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**PRESS RELEASE**

***Nicosia Open Up Festival –- A festival open to all***

The *Nicosia Open Up Festival – A festival open to all* is a multi-dimensional arts festival that features an art exhibition, performances, an open discussion, lectures-performances, video-installations, multifaceted art activities, music, screenings, a street party, culinary events and workshops. The four-day events of the festival begin on Thursday, 19 October 2023, with the opening of the Open Up exhibition at NiMAC [The Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, Associated with the Pierides Foundation] and conclude on Sunday, 22 October 2023, with a large street party.

The *Nicosia Open Up Festival* (<https://openupeu.com/activities/nicosia-festival/>) is organized by the Pierides Foundation within the framework of the European project Open Up (<https://openupeu.com/>) in collaboration with six other major and renowned partners: PUBLICS Agency, Helsinki (Finland), Valand Academy, Gothenburg (Sweden), New Hand Lab, Covilhã (Portugal), University of Thessaly, Volos (Greece), Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain), University of Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens (France).

The festival presents works by artists who participated in workshops, seminars and various other activities organised and implemented by all partner-institutions participating in the Open Up project during the four-year programme (2019–2023). The aim of the programme and of the festival itself is to promote talented artists from Cyprus, Finland, France, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, who for various reasons –political, geographical, social and economic– were not able to present their work at local or European level. The *Nicosia Open Up Festival* is the last and major event of the European project and reflects the programme’s vision: Faith in the value of human creativity.

This is the first time that such a festival is organised in Cyprus; one that seeks to bring to the surface and give a platform to more than 100 artists through screenings, performances, music, visual arts events, exhibition, installations, design, fashion and more. During the four-day festival, various events will be held in four venues (NiMAC, Theatro Polis OPAP, Gardens of the Future, and various outdoor spaces around NiMAC), the entrance to which will be free for the public.

The *Nicosia Open Up Festival – A festival open to all* aspires to become an event of inclusion and common understanding of numerous diverse artists and practices.

**Pierides Foundation, Nicosia, Cyprus**

The Pierides Foundation participates in the *Nicosia Open Up Festival* with the following actions: organising an open discussion, curating the exhibition at NiMAC and participating in it with works resulting from the workshops of the Design Lab, Visual Arts Lab, Fashion Lab and Stories of Shifts Lab, as well as works from the Performance Lab at the Theatro Polis OPAP. In addition, it will hold musical events in the streets around NiMAC throughout the duration of the four-day festival.

**Open Discussion** on the European Funding Programmes for Culture

**Venue:** Nicosia Municipality Conference Hall

**Date and Time:** Thursday, 19 October 2023, 10.00–13.00

With the themes, challenges, and best practices of the Open Up project in mind, the discussion will examine the prospects of such European programmes.

**Coordinator:** Apostolos Kouroupakis

**Speakers:**

* Yiannis Toumazis: Former Deputy Minister of Culture, Nicosia, Cyprus
* Annabelle Antas: PUBLICS, Helsinki, Finland
* Mick Wilson: Valand Academy, Gothenburg, Sweden
* Guida Rolo: New Hand Lab Centre, Covilhã, Portugal
* Prof. Zisis Kotionis: University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece
* Prof. Jessica Jacques: Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain
* Prof. Andri Michael: University of Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, France
* Michalis Karakatsanis: Officer of the Organisation for European Programmes and Cultural Relations

Participation to the Open Discussion, which will be held in English, will be by invitation only following expression of interest.

At the beginning of the discussion, there will be a 20-minute documentary about all the workshops of the Open Up project. The documentary was directed by Sébastien Denis and produced by the University of Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, France.

**Open Up Exhibition**

**NiMAC**

**19–22 October 2023**

The exhibition features the works of the artists who participated in Open Up project by organization and country. The combination and coexistence of such different arts, styles and perceptions constituted a challenge and a motivation for the curator of the exhibition, Xenios Symeonides. The exhibition reflects the coexistence of creativity beyond geographical limitations and dividing lines, highlights the concept of inclusion in civil society and provides a platform and a voice to many artists for the first time.

Pierides Foundation will present at the Open UP exhibition the final works produced by the Design Lab, Visual Arts Lab, Fashion Lab and Stories of Shifts Lab:

**Design Lab**

The creators present the final works of the workshop in a site-specific installation that includes visual elements, documentary production and participatory events. The works presented are related to the field of product and service design. Participants developed online platforms and applications aimed at facilitating and accelerating the process of social inclusion of underrepresented communities.

The “Design Lab” included a series of workshops and presentations for marginalised creators, such as refugees and asylum seekers. The programme was coordinated by designer Constantinos Economides with invitations to experts who were assigned the direction of the relevant workshops: Yianna Tsolaki, Constantinos Markou, Dimitris Tsiropoulos, Nikolas Karatzias, Andreas Georgiades and Urban Gorillas.

***Participants***

* Abdul Gandy Bande, *Untitled*
* Cagla Elektrikci, Eliana Petrou, Bikash Shrestha, *BRIDGE IΤ*
* Bikash Shrestha, Panayiotis Pavlides, *HELPBANK*
* Christoforos Christodoulou, *Notes on a Blackboard*
* John Molua, *PEACEBALL–SPORTS VISION CYPRUS*
* Tuene Bebe Bell, Thierno Cire Barry, Christian Bapambe, Christos Evangelou, Israilou Bah, Rahim Sidibe, *RAPIC.INFO*

**Visual Arts Lab**

The works presented in the context of Visual Arts – Printmaking Lab are the result of two years of workshops.

The themes of the projects are mainly drawn from the personal concerns and experiences of the participants. However, the opportunity given to them to collaborate with artists from the other countries-partners (Finland, Sweden, Portugal, Greece, Spain, France) proved extremely useful in enriching their knowledge and experience. Furthermore, their participation in the three-day “Transnational Workshop” –including a visit to Famagusta, Cyprus– contributed decisively to this. Issues, such as justice, abandonment, isolation, memory, the insanity of war and division, were discussed. All these were the source of inspiration for the engraving works created with a contemporary visual arts approach and enlightened social content. Installation works/videos and prints on various surfaces will be presented in NiMAC’s exhibition hall.

***Participants***

* Markos Alexandrou, *Broken*, prints on fabric
* Ilina Chervonnaya, *Stuffed by Care*, mixed media installation / prints
* Sakis Doritis, *I Am Not Japanese*, silkscreen prints / triptych
* Rebecca Efstathiou, *ase ta logia (leave the words)*, digital image / video over a 3D holographic projector
* Eleni Kepola, *Per\_fail\_ction*,mixed materials, found objects, prints
* Eleni Mylona, *La Vie D΄Un Mannequin* (*The Life of a Mannequin*), mixed media installation / fabrics / prints
* Katerina Neofitidou, *Inaccessible*, MDF, polystyrene, acrylic, silkscreen print
* Despo Pringi, *Shadow – The Memory of the Root*, engraving and colour on lino, silkscreen transparency print
* Kyriakos Theocharous, *Chine Collé Vol.2 / Chine Collé Vol.2*, Metal stencils, Diptych
(2 itm100x70cm)
* Thalia Vassiliou, *Missed Connections*, mixed materials, wall composition
* Celia Wong, *Mini Periptero*, wood, silkscreen prints

**Fashion Lab**

The Fashion Lab addressed current challenges in the fashion industry, advocating for sustainable fashion through the repurposing of existing materials. It emphasized the fusion of traditional arts and crafts with contemporary fashion, guiding participants to create sustainable garments and fostering creativity and skills development.

* Nune Tounjikian’s work focuses on recycling and repurposing materials to create contemporary clothing. She transforms old clothes and fabrics into new pieces, often combining household and other textiles in her creations.
* Hayal Gezer’s work is centred around the element of “ethereal” as a symbol of cultural heritage. Her work draws inspiration from cultural traditions, incorporating a sense of spirituality and other “ethereal” elements.
* Vasia Zisimou is inspired by the fashion of the 1950s and 1960s, using this period as a reference point for her works. Her personal nostalgia and her love for motion pictures from that era are the starting point of her work.
* Grace Patricia Michail presents vests (sleeveless jackets) that showcase traditional Greek clothing and its heritage in a new context. The combination of traditional and modern elements in her creations is a focal point to her creations.
* George Kyrou presents vests that reflect his personal aesthetic style.

**Stories of Shifts Lab**

The “Stories of Shifts” workshop, under the coordination of Danai Anagnostou and Lia Haraki, presents the audiovisual works of its seven participants. The workshop took place in Nicosia in March 2023 and continued online until August of the same year, combining practices from different fields, such as animation, storytelling and performance. The workshop was attended by seven participants, one from each of the seven cultural and academic partner-countries of the Open Up project: Cyprus, Finland, Sweden, Portugal, Greece, Spain, and France. The aim of the workshop was to develop the skills of the participants, offering them experiences and tools that will positively influence their future career path.

The multi-sensory video installation experience of those who participated in the “Stories of Shifts” workshop explores a range of themes including history and identity, self-introspection, memory, association, climate change, as well as contemporary socio-economic changes.

The video installation *Stories of Shifts*, which is presented at the Open Up exhibition at NiMAC, is a multidimensional experience for all visitors. Through animation, the following seven artists share their perspective, challenging audiences to think about their own self-discovery and understanding of their environment:

* Ainhoa Concustell López examines the role of teacher, showing how she incorporates the tools she acquired from the Open Up workshops as a history teacher and documents her pedagogical method.
* Aladdin Mofakheri adopts a different approach, presenting a stop-motion video made from recyclable materials. His work is a dynamic reference to climate change.
* Bruno Miguel Marques combines videos and photos from his participation in the programme, creating an internal narrative, enhanced by electronic music and sound effects.
* Hayal Gezer draws inspiration from one of her dreams, exploring the complexities of ancestry, national identity and the coexistence of different realities in Cyprus.
* Ilaf Haidar presents a poetic depiction of the small changes we experience every day. The poetic capture of personal transformation is connected to the journey of Open Up.
* Vangelis Xenohidis presents a narrative in which he wakes up in a mysterious desert landscape, dealing with fragmented memories in his effort to make sense of his past.
* Vishnu Vardhani Rajan combines collage techniques and follows food delivery couriers in different cities.

**Performance at the Theatro Polis-OPAP**

**Performance Lab**

The artists present the final works of the “Performance Lab”: performances, installations, participatory events and site-specific works, at the Theatro Polis OPAP, on the streets of Nicosia and at the Gardens of the Future venue. The Performance Lab included a series of workshops and presentations for emerging visual arts and performance artists who were not yet established in the arts world. The programme was coordinated by artist Lia Haraki with workshops and master classes by active artists such as: Eleana Alexandrou, Alexis Vassiliou, Petros Konnaris, PASHIAS, Guy Cools, Yiannis Christofides, Kesrel Leah, Ariana Markoulidou, Panagiotis Tofi and others.

***Participants***

* Natalie Adamos, “Washing Machine”, performance, 8΄
* Theodora Andreou, “Sex CARing”, performance, 20΄, +18
* Ifigenia Avraam, “Sun rays”, installation
* Demetra Demetriadou, “My nightmare”, performance, 20΄
* Haris Iacovou, “Retrieveentity;”, installation/performance, 20΄
* Nayia Τ. Karacosta, “Un | packed”, participatory performance | documentary installation, 45΄
* Maria Kasapi, “Hybrid”, installation, performance, 15΄
* Giorgos Bizios, “BRIEF”, performance, 15΄
* Eleni Mylona, “RUNWAY”, performance, 20΄
* Alexandra Pambouka, “Ritewright”, performance, 20΄
* Elisavet Panagiotou, “childhood leftovers”, performance, 17΄
* Natalia Panagiotou, “La patronne”, participatory performance, 20΄
* Panagiota Nikolaou, “Je t’aime”, performance, 20΄
* Eleni Phyla, “Forest and Love”, video, 15΄
* Eleana Charalambous, “Checkmate”, performance, 20΄
* Maria Charalambous, “μ [e] r r o r”, video-installation
* Simone Khenkin, “Conversations with my therapist”, performance, 20΄
* Argyro Christodoulou, “Battlehood”, performance, 15΄
* Emily Cutler, “Somewhere, Somehow…”, performance, 12΄
* Hayal Gezer, “Undysreguated”, participatory performance, 15΄
* Nutsa Poulouzasvili, Vicky Kalla, Yiannis (Jay) Stamataris, “Confetti”, performance, 20΄
* Celia Wong, “The real people 2023”, performance, 20΄

**PUBLICS, Helsinki, Finland**

PUBLICS presents at the *Nicosia Open Up Festival* “Today is Our Tomorrow: The Voice That Remains” (TIOT), which is the annual transdisciplinary public gathering of PUBLICS that was initiated in 2019. Each year, this annual meeting supports intersectional ecologies, a diversity of thoughts, practices, identities and their experiences, taking a different form, importance, title and location.

This year, “Today is Our Tomorrow: The Voice That Remains” comprises all new works: performances, theatre, soundscapes, symposia, films, lectures, podcasts, an accompanying publication, the release of a vinyl record and the premiere of a new soundtrack for an imaginary future festival.

This series of nine unique artistic commissions are presented at the *Nicosia Open Up Festival*. Each work-commission focuses on the current futurity and presentness of the voice in its many forms, vocal modes and acoustic modalities. These artists explore acts of world listening, life recording and the voice as a body of cohabitation, modes of living and being together, each giving form to our political present and to our future futures.

 “Today is Our Tomorrow: The Voice That Remains” frames much of PUBLICS’ activities over the past year on the recurrent thematic and evolving concept of the voice, and its collection of commissioned works explores the interaction between people, their acoustic worlds and the sounds of the environment that the listener hears and imagines.

 ***Participants***

* PUBLICS Youth, *PUBLICS Youth 2022 in Conversation* and *Harold Offeh on working with PUBLICS Youth*, podcast in two episodes.
* Harold Offeh, “Lounging Symposium”, performance.
* KMRU, “Stupor: A Soundtrack for a Future Festival”, performance.
* Noor Abed & Mark Lofty, “Yours Truly”*,* multimedia lecture-performance.
* Shubhangi Singh, “Force meets vacuum”*,* lectur- performance.
* Sepideh Rahaa, *Songs to Earth, Songs to Seeds,* installation (multichannel video).
* Anu Pennanen, *5, 10, 100 YEARS FROM NOW, 2023,* video installation.
* Eugenia Lim, *Metabolism,* film-essay.
* Moe Mustafa (Atheer Soot), “The Topography soundscape of my queer body”*,* sound performance, +18.

**Valand Academy, Gothenburg, Sweden**

The following works will be presented by the Valand Academy of Gothenburg during the *Nicosia Open Up Festival*:

* A compilation audio piece comprising a collection of audio works by Open Up participants from Gothenburg that includes experimental sound art works, vocal tracks, and short readings in several languages. This is played as an ambient work at NiMAC.
* Three video monitors/screens showing: (a) the Open Up Gothenburg Documentary [Eldin Smajlović] (b) a compilation of video works from Open Up participants [film works, Azad Larki, Masoud Yousefi, Kamaran Seydiyan, Rezgar Alipanah] and (c) a compilation of videos works from Open Up participants [more experimental fine art and performative works, Ingrid Lindberg, Gunilla Gränsbo, Azadeh E Zaghi, Marie Bergqvist].
* A set of wall-based works (mixed media on paper, digital prints, paintings etc.) presented as a carpet of images in the wall rather than individual picture hanging [Aladdin Mofakheri, Bereen Darwish, Branka Vidovic-Butler, Elin Wennberg, Hamidreza Jahantighl, Helaleh Ghaderi, Kamaran Seydiyan, Negar (Nila) Latifian, Nora Ordenes Söderbergh, Olof Nilsson (& Ronak Rabiee), Rezgar Alipanah, Ronak Rabiee, Sara Khayat, (Roz) Tayebeh Madadi, Ward Zaraa].
* A series of small sculptures (wood, mixed media assemblage) [Annika Wennberg and Heba Alakkad].
* A sculpture comprising a tower of vases [Aladdin Mofakheri].
* Some handmade garments: (a) upcycling materials [Aladdin Mofakheri] and (b) fashion design [Fatemeh Salehi].
* A set of books: works drawn from the prior practices of the Open Up Gothenburg participants [Ronak Rabiee, Kamaran Seydiyan, Helaleh Ghaderi, Paul Butler, Negar (Nila) Latifian], as well as the new book *OPEN UP SAMPLER* that comes out of the work of the Art Publishing Workshop.

**New Hand Lab,** **Covilhã, Portugal**

The New Hand Lab (NHL) is located in Covilhã, a semi-mountainous region of Portugal that historically was home to over 180 small wool producing and textile industries. This space has become a thriving hub for creators and artists, who transform the history of wool into original and modern ideas. Their contribution to the *Nicosia Open Up Festival* is an installation in NiMAC’ s exhibition space, which is a collaboration of all New Hand Lab artists, each bringing her/his own particular elements and artistic perspective to contribute to the work as a whole. It is therefore a single work, in which video art meets the actual artwork.

The installation “*Mesa dos Sentidos*” (The Table of Senses) invites us to take a seat, creating a focus point, which allows the visitor to both observe and immerse himself or herself in the experience. There is no given way to live this observational experience. In fact, its luminosity would lose intensity if we were to guide the visitor down a specific path.

Having been immersed in the separate parts of this exhibition-environment –divided into three parts by the layout of the space we were invited to occupy– and having followed this trail the visitor returns to the light of the table, where this experience began. The visitor becomes aware of the materials that surround her/him; the different forms of artistic expression.

This artwork serves to map the entire creative process, bringing together different results, in this final piece, to show the essence of the space and its particular warmth. It therefore reflects on the creative process itself.

***Participants***

Curator: Alexandre Gonçalves. Artists: Alexandre Guerreiro, Ana Almeida, David Duarte, Diogo Pereira, Inês Viegas, Isabel Nave, Miguel Gigante, Raquel Balsa, Ricardo Magalhães, Rita Gascão Nunes, Sara Pinto.

**University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece**

The University of Thessaly Open Up team participates in the *Nicosia Open Up Festival* with a series of exhibits and events, the aim of which is to stir up already acceptable practices of responsibility from the new subjectivities and agencies of creation in architecture and art. That is, creative practices refer to the constitution of everyday life, the material experience of residence, the new forms of life that emerge somewhere within the ground we tread on, the constructions we inhabit, the near and distant bodies, the mechanisms and techniques, the nutritional values that we metabolise. Which is the contemporary subject, how can its residence be constituted with durability, and how does this define, together with the other ones, the field of its confluence with what we call life, or life-with-others?

Works by the artists of the programme related to the creation of household objects with the method of assemblage and the reuse of materials from the world around us meet in the exhibition space the “Garden of the Future” on the theme of nutritional self-sufficiency by Open Up UTH Canteen and the canteen coordinator Sumela Makanika. Alongside these events, digital material from the activities of the programme in previous years, as well as the collective catalogue of Open Up UTH will be shown.

***Participants***

Ifigenia Karameliou, Ismini Kaloupi, Katerina Zyrpiadou, Kostas Tsogas, Loukas Goumas, Lygeia Papanikolaou, Maria Konstantinidou, Maria Nikolopoulou, Nikos Karatzounis, Nikoletta Theodoropoulou, Xakousti Fourtouna, Soumela Makanika, Athena Davana, Georgia Doutsi, Yiannis Manolakis, Yiannis Mimitos, Eugenia Kiskini, Giovanni Mousias

**Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain**

The main objective of the University of Barcelona Open Up team has been to invite underrepresented artists and students to become aware of the potential of their creativity and at the same time invite Barcelona’s established creators and creative underrepresented students to work together in order to come up with an innovative and hybrid way of working. The contribution immigrants who left their home countries, –usually for survival reasons– or for people who were born in Catalunya in a migrant family, have enriched the artistic ecosystem with different cultural practices and experiences.

More specifically, this objective helped to bring to the fore the potential creativity of immigrants and/or people who are underrepresented in Barcelona's university communities and institutions. In addition, exchange strategies were drawn up between the creators born in migrant families and active artists of Barcelona, highlighting the resulting professional benefits. Underrepresented students in the creative professional sector were also invited, while a student network was also established between all the Open Up partner-universities, encouraging them to communicate and share their works.

The question of “How to get to know each other better and without sharing a language?” was the moto of the Open Up Festival in Barcelona, from which most of the works presented at the *Nicosia Open Up Festival* come from. Our invitation to those attending our activities in Nicosia is to come together in order to build other common languages through dress, sewing, the body, dance and movement, suggesting possible ways of inhabiting as migratory beings, in constant change, movement and construction.

***Participants***

* Laura Vilar, “Nomadic parcours”, participatory workshop and performance, streets around NiMAC (Open Call for entries to be announced)
* Meritxell de Soto, “432hz”, music and movement participatory workshop, “The Old Powerhouse Restaurant” Open Call for entries to be announced)
* Fiona Capdevila, *Throw*, site-specific installation, NiMAC
* Fiona Capdevila, *Transitional Dress*, site-specific installation, NiMAC
* Fiona Capdevila, “Calicoe meadows as interfaces”, participatory workshop, Gardens of the Future (Open Call for entries to be announced)
* Bárbara Bayarri and Daniela Callejas, “Fabrics to weave care”, performance, NiMAC and Gardens of the Future

**Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, France**

In the context of examining the concept of material culture in a broader sense, the University of Picardie Jules Verne, and more specifically the UFR des arts, focused its attention on such issues as the migration of people, languages and migratory aesthetics. Examining the links between art and craft, the UPJV Open Up group combined traditional techniques and materials –mother-of-pearl or clay– with the most up-to-date possibilities modern technology (3D printing). The theoretical and practical workshops for vulnerable or disadvantaged people and unrepresented population groups gave the opportunity to people from different cultures and territories to interact and mingle, and enabled the circulation of very fruitful ideas between the academic world and a more inclusive society.

The following works, made within the framework of the four-year Open Up programme, are presented at the *Nicosia Open Up Festival*:

* Ceramics “Earth as skin” by Jessica Lajard, Elisabeth Piot, and Caroline Sobczak.
* 3D Printing Workshop “Jewellery and micro sculpture in perspective” by Theodoulos Gregoriou.
* Performance “When objects tell a story” by Lise Lerichomme.
* Performance “No Borders” by Barthélémy Toguo. The artist will unroll a 30-metre-long and 2.50-metre-wide piece of drawing paper on which he will print the engraved “No borders” stamp. The performance will take place in a street near NiMAC and the Green Line that divides the island in two.
* Performance “OPENWORK AJOURS ΟΠΕΣ” byMadeleine Aktypi.
* Performance “La poterie est politique” by Lise Lerichomme.
* Video screening of the performance “Burying the dress” by Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu Gros and discussion with the artist.
* Performance “A 16” by Fabien Lerat.
* Screening of a documentary about the entire Open Up programme, directed by Sébastien Denis.

**For more information and the programme:**[**https://openupeu.com/activities/nicosia-festival-3/**](https://openupeu.com/activities/nicosia-festival-3/)

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