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GALLERY OF THE FONDAZIONE SANDRETTO RE REBAUDENGO

Turin, via Modane 20

VENIA DIMITRAKOPOULOU PRIMORDIAL FUTURE Logos

*curated by Afrodite Oikonomidou and Matteo Pacini
with critic text by Franco Fanelli*

22 February - 31 March 2019

Opening Thursday 21 February, 6:30pm

press release, 14.02.2019

From 22 February to 31 March 2019, the **Gallery of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo** in **Turin** will host an exhibition of the work of Greek sculptress **Venia Dimitrakopoulou**, entitled *Venia Dimitrakopoulou. Primordial Future - Logos*, curated by Afrodite Oikonomidou and Matteo Pacini.

The Italian tour of the multifaceted artist continues in Turin with her second major solo show containing a **new selection of works**. Of particular note are **two large installations: a site specific work *Ellampsis* (2019)** created for the occasion, which takes the form of a steel epigraph with a 'prophetic' luminous text, and the **installation *Dialogues* (2019)**, a series of books deconstructed into imposing steel plates and delicate Chinese papers on which phrases float in black and red ink, inspired by sociological research carried out among ordinary people, the expression of voices that do not usually capture media attention. In fact, Venia Dimitrakopoulou has arrived in Italy with her triptych of exhibitions during a difficult and dramatic phase for Western history and the destiny of Europe, composed of walls, populism, nationalism, racial discrimination and new frontiers, as **Franco Fanelli** remarks in his introduction to the catalogue. However, it is precisely in a crisis that 'the hero', in this case the artist who is capable of awakening the collective conscience, "needs to know how to pose the right questions to the right people. In a crisis, heroes always seek their answers at the deepest level". For this reason Dimitrakopoulou questions and investigates myth, history and the recent past, right down to the common roots of Italy and Greece, moving from "the ivory tower of art to the control tower of the social condition", to quote philosopher Dionysis Kavvathas.

The major theme of the entire Turin exhibition is the '**logos**', the word that becomes a sign and, at the same time, the sign that becomes a word, and is thus well suited to the white surfaces of the exhibition space, which seem to evoke 'unwritten pages' as the sculptress suggests: "All the works on show have one thing in common: they are covered with texts that almost appear to be automatic writing. Artist's books, leporellos, diaries, and again the *Shirt of Nessus* and the *Secret Armour*". Indeed these two works act as a link between the exhibition in Palermo - *Primordial Future - Matter*, which ended at the Salinas Museum on 3 February - and the Turin exhibition, as Fanelli again points out: "In these two, splendid works on paper, inscribed within the shape of an ancient religious tunic or perhaps that of a banner, covered in tormented writings, the alpha and omega come to life along with a joining of opposites and circularity, like constellations across Dimitrakopoulou's work". A duality that exists both in the format of the works on show and in the message they convey, which describes a universal condition in the most imposing creations, and an intimate world in those on a smaller scale, among them A

diary, 3.107 *Linethoughts*, *Labirinth*, *Amulet*, and the series *Summer Days* and *Cold Days*, veritable artist's books that form personal anthologies of interior experiences.

Indian ink, pastel, watercolour and collage on rare papers result in **works that range in size from small to large**, in a spirit of stylistic and technical nomadism spanning traditional sculpture, installation, video, performance, writing and graphics, which, as Fanelli points out, represents "a condition that is coherent and necessary for an artist who, in a classical exile, lives and works on the brink of an epochal shift. The brink is a recurring metaphor in her work, as is the concept of the double, of chronological circularity, of the oxymoron that gives the Italian triptych its name, "Primordial Future". These are all concepts that refer emphatically to that idea of a border, perhaps the most frequent of her artistic themes, alongside metamorphosis, which for the artist represents an essential and poetic condition".

The exhibition at the Gallery of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin is **under the patronage of** the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Embassy of Greece in Rome, the Regione Piemonte, the City of Turin, the National Museum of Contemporary Art - Athens (EMST), the Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti - Turin, the DAMS degree course at the University of Turin, the Piedmont-Greece Association 'Santorre di Santarosa', and the Italian-Greek Cultural Training Association 'Microkosmos'. The event is **the second stage of a trilogy of Italian exhibitions** organised by the **Hellenic Foundation for Culture - Italy** in collaboration with **Artespressione in Milan**, the Italian gallery representing the artist for this series of exhibitions, which will continue from 12 April to 14 June 2019 in **Trieste** at the Civico Museo Sartorio and the Castello di San Giusto with other new works on the theme of 'Sound'.

Venia Dimitrakopoulou's three exhibitions in Italy - in Palermo, Turin and Trieste - are part of the **Tempo Forte Italia - Grecia** programme, an initiative promoted by the Italian Embassy in Athens and ratified during the First Intergovernmental Summit between Italy and Greece, held on 14 September 2017 on Corfu, whose purpose is to encourage and support the strengthening of cultural ties between the two countries, maintaining a balance between the various cultural spheres, from the traditional to the contemporary, and from the past to the future.

The exhibition series is accompanied by a complete bilingual **catalogue** in Italian and English, published by **Umberto Allemandi**.

Short biography: **Venia Dimitrakopoulou** was born in Athens, Greece, in 1965. She attended sculpture at the 1st Workshop of Sculpture in the Athens School of Fine Arts while studying theatre at the Athens Conservatoire Drama School. She has also attended drawing classes at the Atelier Vivant of the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA). She lives and works in Athens and on the island of Aegina. She is a member of the Chamber of Fine Arts of Greece (EETE) and of the working group of 'Tempo Forte Italia – Grecia' of the Italian Embassy in Athens.

She has presented her work in solo exhibitions and participated in group shows in Greece and abroad. Her work is located in public spaces as well as private collections in Greece and abroad.

In 2014, *Venia Dimitrakopoulou. Promahones* was published by Hatje Cantz, a publication that focuses on her large-scale sculpture *Promahones*, presented at the Benaki Museum in Athens during the winter of 2014-2015. Since 2016, this public sculpture has been installed in the garden of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens.

In November 2015 she presented her artistic activity and work in Italy, to the students of the University Ca' Foscari, in the context of Biennale Sessions of the Venice Biennale; the meetings were realized by the University Ca' Foscari, Venice in collaboration with Fondo Ambiente Italiano (FAI) - Sezione giovani and the Hellenic Foundation of Culture in Italy. The events were curated by Caterina Carpinato and the gallery Artespressione of Paula Nora Seegy in Milan, where in 2016 Venia Dimitrakopoulou held her first personal exhibition in Italy, curated by Charis Kanellopoulou and Matteo Pacini.

In January 2017, the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella awarded her as *Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia*, in recognition of her contribution, through her artistic work, to creating bonds with Italy, a country with which she feels deeply connected.

www.dimitrakopoulou.com

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Exhibition details – Turin

Title Venia Dimitrakopoulou. Primordial Future - Logos

Exhibition organized by Hellenic Foundation for Culture, Italy

Curated by Afrodite Oikonomidou and Matteo Pacini

Venue Gallery of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, via Modane 20, Turin

Dates 22 February - 31 March 2019

Grand opening Thursday 21 February, 6:30pm

Opening hours Thursday 8-11pm; Friday - Saturday - Sunday 12-7pm

Entrance free

Catalogue published by Umberto Allemandi with critic text by Franco Fanelli

Info to the public veniad.italia@gmail.com

Next exhibition in Trieste

Title Venia Dimitrakopoulou. Primordial Future - Sound

Venue Sartorio City Museum and San Giusto Castle, Trieste

Dates 12 April - 14 June 2019

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