



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ - HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού
Ministry of Culture and Sports

EMST MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART



la Biennale di Venezia

57. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Greek Pavilion

George Drivas

LABORATORY OF DILEMMAS

Commissioner: National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Director: Katerina Koskina
Curator: Orestis Andreadakis



Laboratory of Dilemmas is a narrative video installation based on Aeschylus' theatre play *Iketides* (Suppliant Women) and the dilemma it poses between saving the Foreigner or maintaining the safety of the Native, which attempts to expose the anguish, puzzlement, and confusion of individuals and social groups when called upon to address similar dilemmas.

Aeschylus's *Iketides* (Suppliant Women, 463-464 BC) is the first literary text in history that raises the issue of a persecuted group of people seeking asylum. The Suppliants have left Egypt to avoid having to marry their first cousins and arrive at Argos seeking asylum from the King of the city.

The King is then faced with a major dilemma. If he helps the foreign women, he risks inciting a war with the Egyptians, who will come to take back the Suppliants. But if he doesn't help them, he will be breaking the sacred laws of Hospitality and violat-

ing the principles of Law and Humanism, leaving the Suppliants to the mercy of their pursuers, who might well destroy them. *Laboratory of Dilemmas* presents the play's dilemmas through the excerpts of an unfinished documentary, about a scientific experiment.

This experiment was never completed for unknown reasons, however the excerpts from an old documentary reveal today for the first time the details of the experiment, the hopes of the Greek professor who envisioned it, and the disagreements with his co-researchers.

The project went through many stages. During the last stage, the researchers suddenly discovered in their cell culture, a group of new cells which were different from the ones being investigated. These new ones were vulnerable outside the cell culture and were showing a tension to organize with the old cells.

The dilemma

Should the researchers allow the two cell populations to organize themselves in the hope that, through their interaction, the new cells would be able to survive and thus give the research group the opportunity to study and possibly improve the existing culture? Or should they prevent them from organizing themselves, isolate and condemn the new cells to extinction, fearing that this union would dangerously corrupt the existing culture?

The installation at the Greek pavilion

Laboratory of Dilemmas is presented piecemeal on screens and through speakers which have been placed in an installation divided into three parts: the Upper Level, the Lower Level/Labyrinth and the Screening Room.

3. The Screening Room

The end of the labyrinth leads the viewers to a small screening room. There, on a large screen, they can watch a filmed representation of the last meeting of the team of researchers, which lasts 10 minutes. The original meeting was neither filmed nor recorded, but was produced today as a reenactment with actors, based on the original director's notes. In it, the scientists and official representatives of the laboratory discuss the possibility of the new cells being preserved into the cell culture according

to the findings of the researchers and the Greek biologist heading the group. All the participants have their say, not only the ones directly involved in the actual experiment. The dilemmas are expressed in quick succession and each argument is followed by another. Everything is possible. The original end of this conversation is unknown and so the reenactment stops at the most critical moment, restarting again from the beginning. The dilemma remains open.

1. Upper Level

The Upper Level is a perimetric, raised corridor to which the viewer is led by a flight of stairs upon entering the pavilion. Along the bannister of the corridor there are 6 small screens showing the 6 excerpts of the found footage, each of which runs for one to two minutes, on a loop. Looking down a dark labyrinth is revealed into which the viewers will enter after first having walked through the Upper Level, ending up in a Screening room.

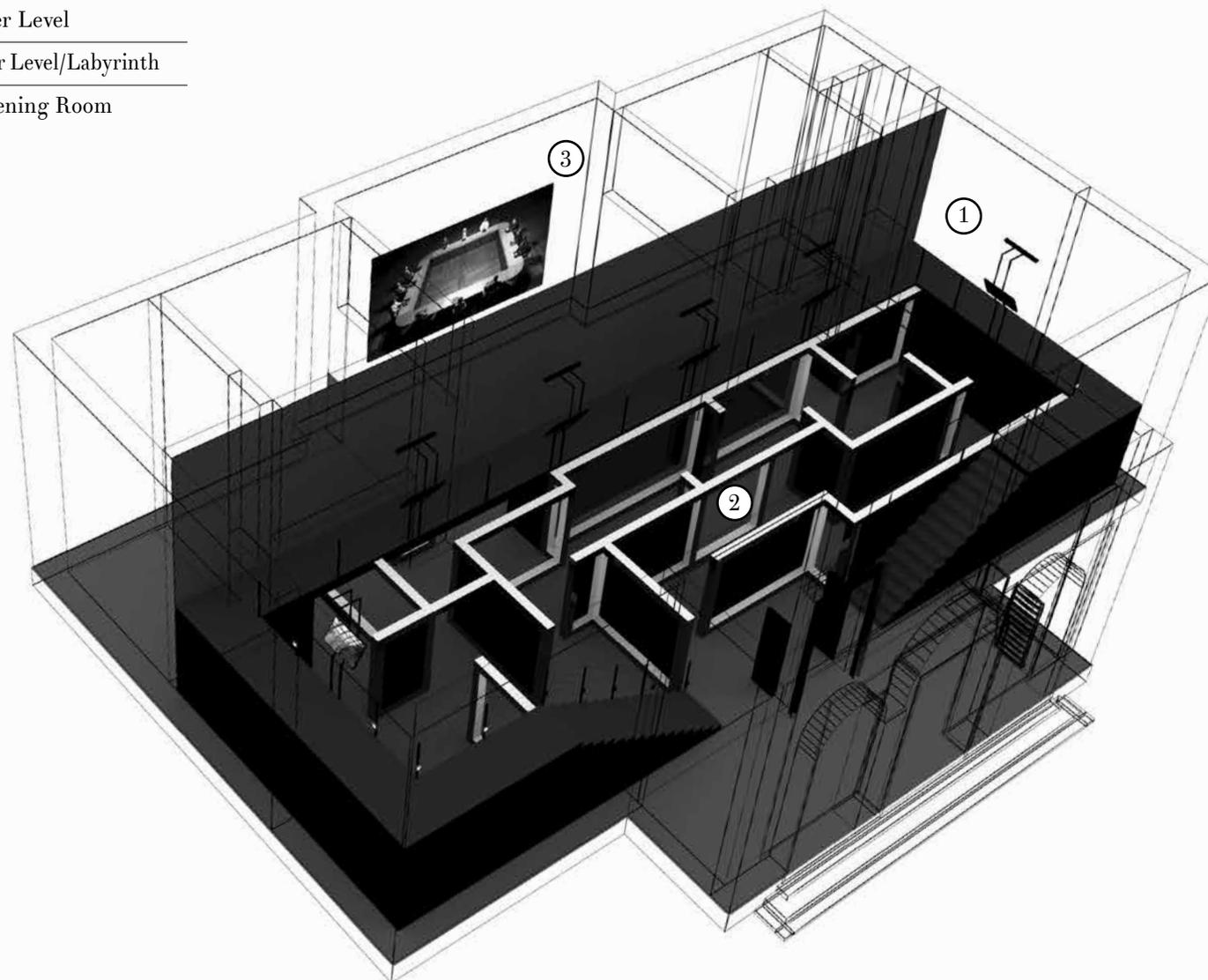
2. Lower level/Labyrinth

After the itinerary, the visitors descend and enter into the lower part of the installation which they previously viewed from above. In the labyrinth there are 5 audio excerpts from the documentary; according to a note by the director which will be placed on the wall, he was not allowed to film this stage of the experiment. There, with the help of built-in speakers, the visitors will be guided along the corridor, as they listen to these audio excerpts from the discussions between the researchers in the lab at the moment that they discovered the problem with the new cells.

1. Upper Level

2. Lower Level/Labyrinth

3. Screening Room



57th International Art Exhibition, Greek Pavilion | 13 May–26 November 2017

Credits: Laboratory of Dilemmas

Actors: Charlotte Rampling, Yorgos Kotanidis, Lazaros Georgakopoulos, Kora Karvouni, Polydoros Vogiatzis, Rena Kyprioti, Panis Kalofolias.

Producer: Fenia Cossovitsa, **Production Designer:** Elias Ledakis, **Director of Photography:** Claudio Bolivar, **Editor:** Christos Gakis, **Costume Designer:** Eva Nathena, **Production:** Blonde Audiovisual Productions, Athens

www.laboratoryofdilemmas.gr

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