

PROGRAM

Saturday, February 17, 2024

State of Concept, Tousa Botsari 19, Athens

20:00

The Dialogue by Maria Lalou (2018) 90'

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Goethe-Institut Athen, Omirou 14-16, Athens

20:00

Camera and the Mirror by Maria Lalou (2018) 43'

21:00

In Resistance 45'- Live,

pre-scripted / staged / recorded by Maria Lalou

with: Daphne Dragona, iLiana Fokianaki, Maria Komninos, Rachael Rakes

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Goethe-Institut Athen, Omirou 14-16, Athens

20:00

Animated World by Maria Lalou (2018) 6'

Parallel I-IV by Harun Farocki (2012-2014) 43'

Thursday, February 29, 2024

State of Concept, Tousa Botsari 19, Athens

20:00

Human Agents by Maria Lalou (2018) 4'09"

Salaam Cinema by Mohsen Makhmalbaf (1995) 75'

Friday, March 1, 2024

Greek Film Archive - Tainiothiki, Iera Odos 48, Athens

19:00-21:00 - Hall 2

Camera Actors by Maria Lalou (2018) 13'19" - in loop

21:00 - Hall 1

Camera Actors by Maria Lalou (2018) 13'19"

Le Mépris by Jean-Luc Godard (1963) 102'

Foyer

Mechanisms of the Seen by Maria Lalou, exhibition

Museum

IMAGE INFINITE by Maria Lalou, exhibition

IMAGE INFINITE- Silver-Cine by Maria Lalou (2021) 7'17" - in loop

IMAGE INFINITE- Casa in Rome by Maria Lalou (2021) 5'34" - in loop

CAN WE USE
THE CAMERA AS
A TOOL OF
RESISTANCE?

MARIA LALOU MECHANISMS OF THE SEEN

17.02. – 01.03.2024

STATE OF CONCEPT

Saturday 17.02. & Thursday 29.02.
Tousa Botsari 19, Athens

GOETHE-INSTITUT ATHEN

Tuesday 27.02. & Wednesday 28.02.
Omirou 14-16, Athens

GREEK FILM ARCHIVE – TAINIOTHIKI

Friday 01.03.
Iera Odos 48, Athens



Maria Lalou makes uniquely in-depth investigations into the technologies of visual recording as apparatus, subject, and conversant. Ranging from the analogue and digital camera to pre-constructing devices such as AI, Lalou's multidisciplinary works enliven and dialogue with theories of mechanical and digital vision and perception. They illustrate and make legible thorny ideas on media and surveillance theory while making new theoretical contributions through their singular systemic arrangements. This exhibition presents several of these projects together, blending performance, research, cinema, and objects and several kinds of encounter with image reproduction, surveillance, and ever developing methods of capture. These works are unified by their austere aesthetic: shown together they conjure an expansive lab-like setting, integrating the audience into the production and subjectivity of the works and bringing several years of research and technique into dialogue, with beginning object of study filmed performance experiments pushing the boundaries of cognition, in physicality and language and their affects in relation to institutional systems, surveyed networks and her own continuous discovery of identity.

This program, taking place over February and March 2024 at several locations in Athens, presents different components of Lalou's investigations and also generates new elements in the overall body of work. Each presentation will be an opportunity to display and generate new ideas connecting Lalou's work to the institutional, mediatic, and neighbourhood contexts of each space. At Goethe-Institut Athen, State of Concept, and the Greek Film Archive (Ταινιοθήκη) programs merge performance, conversation, and screenings. At State of Concept, Lalou's feature-length *The Dialogue* screens as a one-time engagement, followed by another event pairing Lalou's work *Human Agents* with Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *Salaam Cinema*. At Goethe-Institut Athen, Lalou's *Virtual Presence* short is joined by a new, live-recorded performance-interview, *In Resistance*, with the presence of Daphne Dragona, iLiana Fokianaki, Rachael Rakes, and Maria Komninos. Additionally, at Goethe-Institut Athen will be a screening of a special pairing of Lalou's short, *Animated World*, with *Parallel I-IV*, by Harun Farocki. At the Greek Film Archive, Lalou will present another series of cinematically-engaged encounters including an installation of the drawings *Mechanisms of the Seen* and the video work *Camera and the Mirror*, and events featuring the short work *IMAGE INFINITE*, paired with the classic film *Le Mépris* by Jean-Luc Godard. These locations each emphasise different aspects of aesthetics, politics, and cinematic inquiry in Lalou's practice, and bring light to their theoretical and filmic engagements and predecessors.

– Rachael Rakes 2023

artist & curator of *In Resistance and Mechanisms of the Seen* screenings exhibition
Maria Lalou (Athens 1977) is a conceptual artist, an experimental filmmaker and occasional writer. She explores the topic of viewing, incorporating cinematic apparatus and surveillance as part of her tools, with central references to the politics of the viewer. Large-scale installations, performances, films and publications characterize her work, shown internationally. Lalou holds a number of grants and awards, presenting her work internationally in exhibitions, publications and lectures. She has published three monographs [*theatro*] (2015 Onomatopée, Eindhoven), *the camera* (2019 Dolce Publications, Athens), and the recent [*UN*]FINISHED (2023, Jap Sam Books, Prinsenbeek) along with the architect Skafté Aymo-Boot. Lalou is a member of CREAM, University of Westminster, as a candidate for a Doctorate of Philosophy, via a PhD by Published Works. 2017-18 she was artist-in-residence at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York. Recent works have been presented at Greek Film Archive (Athens), Printed Matter (New York), Vilem Flusser Archive (Berlin) and LIMA Institute for Media Art (Amsterdam) among others. Together with architect Skafté Aymo-Boot, Maria Lalou has initiated and is co-directing the art centre 'Cross Section Archive' in Athens, a space focusing on art and architecture, around phenomena that occur in the intersection of those disciplines and explore how historical facts, political structures and everyday circumstances have been interfering with, forming, and directing them. Maria Lalou lives in Amsterdam and Athens.

Free admission at Goethe-Institut Athen and State of Concept.

Admission on February 29 at State of Concept is free upon reservation on a first come first served basis due to limited seating. Reservations can be made by sending your details to: info@stateofconcept.org

Language: English

Thanks to Stefanie Peter, Eleanna Papathanasiadi, Nikos Dimitrakakos, Dimitris Spanos from Goethe-Institut Athen, iLiana Fokianaki, Konstantina Melachrinou from State of Concept, Maria Komninos, Phaedra Papadopoulou, Tasos Adamopoulos, Nektarios Sakkas from the Greek Film Archive, Giuliano Anzani, and Skafté Aymo-Boot.

Special thanks to Daphne Dragona, iLiana Fokianaki, Maria Komninos, Rachael Rakes for their for their thoughts and presence at *In Resistance*.



Harun Farocki GfR



BIOGRAPHIES

and Perspectives of participants of In Resistance

on the ambitious role of technology

Daphne Dragona is a curator, writer and researcher working in Berlin and Athens. In her current work, she addresses the promises of degrowth for art and culture, and the role of technology in times of climate crisis. Dragona worked as curator for the transmediale festival between 2015-2019 and for the EMAF between 2020 and 2023. She is affiliated to Onassis Stegi as a curatorial advisor. She is teaching Theory of Curatorial Practices and Exhibition Design at the Department of Audiovisual Arts of the Ionian University. She holds a PhD from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Athens.

on identity politics vs. embodied reality

iLiana Fokianaki is a curator and theorist based in Athens and Rotterdam. Her curatorial practice focuses on how curating can become instituting -a verb- in the cases of small-scale precarious institutions. Through her independent and institutional curatorials and writings, she is considering institutional programming that is conceived from the local perspective but responding to the global sociopolitical realities of contemporaneity. Her research looks into formations of power and how they metamorphose under the influence of geopolitics, national identity and cultural and anthropological histories. In 2013, she founded State of Concept, a non-profit contemporary art institution situated in the heart of Athens which she ran for a decade. Since April 2024, she is the director of Kunsthalle Bern.

on myth vs. network vs. cinema

Maria Komninos is Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Political Communication National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She acts as Member of the Board of Directors and Program Officer of Greek Film Archive, and is a member of the Executive Committee of ACE (Association des Cinematheques Europeenes). She has been editor of the series Image and Communication in Papazisis publishing and Honorary Research Fellow, School of History of Art, Film, and Visual Media of Birkbeck College, in 2005-2006. Her research interests revolve around the Theory of Communication, Political Theory, Film Theory, Gender, Film Archives, and Preservation of Audiovisual Heritage.

on real time vs. registered time

Rachael Rakes is a curator, arts writer, editor, film programmer, and educator. She is currently the Artistic Director of the 12th Seoul Mediacity Biennale. She is an Editor at Large for Verso Books, a Contributing Editor for INFRASONICA, and a Screening Committee Member of the New York Film Festival. With Laura Huertas Millán, and Onyeka Igwe, she organizes the curatorial and research initiative on alternative ethnographies, Counter-Encounters. From 2019-2022 she was the Curator for Public Practice at BAK basis voor actuele kunst. Until 2019, she was the Head Curator and Manager of the Curatorial Programme at De Appel. Rakes has taught recently for Zine Eskola, HKU, KASK, The New School, Harvard University, and the New Centre for Research and Practice, and advised for Sandberg Institut. Rakes is editor of the books *This, Too, is a Map: An Anthology* (2023, [NAME Publications]), *Toward the Not-Yet* (2021, BAK/MIT Press), and *Practice Space* (2019, NAME/De Appel).

Saturday, February 17, 2024

State of Concept, Touse Botsari 19, Athens

20:30

The Dialogue by Maria Lalou (2018) 90'

The Dialogue is a discourse - live and pre-recorded - between the artists and scholars invited to discuss contemporary subjectivity. Questioning and at the same time establishing a statement about the parameters of how an image can be infinite. A camera infinitely moves in parallel to a table around which five people dressed in black are situated. It faces always the back of one; the director herself. Her initial monologue leads to a live discourse between the five, shaping a manifestation of concerns and suggestions on resisting algorithmic governance. The live dialogue based on the format of Gorgias of Plato isn't pre-scripted, yet it is moderated; it is recorded in one long shot by a camera placed on a dolly track.



20:00

Camera and the Mirror by Maria Lalou (2018) 43'

Lalou analyzed the work of three central white male figures that made a significant stance on the role of camera apparatus in film production, planning her slow physical death as an artist-at-work, and her transference to a three-model algorithm, after fifteen years of producing works that incorporate cinematic and surveillance apparatuses as her tools, with references to the politics of the viewer. The first chapter *Virtual Presence* is based on her own first feature film recorded as a single shot *The Dialogue*. Lalou performs her gradual transition to a non-human, by staging her fall into the darkness of a black screen, and yet still wording out her thoughts on the reasons for replacing her labor by a three-module algorithm and focusing on the viewers' data protection. With as core subject the power of the learning machine, she is introducing the process of extracting the viewer as a physical human entity from the live act and the artist from the role of the operator of the mechanisms of the seen in cultural production. The following chapters move the narrative through the basis of three major works of film history: *Parallel I-IV* (2012-14), *Salaam Cinema* (1995) and *Le Mépris* (1963) along with Vilém Flusser's writings on the functions of the apparatus in the book *Post-History*. By marking an index of cameras demonstrating the ideas behind their medium produced, and by scrutinizing the ingenious of each film, she directs a manual towards freedom from algorithmic governance where the relation between camera, view and actor, subject and object is foregrounded and destabilized.



Foyer

Mechanisms of the Seen by Maria Lalou

Mechanisms of the Seen - diagrammatic drawings present Lalou's elaborate research work and rationale along with a two-way relationship of theory and aesthetic reference. What we see in the drawings is transferred to her installation and filmic works and vice versa accordingly. Thus, what she previously considered as a sketch has developed into the production of meaningful diagrammatic drawings which deal with the sketching of ideas, storyboards, scores and often form part of the works themselves, as we see in the work of *Camera Actors* part of the *Camera and the Mirror* tetralogy.

Museum

IMAGE INFINITE by Maria Lalou

The works presented in the Museum room are a preview of a filmic experiment based on a pre-scripted and live recorded performance, and an artistic research of a manual of resistance against algorithmic governance. The work brings together the domain of generative art, the history of film production, cyberspace and the white cube gallery space. With cameras as the main actors in the installation and filmic set, the humans are physically deploying the instructions of an artificial intelligence algorithm, evaluating: How can an image be infinite? and: How to alternate algorithmic governance, based on the idea of Flusser that only malfunctioning program allow for freedom?

IMAGE INFINITE - Silver-Cine by Maria Lalou (2021) 7'17" - in loop

Silver-Cine is based on a specific scene in *Le Mépris* at Silver Cine, where all characters are performing a testament, for their viewer and possibly giving their lines to their director. An intrinsic part of the film, in *Silver Cine*, staging the triple ironic relations, including the Brechtian fall of the front wall within its cinematic house, and Godard's presence at the staging of the cinematic discourse with his characters on role in the awaited play, the journalist mirroring his persona. One of the most important scenes to study on the deconstruction of a cinematic script.

IMAGE INFINITE - Casa in Rome by Maria Lalou (2021) 5'34" - in loop

Casa In Rome performs Lalou's study on Harun Farocki's, *Parallel IV*; in her idea of forming the concept of space in the networked reality in the gamified cinematic time along with the influence by game reality while growing through the PacMan generation. A set of walls in a three-dimensional format of a wall object in PacMan are choreographing the idea of the Infinite. An algorithm is allowing a set of instructions towards the Human Agents that are assisting the director to pass notes to the Camera Actors. The scene is based on the registered scene in *Le Mépris* where Paul and Camille walk through their apartments having an argumentative dialogue on love.

Friday, March 1, 2024

Greek Film Archive - Tainiothiki, Iera Odos 48, Athens

19:00-21:00 - Hall 2

Camera Actors by Maria Lalou (2018) 13'19" - in loop

By marking an index of cameras demonstrating the ideas behind their medium produced, Lalou uses the function of each of the camera devices she chooses as protagonists. A paired system of thoughts between the role of each camera device upholds our current cinematic experience, with the scripted main roles confronting the cinematic industry and its mechanism witnessed on Godard's critical map of the industry on *Le Mépris*. In this way *Camera Actors*, is an essay deconstructing the complexity of its scripted encountering on the narrative image making and its instituting, with starting point the critical *Le Mépris*.

21:00 - Hall 1

Camera Actors by Maria Lalou (2018) 13'19"

Le Mépris by Jean-Luc Godard (1963) 102'

Paul Javal, a young French playwright who has found commercial success in Rome, accepts an offer from vulgar American producer Jeremy Prokosch to rework the script for German director Fritz Lang's screen adaptation of the *Odyssey*. *Contempt* (French: *Le Mépris*) is a 1963 French New Wave drama film written and directed by Jean-Luc Godard, based on the 1954 Italian novel *Il disprezzo* (*A Ghost at Noon*) by Alberto Moravia. It was filmed in Italy where it is set, with location shooting at the Cinecittà studios in Rome and the Casa Malaparte on Capri island. In a central sequence, the characters played by Piccoli and Bardot wander through their apartment alternately arguing and reconciling. Godard filmed the scene as an extended series of tracking shots, in natural light and in near real-time.



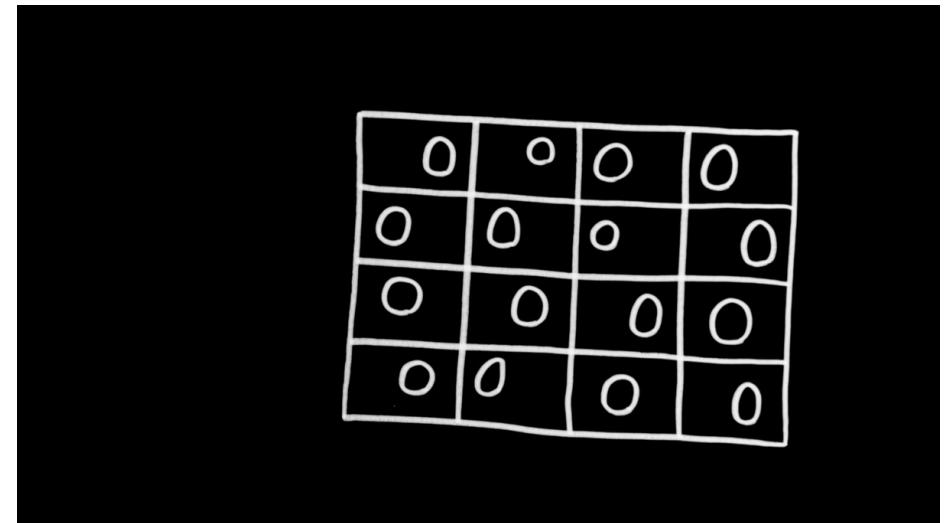
21:00

In Resistance 45'- Live

pre-scripted / staged / recorded by Maria Lalou

with: Daphne Dragona, iLiana Fokianaki, Maria Komninos, Rachael Rakes

A live talk with Daphne Dragona, iLiana Fokianaki, Maria Komninos and Rachael Rakes, scripted and directed by Lalou on stage. With Daphne Dragona on the ambitious role of technology, iLiana Fokianaki on identity politics vs embodied reality, Maria Komninos on myth vs. network vs. cinema and Rachael Rakes on real time vs. registered time.



Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Goethe-Institut Athen, Omirou 14-16, Athens

20:00

Animated World by Maria Lalou (2018) 6'

The role of the camera, its relation to the viewer, and the viewer as persistent co-narrator in the narrative structure. *Animated World* is a video essay, deconstructing 'the political' of the viewer by engaging the performative act of viewing under the lens of 'mechanisms of the seen,' with extract clips and in dialogue with thoughts and writings of Harun Farocki on the cinematic environment and its deconstruction and simulation in computer gaming. There are certain properties of the medium and the programmatic image in the game reality that are set in the filmic language as 'background'. The cinematic gesture by the focus of the camera is translated in the programmatic reality, in computing, in the term of 'command' during a computational narrative script. *Animated World* is the 2nd essay in *Camera and the Mirror*.

Thoughts and text written by Lalou based on *Post-History* book by Vilém Flusser. Clips presented in *Animated World* are based on the filmic essay *Parallel I-IV* by Harun Farocki.

Parallel I-IV by Harun Farocki (2012-2014) 43'

What happens when computer-generated video game images usurp film as the predominant medium of visual world-making? Harun Farocki's four-part *Parallel I-IV* (2012-14) takes up this question tracing how video games have developed from two-dimensional schematics to photorealistic environments. "The latest works by Farocki, *Parallel I-IV*, address the images of computer games, investigating their relationship with the "first person," and reality as an "absent referent" constructed by algorithms. When questioning these new images, Farocki not only rescues the reflection on the invention of perspective in the construction of the Renaissance universe, but also the debate on photography as a medium that liberates painting from the search of likeness. He asks if computers will perform functions previously assumed by film which, in turn, will be free for other functions." *Paço das Artes, for e-flux 2016*.



Thursday, February 29, 2024

State of Concept, Tousa Botsari 19, Athens

20:30

Human Agents by Maria Lalou (2018) 4'09"

After a while I thought that we as human have a secondary role yet the camera has the main one. *Human Agents*, is an essay building upon thought on the strategy of Resistance, based on the idea of camouflaging, with the use of the mirror as a device of erasure. *Human Agents* is based on the exemplary work of Mohsen Makhmalbaf, *Salaam Cinema*. In a counter-objectified reality, meaning in a networked discourse, how do we choose who are the main actors and who is in the background. There are certain ways that the erasure of the mirror's properties can alternate what is considered in the filmic discourse as 'background' to foreground, meaning alternate the focus of the main narrative-plot.

Thoughts and text written by Lalou based on *Post-History* book by Vilém Flusser. Clips presented in *Human Agents* are based on the film *Salaam Cinema*, by Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

Salaam Cinema by Mohsen Makhmalbaf (1995) 75'

A well-known Iranian director, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, plans to make a film for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of cinema. He placed an advertisement in a newspaper in order to hire one hundred actors. He has prepared 1,000 application forms, but 5,000 people show up. The result is a riot in which the applicants are trampled on and wounded. Mohsen Makhmalbaf auditions dozens of men and women in front of the camera; their statements, which are by turns funny and touching, reveal the reality of life in Iran. Thus, the director enables us to see and understand those intellectuals, students and children and above all the women, who cannot normally be heard or seen.

