

## PRESS RELEASE

### **INVESTIGATIONS OF A DOG** **Works from the FACE Collections**

DESTE Foundation, Athens - Ground & 1<sup>st</sup> Floors  
June 22 - October 30, 2011

Press Conference: Wednesday, June 22, 2011 @ 12:00

Opening: Wednesday, June 22, 2011 @ 20:00

Curated for the DESTE Foundation by Nadja Argyropoulou

**FACE** | Foundation of  
Arts for a  
Contemporary  
Europe



The DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Investigations of a Dog - Works from the FACE Collections*, the first exhibition organized and curated by the FACE group that features works from the collections of the five partner institutions.

*Investigations of a Dog* takes its title from the short story by Franz Kafka (1922), whose main character, a dog, questions the limits of his canine existence, or rather, the sense of the community to which he belongs. This constant questioning distances the dog from the others and forces him into the position of the outsider. Nonetheless, in his solitude the dog expresses his most intense form of interest for the community and his compatriots.

This story, and more generally the themes and expressive strategies that recur in Kafka's stories, have inspired the selection of the works on display. All works center around the question of how linguistic innovation can entail a political dimension of art-making that precedes the content-related aspects of the artwork. In their analysis of Kafka's work, the French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari have come up with the notion of "minor" literature to describe this link between writing and politics, namely, the possibility for artistic creation to carry revolutionary messages, starting precisely from the subversive use of language. "Minor" here refers to something that is not official, not in power, but that nonetheless moves within the domain of the power to find escape lines and create spaces of freedom. In this context, minor implies the formation of a link between individual events and a larger context, finding the political relevance of individual stories. It is the collective nature of an utterance, the transition from individual to collective voice.



Background: Gardar Eide Einarsson, *Burnt White Fig.*, 2005  
From the Collection of the Ellipse Foundation, Cascais  
Foreground: Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (Suspended Chair, Vertical III)*, 1987  
From the Collection of Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall



Virginie Barré, *Les Hommes Venus d'Ailleurs*, 2005  
From the Collection of Antoine De Galbert, La Maison Rouge, Paris

The artists who participate in the exhibition share a practice of art that can be read in the light of this category of minor. They have initiated an "eccentric" art discourse which cannot be associated with any of the acquired aesthetic categories and which subverts the conventional use of the expressive means it adopts. This formal research however, is not an end in itself, but rather looks at the outside world and connects with the political situation of this time; it is therefore socially active. In this perspective, appropriating objects and signs from extra-artistic fields and attributing new meanings and functions to them is a key strategy, employed by many of the artists in the show, to reflect upon central themes in our contemporary society, such as post-colonial identity, gender, race and religious conflicts, violence and collective paranoia, economic disparities and the excesses of consumer society, the sense of community and the condition of marginality, the relationship between memory and the present time.

Like the dog-protagonist in Kafka's short story, the artists in the exhibition ask themselves questions about the meaning of art making, spurred by a passionate emotional involvement in the society of humans.

## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Vasco Araujo, Virginie Barré, Philippe Bazin, Mircea Cantor, Maurizio Cattelan, Roberto Cuoghi, Mark Dion, Gardar Eide Einarsson, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Urs Fischer, Fischli & Weiss, David Hammons, Annika von Hausswolff, Thomas Hirschhorn, William Kentridge, Kimsooja, Jeff Koons, Sigalit Landau, Sherrie Levine, DeAnna Maganias, Mark Manders, Esko Männikkö, Marcos Reis Peixoto Marepe, Paul McCarthy, Boris Mikhailov, Segal Miri, Bruce Nauman, Cady Noland, Martin Parr, Aurel Schmidt, Gregor Schneider, Lara Schnitger, Santiago Sierra, Lorna Simpson, Stéphane Thidet, Kara Walker & Artur Zmijewski

## ABOUT FACE

FACE (Foundation of Arts for a Contemporary Europe) was formed in 2008 by five private, non-profit foundations based in Europe, which were established for the production and promotion of Contemporary Art. These institutions are the Ellipse Foundation, Cascais (Portugal), the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (Italy), La Maison Rouge - Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris (France), Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm (Sweden) and the DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens (Greece).

This new alliance is a unique collaboration dedicated to the promotion of contemporary art and international artists both in Europe and the rest of the world and to bringing an ever-growing public closer to contemporary art and culture. In addition, through the collaborations that will develop between the partner foundations and through the production and exhibition of new works, FACE will aim to organize a series of international exhibitions and to promote the activities and the art collections of each partner foundation.

Greece is the last venue where *Investigations of a Dog* will be presented. The show has already been hosted by the other four FACE partner institutions between October, 2009 and May, 2011.

## CATALOGUE

The exhibition catalogue, published by JRP-Ringier, is a project in itself.

Drawing on the short story *Investigations of a Dog* by Franz Kafka as well as the works included in the show, five authors (Aristide Antonas, Jonas Hassen Khemiri, Tiziano Scarpa, Rui Cardoso Martins, and Emmanuelle Pagano) have been commissioned to write a short story. These short stories have been published as individual paperbacks in the HAPAX collection, each in its original language and have been illustrated by images from the exhibition.

All short stories have been translated into English in a sixth book, complete with information on the exhibition and on the five members of FACE.



For more information on FACE please visit: [www.art-face.eu](http://www.art-face.eu)

For more information on the FACE partners please visit:

Ellipse Foundation: [www.ellipsefoundation.com](http://www.ellipsefoundation.com)

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo: [www.fondsrr.org](http://www.fondsrr.org)

La Maison Rouge: [www.lamaisonrouge.org](http://www.lamaisonrouge.org)

Magasin 3: [www.magasin3.com](http://www.magasin3.com)

DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art: [www.deste.gr](http://www.deste.gr)

For more information about the exhibition, please contact the DESTE Foundation:

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**OPENING HOURS:**

**Wednesday:** 12:00 - 20:00

**Saturday:** 10:00 - 14:00

*Entrance to the exhibition is free*

**GUIDED TOURS:**

**Wednesday**

from 12:30 and every hour. The last tour will take place at 18:30.

**Saturday**

from 10:30 and every hour. The last tour will take place at 12:30.

*The guided tours and presentations are conducted by trained DESTE personnel and are free of charge.*

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