

# Chryssa Tsampazi

Portfolio

## Statement

My work is based on speech performances and testimonial actions. It promotes the concept of intimacy with the audience where the body of the artist and those of the participants/collaborators are the subject and, simultaneously, the transmitting mechanism of the work.

I borrow terms and practices from theatre and conceptual art to turn directing into a set of simple instructions. I invite people to follow them, thus contributing, inevitably, to the final outcome.

What interests me is the deviation that takes place in the course of every work and the collective aspect of the creative experience. I endeavor for my work to have a dual status: to remain an event within the real world and, simultaneously, to create a new picture about it. To communicate the paradoxes that inhere, repressed, in daily life and to motivate experiences of pleasure, prompting the question of to what extent are we able to imagine the world and our relationships anew.

Apart from participants and viewers, third terms are oftentimes employed, such as objects and photographs.

# On a Runway

Video HD, silent, 2010

Chicago

Duration: 4:34 min

The work was realized in Northerly Island Park, in Chicago. In this location just a few years prior were the grounds of Meigs Field, an airport which was dismantled by the authorities in a single night. I invited twelve people who didn't know each other, to take a walk together, in the same direction, each holding a piece of mirror. A camera recorded the group walking. As the rays of the sun were reflected by the mirrors, the movement and rhythm of each person were accentuated. The reflected light referred to some kind of code from a group whose faces were only vaguely discernible.



# Under The Bridge

Video projection, 2010

HD, silent

Duration: 4min and 10 sec

Chicago, USA

Eleven people chosen out of different environments are under a bridge in downtown Chicago. Each one is holding a piece of mirror. Their attempt to coordinate as a group with the view of the bridge and the morning light as the only common element, is recorded through the rhythmic or otherwise motions of the mirrors and the reflections that are created.



# Who Says This Is Not The Way It Should Be?

Two channel video installation, 2010

Sound

Duration: 8min 16sec, 8min 46sec.

Chicago, Berlin

The performances were realized in Humboldt Park and Humbolthain Park, in Chicago and Berlin respectively. In each city, I created a workshop with students from the surrounding high schools of each area as participants.

With the groups of youth thus formed, we worked on songs they liked collectively or individually, placing emphasis on the verse.

The process aimed at studying our relationship to lyrical music, treating it both as material for private use and emotional charge as well as a common good and a tool for collective interrelating. The parks functioned as stages for the presentation of this collective work, made of phrases and fragments of verse. This improvised choir was repeated in two different cultural environments, with different influences, though with similar outcomes.



How to tell you? I don't know



I've seen them shooting up funerals



Video installation  
Sullivan Galleries, Chicago 2010

## Five Hidden People In The Cultural Centre

Performance, 2009

Duration: 60 min

Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, USA

The work was presented on the theater stage of the cultural center of Chicago in the form of a performance. I hired five unemployed citizens whom I asked to pretend they were actors.

The duration of the performance was one hour. I asked my actors to hide for that duration in different parts of the theater building. The wait by the audience and the actors and their absence from a common space, was followed by descriptions by the actors on stage of the places where they had chosen to hide. After one hour they appeared, one after the other, on the stage before the audience that had been waiting. The stage was differentiated from the space of action. The audience and the actors shared, from a different position, a joint experience of producing a plot.

There was no video of the work, there were only photographs taken.



A place in the building where a participant was hidden  
DCA Theatre, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL



# 20 People And One Lesbian. A Public Opera

Performance, 2011

Athens

Duration: 120 min

I invited twenty Athenians to accompany me singing in a street “happening” on the sidewalk joining Academias and Panepistimiou streets. Positioning ourselves amidst of pedestrians, we sang for two hours with periodic intervals of silence, using the title of the work and three short phrases in the first person: “20 People and One Lesbian. A Public Opera. This is your relationship. I am everywhere and nowhere. You can find me.” During the pauses in the singing, there was just a slight indication that the singers were part of a group, each one of them wore a discrete pin on their clothes. This was the first time these people sang in public. I chose to amplify their public exposure by regular interruptions of the choir. Their dispersal into the crowd during the pauses and the underscoring of each person’s gender.

ical score



# I Got A Plan To Get Us Out Of Here

Performance, 2014  
Personal Territories, OKK/Raum 29, Berlin  
Duration: 120 min

This performance took place in Berlin's Wedding district. I asked local residents to take part as households in the creation of a short musical composition. The outcome would be presented at their home, to an invited audience. An experienced vocalist was to reside with each one of the three families for two weeks, with the intention of being guided by its members in creating a piece together. The groups read F. Kafka's novel Metamorphosis and studied the character of Gregor Samsa who gradually loses his place not only within society but within the family as well. Language, which was gradually being replaced by sounds, was given as an example of that composition. The title of the work, "I Got A Plan To Get Us Out Of Here" was given to the participants from the outset, to be used as a departure point. During the exhibition, the audience could wander through the open apartments and stay as long as they wished listening to these compositions.

## The departure

I ordered my horse to be brought from the stables.  
The servant did not understand my orders.  
So I went to the stables myself, saddled my horse, and mounted.  
In the distance I heard the sound of a trumpet, and I asked the servant what it meant. He knew nothing and had heard nothing. At the gate he stopped me and asked: "Where is the master going?"  
"I don't know," I said, "just out of here, just out of here. Nothing else, it's the only way I can reach my goal."  
"So you know your goal?" he asked. "Yes," I replied, "I've just told you.  
Out of here – that's my goal."

Franz Kafka



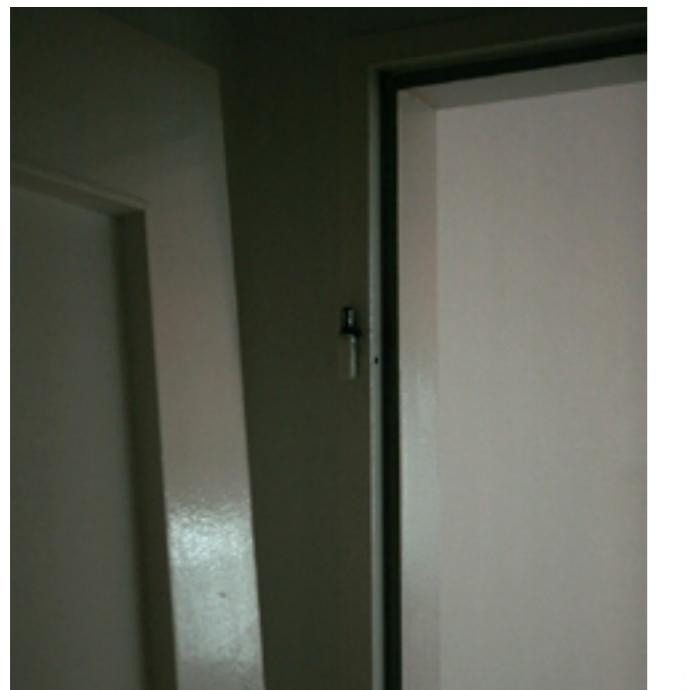
# The Good Times Are Coming

Performance, sound installation, 2012

Kunstverein Tiergarten, Berlin

Duration: 120 min

The work was presented at the Kunstverein Tiergarten, in Berlin. I invited members of the Greek-German choir “Polyphonia”, based in Berlin, to do ensemble improvisations. The only direction I gave them, concerned the repetition of the following verse: “The good times are coming, they will be coming real soon / The good times are coming when they come I ll be there.” For over two hours, the duration of the performance, the choir remained locked in the manager’s office. To symbolically free access to that place, I removed all the doors along the way to the room and leaned them against the walls. The audience of the exhibition could hear the choir’s singing echo through the corridors and out into the street, through the open windows of the room, and could vaguely make out silhouettes behind the closed glass door. The condition of the choir’s incarceration in contrast to their happy message was decisive both for the process of improvisation and the listeners’ perception of the message. After the night of the performance and for the duration of the exhibition, the choir singing was heard emanating from the closed manager’s room as a sound installation.



Details of the doors in the building



# Lottery Drawing With The Artist's Phone Number

Performance, 2014

glass bowl, paper

Duration: 3 hours

Personal Territories, OKK/raum 29, Berlin

I invited six people to the opening of the exhibition “Personal Territories”, in the space of Okk/raum 29, in Berlin. Each one wore a black t-shirt with a number printed on the back. I directed them to behave as visitors and, at periodic intervals, to stand next to each other in a specific order. That temporary formation was my phone number. This was a planned advertising trick to raise the curiosity of the viewers and prompt them to call the number and speak directly to the artist. In the exhibition space was a bowl with folded pieces of paper that with my telephone number next to the statement “I Got A Plan To Get Us Out Of Here”. The phrase was the title of the next work that I showed later, in the context of the same exhibition.



# In Or Out

Performance, 2009

Duration: 35 min

Betty Rymer Gallery

Chicago, USA

The work was presented at the Betty Rymer Gallery, in Chicago. The curator, Ellen Rothenberg, invited me to participate in her exhibition titled “Text Off The Page”. The subject of the exhibition was alternative ways of presenting a text beyond and past the bounds of the printed page. In place of a text, I chose as my material a live performance in the gallery space. I asked for the participation of twenty primary school students, who would simply be in the space for three hours, without any instructions, doing whatever they wanted; the only restriction was that they had to remain in the space for the assigned duration. My intent was to work on the subject of the exhibition starting with the correspondence of the space of a text with the space of a happening. The students invented activities and games and organized the vacant time period. For the duration of the exhibition, there was in the gallery space a video installation with excerpts from the performance.



Video projection, 4min and 35sec  
Betty Rymer Gallery, Chicago, 2009



# I Am No Longer Myself. I Am So Much Yours.

Public intervention, 2013

3rd Thessaloniki Performance Festival / 4th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art Thessaloniki,  
Thessaloniki

Duration: 120 min

This piece was presented at a performance festival taking place as part of the 3rd Biennial I of Thessaloniki. I was invited by the organisers to work with the hostel of unaccompanied, underage refugees from the social organisation ARSIS and to present a performance making use of some of its human resources. I designed two routes of 30 minutes, each from different starting points, with taxis crossing the city and arriving at the same time at the Allah Ja Imaret, the meeting point with the public. Four kids took part in the performance. Accompanied by an off-duty policeman, they took these rides in pairs towards a common destination. The taxi drivers were instructed to remain silent and neutral during the whole ride and to allow their vehicle to become a semi-private space for my guests. The conversations that took place in the taxis were not recorded. At the meeting point, the three taxis lined up among the crowd, all the doors were opened and the conversation ceased. The public could then view the work at that moment of completion: the abrupt cessation of the narration and the awkwardness of the participants from all sides. The performance remained in this still state for the last twenty minutes.



# When I Am Weak You Are Strong

Public intervention, 2011

Nafpaktos

Duration: 55 min

The action took place in the city of Nafpaktos. The organisers of the international symposium on the performing arts “Communication of Crisis” invited me to devise a happening with the participation of local adolescents. After six days of workshops, the group went on an excursion through sites with which each participant had personally bonded in the past. It was a silent touring of locales, where the reason for choosing each one and its connection to every young person, remained undisclosed to the group as a whole. The work, comprised of a collection of unsaid stories, took on the form of a common secret, impossible to convey except collectively.



# I Am Trying To Find A Nice Place To Talk To You

Public Intervention, 2009

Duration: 7 days

Chicago, USA

The action took place in downtown Chicago for two hours daily for the duration of a week. At a temporary location with high visibility, I held a poster and stated to passersby my wish for an appropriate place to be found as a necessary precondition for any new communication.

Although the message was simple and readily communicable, it was superceded by default by the paradoxical character of the specific action.



# I'm New Here

Public intervention, 2014

Mythimna

The performance took place in the village of Mythimna on Lesvos, in the context of a collective workshop in public space, titled Apergias Ergon (The Labor of Work-Stop). I used the existing network of sound speakers which I found installed in the village as well as the network of the residents' trust towards the administrative authorities. Through speakers installed in the streets, the members of the community were receiving directly information, announcements and instructions by the mayor. I met the mayor personally and asked him to read out my phrases via live transmission, in regular intervals, for the duration of a week. I left the exact timing of the announcements at his disposal. For the next ten days I remained on the island and was subject to the mayor's unexpected interventions, as were the rest of the residents. One of those was the following: "ATTENTION! Emptiness between us!"



## Love Letters

Public Intervention, 2014

Duration: 35 min

NYC, USA

The performance was realized in the context of the exhibition "Depressing Ass Work", in Brooklyn, New York. I wrote a love letter addressed to my partner who was then living in Berlin and was read in the street, through a loud speaker. I then asked the viewers that we all read the same letter together. The erotic story described in it, delivered by the crowd, lost its emotional charge. This work, simple in its structure, exhibits and uses a personal vulnerability and emotional charge translated into language and text, creating listeners. In due course, its purpose is revealed to be the creation of an unmediated communication with the public.



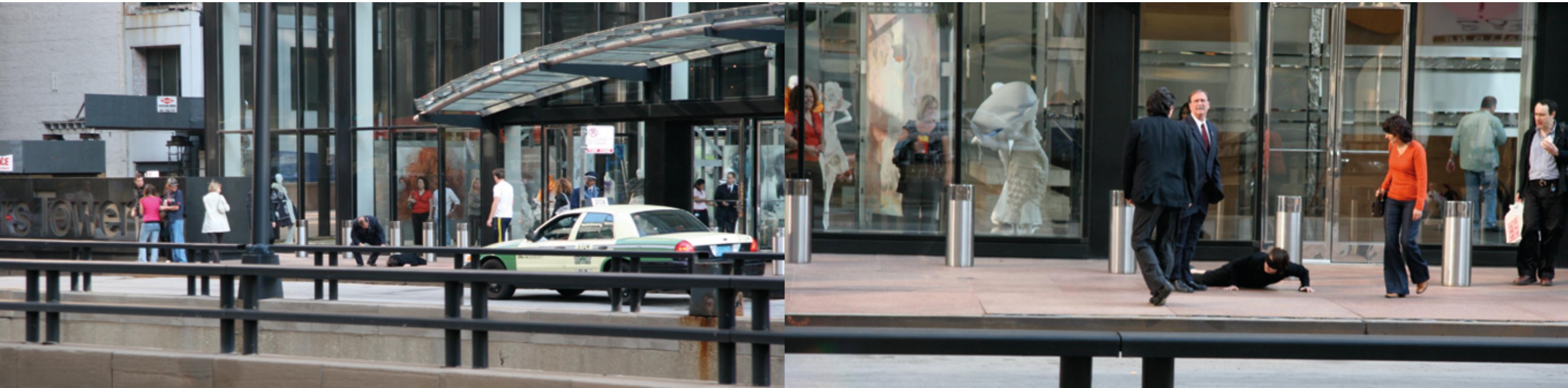
# 33 Steps Before Cassandra Fell

Public Intervention, 2009

Duration: 6 min

Chicago, USA

The action took place in the Sears Tower, in Chicago. At a highly visible place, outside the building's main entrance, I staged a supposed fall, which I repeated without change for the next few days. In the time I managed to be in that position, while anticipating the intervention of the authorities, I delivered in installments a text of mine, of thirty three questions addressed to no one in particular. The following year, that questionnaire, accompanied by photographs of the "fall", was distributed to be filled out, to the guest audience of the Betty Rymer Gallery, in Chicago, as part of the exhibition "Text off the Page". The testimony of the text's first appearance, from such an extreme position, one year previously at the entrance of the Sears Tower, was decisive in the way the questions were answered subsequently. My aim was to get to know my audience and for us to appraise the influence we may mutually exert. Among the questions were: Can you publicly answer a very personal question? Can your fears sometimes become very exciting? How many monuments have fallen in the past five years? What stories would you tell someone who has been wounded in battle?



# I Can't Relax In Deutschland

Performance, eighteen fishing rods, 2015

Arcadia Unbound, Funkhaus, Berlin

Duration: 4 hours

The idea for this project emerged from a series of discussions and meetings with the former director of the radio station from the DDR, who formerly worked in the Funkhaus Nalepastraße where the exhibition took place. We talked about the social organisation and the activities of the workers at that time in the building, as well as current events. I invited people applying for asylum and local fishermen to fish freely in the river in front of the large, impressive building. After the event, the fishing rods from the local fishermen along with the improvised ones from the asylum seekers were placed together as an installation inside the building for the remainder of the exhibition.



# From My West To Reach All The Way To The East

Performance, audio on speakers: 3 min 37 sec, 2015

Scotty Enterprises, Project Space Festival, Berlin

Duration: 240 min

During the opening and at the last day of the exhibition, I presented a performance for which I invited people from different backgrounds to run, to pass through and by Scotty Enterprise, the gallery space, in their attempt to escape, compete, or recreate from their own realities. A sound installation was also created which was inspired by Zelda Rhiando's novel Caposcripti, that was audible in the gallery and outside on the street.



## Right And Wrong Dreams

Performance, printed hats, 2015

Global Alien Anniversary – Galerie im Turm, Berlin

Duration: 50 min

I asked the members of a Greek family living in Berlin to participate. The four family members were covered with a white cloth. They wandered together through the gallery space and shared something that they dreamed of recently. The group stood a while next to the printed hats and then walked out to the public space.

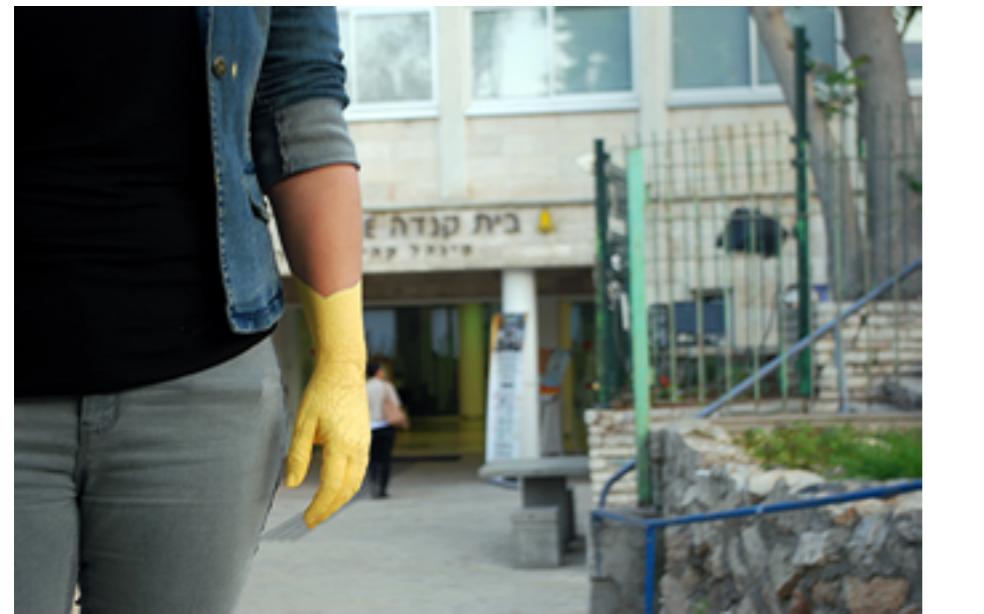


# By Reinventing Only

Public intervention, 2015

Musrara Mix15, Interdisciplinary art festival, Jerusalem

Two local musicians took part in the performance and occurred during the festival at different locations in the city. The performers had a yellow colored hands and softly sang sentences from the third act of Shakespeare's Hamlet for pedestrians.



# Lying in My Heap of Earth I Can Naturally Dream of All Sorts of Things

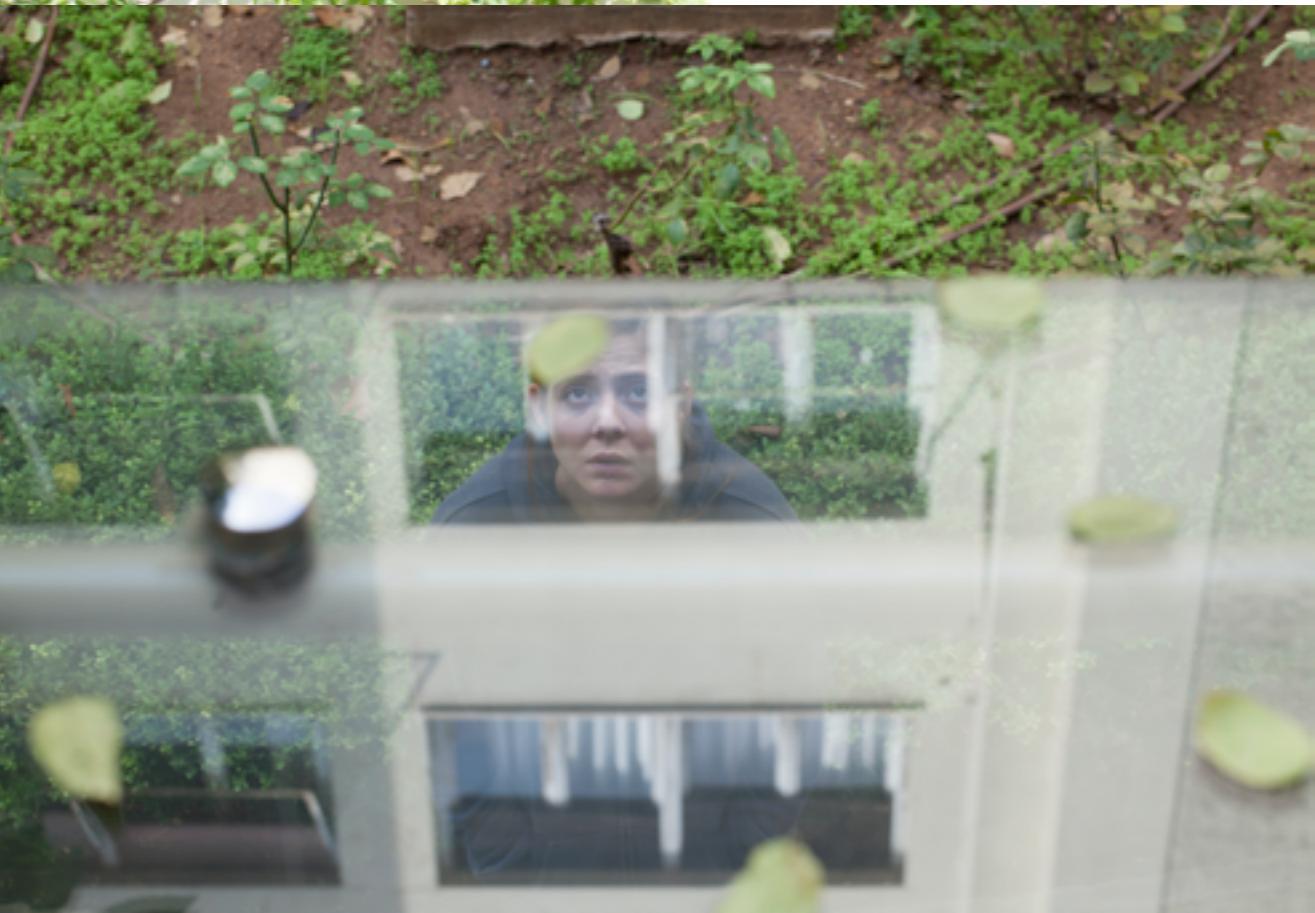
Performance, 2016

Numismatic Museum, TWISTING C(R)ASH, Athens

Duration: 240 min

At different locations in and around the Numismatic Museum in Athens, a small group of performers divided into three different groups attempted to communicate by working within and around a codified vocabulary. Each group had different instructions and locations to perform at. The first group was located inside the museum and performed vocal exercises, as well as movements borrowed from the museum guardians. The second group, set up in the yard, tried to create sounds with coins they had in their pockets. The third group consisted of a single person located at the building opposite the museum. This person could move around but was not allowed to enter the museum. The performance lasted four hours and featured material from the unfinished short story "The Burrow" ( „Der Bau“ in German) by Franz Kafka and my brother's imagined trip to Athens.





# You Know, You Are Right

HD Video, Sound, 2016, Athens

Duration: 2:38 min

I was invited to create a performance for a video. I asked two friends of mine to participate in and to sit on a seesaw, one on each end, with one instruction: they had to work out how to make the seesaw balance.

