



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture  
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La Biennale di Venezia

59. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Press release, 25th January 2022

Pavilion of Greece

at the **59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**

April 23 – November 27, 2022

# Oedipus In Search Of Colonus

Artist Loukia Alavanou presents a VR360 film  
at the Greek Pavilion



ON THE WAY TO COLONUS, VR360, PRODUCED BY VRS, POWERED BY ONASSIS CULTURE, STILLS © LOUKIA ALAVANOU, 2021



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**“La Biennale di Venezia is considered the most high-stakes international exhibition in contemporary art. With my film I wish to defy all fashions and trends and swim against the current.”**

—Loukia Alavanou

In Sophocles’ Greek drama *Oedipus at Colonus*, the aged and mortally ill Oedipus is accompanied by his daughter and sister Antigone to Colonus, a sacred mountain near Athens. This is where he wishes to die. For the first time, he goes against the will of the gods, who were responsible for his tragic fate and life. So he chooses Colonus, a holy place consecrated by the gods, as his final resting place. However, the people of Athens intend to deny him this wish, considering him unworthy.

Today, the Roma who live in the western part of the city, not far from Colonus, also struggle against their fate. These nomads, who usually do not possess any citizenship, are prevented from being buried near their last place of residence by the Greek authorities. In Loukia Alavanou’s most recent VR film, members of this Roma community, who occupy a shantytown on the outskirts of Athens, play the roles of the drama, becoming its amateur actors.



ON THE WAY TO COLONUS,  
IMAGE FROM PRE-PRODUCTION © LOUKIA ALAVANOU, 2021



LOUKIA ALAVANOU © LAURE COTTIN STEFANELLI

The 42-year-old Greek artist Loukia Alavanou is known for her collage-like videos. She studied art in London, Brussels and Ghent and was awarded the prestigious Greek DESTE Prize for her films, which are infused with political, feminist, and psychoanalytical elements. With her work *Oedipus in Search of Colonus* she is representing Greece at the Biennale Arte 2022. The work not only offers her perspective on the Greek tragedy, but thanks to a highly innovative 360-degree technology it is also a unique demonstration of the possibilities of film as an artistic medium. With the help of VR headsets, viewers can truly experience the film, thereby traveling in time from the era of the drama, written some 2500 years ago, to the social problems of today. While explicitly political, her work is deeply rooted in the cultural history of her homeland – a mixture of docufiction, video clips, parody, and the latest VR technology. Curator of the exhibition is Heinz Peter Scherfel, a German specialist in the art of the moving image, who is based in Cologne and Paris. This marks the first time that a German curator is responsible for the Greek Pavilion.



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**Artist:**

Loukia Alavanou

**Curator:**

Heinz Peter Schwerfel

**Associate Curator:**

Giannis Arvanitis

**Commissioner:**

National Gallery –  
Alexandros Soutsos  
Museum (represented by  
the Director, Professor  
Marina Lambraki Plaka)

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ALEXANDROS SOUTSOS MUSEUM

Her film for the Greek pavilion is the first Greek VR film that tells a cohesive story. In parallel with her narrative, Alavanou also raises fundamental questions about this new technology: “How will we want or be able to view VR films in public space in the future? In a state of simultaneous connectedness and isolation, in an experience of aloneness and sharing with likeminded others?” Four hemispherical structures will be constructed inside the neo-Byzantine building of the Greek pavilion. The structures are based on designs by the architecture studio AREA (Architecture Research Athens) and engineer Dimitris Korres and are furnished with posture chairs inspired by the work of Greek utopian architect Takis Zenetos. The artist describes the environment planned for her contribution to the Biennale Arte 2022 as follows: “For his entire life Zenetos dreamt of spaces that would surround the individual and function as networked but isolated clusters, where we would seem to be everywhere and nowhere at the same moment.” In Venice, this environment allows visitors to escape the prevailing hustle and bustle and open themselves up to a poetic, introverted, yet radical work of art.

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