

ECLIPSE

7th ATHENS BIENNALE

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AB7: ECLIPSE

The Athens Biennale announces its seventh edition, titled **ECLIPSE**, co-curated by **Omsk Social Club** and **Larry Ossei-Mensah** under the artistic direction of **Poka-Yio**. ECLIPSE is planned to take place in **Spring 2021** in various locations in Athens. The exhibition will feature artists based in North and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe, many of whom will be exhibiting in Greece for the first time.

The exhibition title highlights the obscured perspective of reality caused by the **constant state of flux** we are experiencing in our society now. ECLIPSE engages the social, political and spiritual changes of today's global construct and in **Athens** itself, as a rising metropolis located at the intersection of Europe, Asia and Africa both physically and historically. An eclipse is a phenomenon of filtering and shrouding as well as a cosmic event. The experience of the eclipse **functions as a catalyst** for reprocessing an unresolved past that can inform an unspoken present and ultimately shape our future. Thus, Athens serves as the appropriate vantage point for contemplating the nuances of time and space. Furthermore, examining the question; **is the west in decline or in a moment of significant transformation?**

ECLIPSE seeks to assess the implications of **identity, history, and cultural complexity**. The 7th Athens Biennale offers an arena to interrogate many of the ideas, queries, concerns, and desires that are frequently not platformed within a Biennial format. In an effort to activate a dynamic **cross-cultural discourse**, AB7 will highlight the works of **artists from the African Diaspora** in addition to other artistic voices that have historically been pushed to the periphery. This engagement will be articulated through the use of a **"Black Lens"** as one of the frameworks. This approach seeks to engage the varying perspectives and artistic practices percolating within the African diaspora. This dialogue will be situated alongside a complimentary framework of **artistic interventions** that use dynamic manifestations to compose unique practical narratives. Their aim is to strategically address the viewers imagination of **potential parallel worlds and futures**. Composing a set of spaces that platform ideas such as radical care, interspecies friendship and sonic viewing strategies, ECLIPSE presents a translocal chapter of contemporary thought on how to co-exist within a world differently.

Defying the prevalent politics of historical narratives, ECLIPSE proposes to challenge oppressive mechanisms and outdated idealism. By deploying various **immersive techniques** such as real game play, radical gossip, persuasive realities, "emotional hypnosis", bodying, synthesis, and visualization, ECLIPSE activates **narrative fabrication** and orchestrates an experiential shift in art viewing opening an alternative future for contemplation.

The 7th Athens Biennale is co-financed by the Hellenic Republic and the European Union through the Regional Operational Programme of "Attica" in the framework of NSRF 2014-2020, performs under the auspices of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports and is realized in partnership with Onassis Culture. AB7: ECLIPSE is produced by the Athens Biennale.

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Quotes

Looking towards both the present and the future, the Onassis Foundation and the Athens Biennale converse with the times and operate based on the moment and the situation. We want to be the glue that connects people and ideas, and trigger discussions about the great issues of our times. With Eclipse we welcome the expectation of light, carrying a strong social and political footprint, where life happens, here in Athens.

— Afroditi Panagiotakou, director of Culture of the Onassis Foundation

In its 7th edition the Athens Biennale follows the changes that have occurred in Athens and lead into rephrasing its scope. When it started, its scope was to help place Athens in the international contemporary art map and now, 15 years later, to help the Athenian cultural scene contribute to the international discourse by providing the alternative perspective of a rising metropolis.

— Poka-Yio, founding director of the Athens Biennale and artistic director of AB7: ECLIPSE

ECLIPSE for us is an opportunity to propose the destruction of outdated idealism. In order to create an exhibition that revolves around the reclamation of life and how to collectively fathom a new potential of experience not only in our artistic practices but one that begins in our emotive bodies. We hope this can address the lives we live “differently”.

— Omsk Social Club, co-curators of AB7: ECLIPSE

ECLIPSE provides an opportune platform for a robust and critical cross-cultural dialogue that questions assumptions, explores new possibilities and stimulates the imagination. I could think of no better place to have this important conversation than in Athens.

— Larry Ossei-Mensah, co-curator of AB7: ECLIPSE

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AB7: CURATORIAL TEAM & ARTISTIC DIRECTION



Omsk Social Club (Co-Curators)

Omsk Social Club forks traditional methods of Live Action Role Play (Larp) through immersive installations and into Real Game Play (RGP) to induce states that could potentially be a fiction or a yet, un-lived reality. Omsk works closely with networks of viewers, everything is unique and unrehearsed. The live installations they create examine virtual egos, popular experiences and political phenomena. Allowing the works to become a dematerialized hybrid of modern-day culture alongside the participant's unique personal experiences. In the past Omsk Social Club's Real Game Play immersive environments have introduced landscapes and topics such as rave culture, survivalism, catfishing, desire & sacrifice, positive trolling, algorithmic strategies and decentralized cryptocurrency. They have exhibited across Europe in various institutions, galleries, theatres and off-sites such as Martin Gropius Bau, House of Electronic Kunst Basel, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, HKW, Berlin, CCCB, Barcelona, Volksbühne, Berlin and Stems Gallery, Brussels. They have been included in 6th Athens Biennale ANTI (2018), Transmediale Festival (2019), The Influencers (2018) and Impakt Festival (2018). www.punkisdada.com



Larry Ossei-Mensah (Co-Curator)

Larry Ossei-Mensah uses contemporary art as a vehicle to redefine how we see ourselves and the world around us. The Ghanaian-American curator and cultural critic has organized exhibitions and programs at commercial and nonprofit spaces around the globe from New York City to Rome featuring such artists as Firelei Baez, Allison Janae Hamilton, Brendan Fernandes, Ebony G. Patterson, Glenn Kaino and Stanley Whitney to name a few. Moreover, Ossei-Mensah has actively documented cultural happenings featuring the most dynamic visual artists working today such as Derrick Adams, Mickalene Thomas, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Federico Solmi, and Kehinde Wiley. Ossei-Mensah has had recent profiles in such publications like The New York Times, Artsy, and Cultured Magazine, which recently named him one of seven curators to watch in 2019.

www.larryosseimensah.com



Poka-Yio (Artistic Director)

Poka-Yio lives and works in Athens. He is a visual artist and curator, associate professor at the Athens School of Fine Arts, founding director of the Athens Biennale, and head of Onassis Foundation's Visual Culture. He is the co-founder of Alpha Station, Center for Contemporary Art in Athens. His practice includes painting, performances, theatre, short films and the artistic direction and curation of large-scale art projects that are designed as *gesamtkunstwerk*. His main focus is the dipole Attraction-Aversion at the age of a "culture of desire".

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AB7: SUPPORT

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Many, better. The Onassis Foundation supports the Athens Biennale since the beginning. Throughout these years, the contemporary art and culture scene in Athens has changed and evolved, emerging as one of the most exciting worldwide. The Onassis Foundation and Athens Biennale are mapping out a long-term strategy that will further develop the event, its international presence, the connection between performance and visual arts and the promotion of Greek artists globally.

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The Athens Biennale is the most significant periodic international event of contemporary culture in Greece. It is held every two years in Athens and in each edition it activates various locations in the city. It functions as an observatory of collective issues and as a platform for the designation of the contemporary culture of the Athenian metropolis, promoting experimental formats and various curatorial approaches. It has contributed to the establishment of Athens as a major cultural destination for contemporary art, on a par with the biggest capitals of Europe.

The Athens Biennale is the international contemporary art event of Greece through which the local artistic production is connected with the international art scene of contemporary art. It has been acknowledged as one of the most significant and innovative cultural initiatives in Europe by the European Cultural Foundation (2015 Princess Margriet Award for Culture).

In 2007, the Athens Biennale founded the European Biennial Network (EBN), a collaborative structure aiming to promote dialogue, interaction and collaboration between contemporary art Biennials in Europe. It is also a member of the International Biennial Association (IBA), a platform intending to use the knowledge, experience and wealth of information accumulated by organisers of large-scale periodic art events in order to support the communication and mobility of artists and art professionals.

To date, the Athens Biennale has attracted more than 315.000 visitors from Greece and abroad in its six editions, under which over 800 artists, international and Greek, have participated, and 127 new art productions have been commissioned or premiered:

AB6: ANTI (2018)

TTT, Esperia Palace Hotel, Benakeios Library, TSMEDE (Syntagma)

AB5to6: OMONOIA (2015-2017)

Bageion Hotel (Omonoia)

AB4: AGORA (2013)

Former Athens Stock Exchange (Sofokleous)

AB3: MONODROME (2011)

Diplareios School (Theatre Square), Arts Centre, El. Venizelos Museum (Park of Liberty)

AB2: HEAVEN (2009)

Former Olympic Properties (Palaio Faliro)

AB1: DESTROY ATHENS (2007)

Technopolis City of Athens (Metaxourgeio - Kerameikos)

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For more information about the organisation, previous editions and AB7: ECLIPSE, visit www.athensbiennale.org. For further updates, follow the Athens Biennale on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube) or subscribe to our newsletter.

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