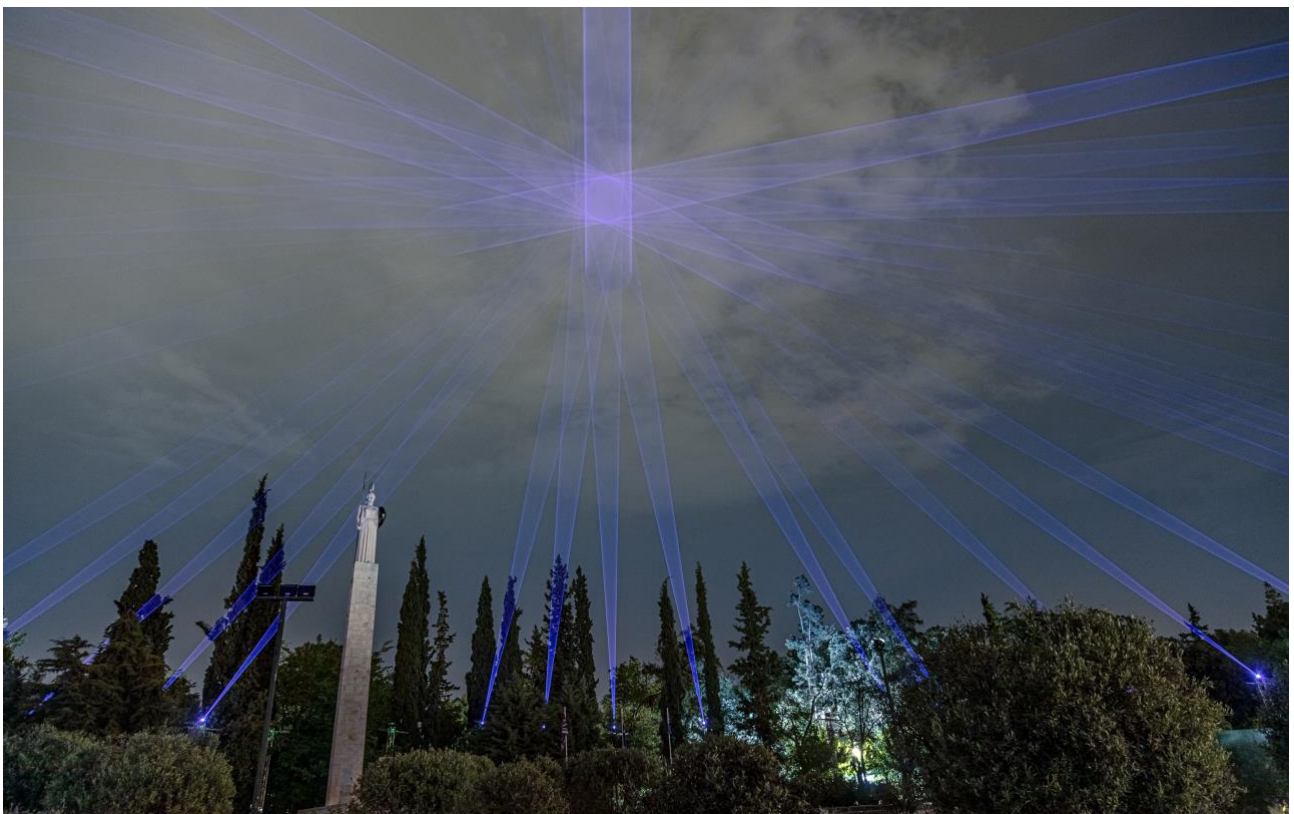
Co-curator **Prodromos Tsiavos**, Head of Digital Development at Onassis Stegi, comments: ‘We want to create an exhibition that leaves a footprint and makes an impact, that enhances the life of the park and the city. This is an annual event that is at once local and global and evolves each year. This year we are looking critically and creatively at how the digital realm affects our thoughts and actions in the physical realm and how we can be the masters, rather than the slaves, of our algorithmic creations.’

Co-curator **Irini Papadimitriou**, Director of FutureEverything, points out: 'Digital art involves similar craft and making skills as textiles. It is worth recalling that Jacquard loom technology inspired the development of computing. There is a human element at the heart of the digital world.'

The word 'Plásmata 'in Greek means 'creatures' but it also has a kind of double meaning, since it comes from the root 'plasso', meaning to fabricate or mold. In a world where data is the new clay, how do we use our digital 'hands' to create different types of creatures and identities, to fabricate and re-fabricate ourselves? How can we mold data – this new raw material – to liberate our bodies while also protecting ourselves from the more sinister side of data harvesting, disinformation and surveillance. How can we use digital culture to connect humanity, rather than divide it?

The 20-meter high 'Divided' -sitespecific installation by the Madrid-based artist SpY (image above) epitomizes some of these questions. This image of a huge red planet cut in two points to the fact that we are in an era of polarization across the globe – yet while political, military and social divisions rage, often exacerbated by digital social media – the planet we all share continues to heat up.

Almost as an echo of this piece, the exhibition also includes 'Another Moon 'by the Seoul based artist collective Kimchi and Chips, a work whose 40 solar batteries collect the energy of the Athenian sun by day to power laser beams that create an artificial moon at night, hovering 70 meters above the ground. Some other works include a 'Happiness', a humanoid handing out medicine in an abandoned pharmacy at the edge of the park by the Dutch artist Dries Verhoeven and a multi-coloured visualization of quantum memories by LA-based artist Refik Anadol.



Another Moon, Kimchi and Chips © Stelios Tzetzias

As part of the exhibition, NOWNESS will curate an algorithm-free screening of short films on large screens at the park's former amphitheater. This presentation disrupts the digital platform's practice of serving content determined by an algorithm to viewers on their personal devices, returning viewers to a collective viewing experience in a public space where they watch – or don't – free of digital tracking.

Returning to Pedion Areos Park for a second year, following on from the successful '[You and AI](#)' exhibition there in 2021, Onassis Stegi is picking up where it left off. If 'You and AI' tackled artificial intelligence and the ways in which we situate ourselves in relation to it, this year's exhibition, 'Plasmata: Bodies, Dreams and Data', explores the body, be it ours or another's. The rationale is one of curated serendipity, with three suggested routes through an exhibition that is nevertheless accessible from any point in the park: engaging with one exhibit means at least one other is in sight, so visitors can immerse themselves in this nocturnal exhibition.

Participating artists:

Morehshin Allahyari, Refik Anadol, LaTurbo Avedon, The Alternative Limb Project, Ekene Ijeoma, Frederik Hayman, Keiken, Kimchi and Chips, Nick Knight (SHOWstudio), Marshmallow Laser Feast, Eva & Franco Mattes, Christian Mio Loclair, Tony Oursler, Maria Papadimitriou, Eva Papamargariti, Annie Saunders, Sensorium, SpY, Superflex, Dries Verhoeven, Cecilie Waagner Falkenstrøm, Saya Woolfalk, Liam Young.
Film screenings curated by NOWNESS.

Curatorial Group: Afroditi Panagiotakou, Director of Culture, Onassis Foundation; Prodromos Tsiavos, Director of Digital Development, Onassis Stegi; Irimi Mirena Papadimitriou, FutureEverything

Exhibition Design: STUDIO ENTROPIA ARCHITECTS (Yota Passia, Panagiotis Roupas)

Commissioned and produced by Onassis Stegi
With the kind support of Region of Attica

[Click here](#) for installation images

Read more

<https://www.onassis.org/whats-on/plasmata>

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Pedion Areos Park

Pedion tou Areos (meaning 'field of Ares'), originally designed as a military parade ground to pay tribute to the heroes of Greek independence and now a large public park, remains an evolving collective space, where Greek and immigrant communities mix to explore this green oasis in the heart of the city. Until recently it had fallen into disrepair and was a haven for drug dealers and crime. During lockdown, Onassis Culture renovated the park to make it safe and accessible to all, in particular at night as a respite from the Athenian summer heat. Today it constitutes the heart of a new Athens – a multicultural Athens brimming with diverse communities – but also a place where public space is being discovered anew, where young

people are being brought together with older citizens, and where the digital encounters the physical, public meets private.

Onassis Stegi at Pedion Areos

[‘You and AI: Through the Algorithmic Lens’](#) (24.06.21 – 25.07.2021) was an exhibition at Pedion tou Areos exploring how algorithmic systems are constructed and defined, and by whom, and how they impact and reshape society and our perception of the world. This exhibition included an exhibition at Pedion Areos in Athens, as well as online experiences, conversations and participatory sessions on artificial intelligence, creativity and ethics and attracted more than 80,000 visitors.

Onassis Culture

Onassis Culture – centered around the performing arts and cultural centre Onassis Stegi (‘shelter ’and ‘roof ’in Greek) and its various other cultural spaces in Athens – is Onassis Foundation’s cultural arm. Onassis Culture focuses on Athens as a centre of global contemporary culture through a series of initiatives and works set within the city. Bringing international culture to Athens and Greek culture to the world, the foundation operates internationally and has activity in New York and Los Angeles. Onassis Culture promotes dialogue about democracy, social and environmental justice, racial and gender equality and the human rights of the LGBTQIA+ community through talks and events. Supporting artistic development, creation, and experimentation across a range of media, Onassis Culture produces performances, films, exhibitions, digital media, publications, documentaries, podcasts and hybrid works and offers fellowships and residencies both to emerging and established artists. With a constant online presence through a dedicated Youtube channel, Onassis Culture creates content for the present moment: culture connected to the here and now that becomes a way of life, embracing the local made global and the global made local. <https://www.onassis.org/culture>

FutureEverything

Established in Manchester and evolving from an annual festival into an award-winning arts organisation with a programme of cultural activity, FutureEverything is a cultural agency and innovation lab that has helped shape digital culture locally, nationally and internationally for over 25 years. They bring audiences together to discover new ideas and imagine better futures through public artworks, cross-sector collaborations and digital debates.

Their mission is to push creative boundaries to stimulate new ways of thinking around urgent global issues, across disciplines and audiences. They aim to spearhead positive societal change and pioneer cultural and critical connections between artists, architects, designers, industries and communities from the hyperlocal to the global.

They work to address social inequalities by facilitating creative spaces and by working in non-art domains including public parks, high streets, and online spaces, engaging with diverse audiences. Their multi-disciplinary projects develop with innovative design approaches using technology as a basis for discussion. They advocate for the transformative power of art and bring together artists and cultural organisations with other industries, with a strong focus on collaborations and partnerships.

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