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PRESS RELEASE

P+P=D

New (Greek) Art from the 1970s and 1980s
From the Activities of the Desmos Gallery (1971-1993)

31 March - 30 May 1999

Curator: Yorgos Tzirtzilakis

The Deste Foundation Centre for Contemporary Art is pleased to present the exhibition *P+P=D: New (Greek) Art From the 70s and 80s*. The exhibition examines the strategies of the Greek avant-garde of the 70s and 80s as manifested in the activities of Desmos (one of the first alternative spaces in Athens), and the relationship between artistic practice during that time and present day concerns and pursuits. But just what is it that makes those 'strange' works from Desmos so special today? And what exactly was Desmos? Was it a gallery that simply assembled the pursuits of some new forms of expression, the collective passion of certain people, or the site of a radical outburst of the new? Whatever it may have been, its protagonists agree that this state of affairs sprang from an extraordinary *esprit du temps*. Desmos encouraged a different way of perceiving contemporary art that always reflected life itself. Desmos also served as a meeting place for an informed public during the early 70s. Through its activities, an audience gained in creative experiences while certain artists received their artistic baptism. The two people behind Desmos, Manos Pavlides and Epi Protonotariou, introduced a series of experimental artistic events in place of the usual marketable commodities, and in so doing created a distinct 'tradition of the new' and a remarkable collection. More significantly, they rekindled the notion of an artistic avant-garde in this country.

Desmos renewed the instruments of artistic expression in Greece (*body art, performance*) and introduced the idea of interdisciplinary collaboration. The emphasis was on communication and on liberating artistic innovation. The works of the artists that formed the Desmos circle are characterised by subversive disposition, unselfconscious expression, a rejection of artistic 'craftsmanship', a critical stance towards society, a synchronization with new international trends and concerns, an irreverent tendency to sarcasm and self-mockery, and an opening up to the spirit of the street.

The Video Projection Room will feature screenings of films and videos

by the artists in addition to a documentary with archival material from exhibitions. Participating artists: **D. Alithinos, Y. Gaitis, C. Varotsos, Diohanti, Theodoros, N. Kanagini, V. Kaloutsis, D. Kontos, N. Kessanlis, Y. Lazongas, S. Logothetis, Y. Mihas, B. Davou, R. Papaspyrou, C. Romanou, V. Skylakos, A. Skourtis, Totsikas, Y. Touyas, C. Tsoclis, Y. Touzenis**, and others.