

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2017



POSTCLASSICISMS

LIQUID ANTIQUITY

The DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art is pleased to announce “Liquid Antiquity”, a project that explores the possibility of reinventing classicism and argues for its enduring influence on contemporary art. Conceived by **Brooke Holmes**, Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Classics at Princeton University, in collaboration with **Polina Kosmadaki**, curator at the Benaki Museum, and **Yorgos Tzirtzilakis**, artistic advisor to the DESTE Foundation, the project includes a book with critical contributions by renowned scholars and conversations with prominent artists, as well as a site-specific video installation of artist interviews, conceived and designed by **Diller Scofidio + Renfro**.

Bringing together artists, classicists, critics, historians, political theorists, and philosophers, the book, edited by **Holmes** and **Karen Marta**, is a critical reflection on the fluid and open-ended relationship between antiquity and contemporary art. *Liquid Antiquity* is made up of two interweaving strands: a visual essay spanning more than twenty-five hundred years of art history, set in an open-ended dialogue with a series of critical texts by twenty seven scholars, and interviews with ten contemporary artists.

A site-specific video installation, “**Liquid Antiquity: Conversations**”, conceived and designed by **Diller Scofidio + Renfro**, places six conversations with Holmes and artists **Matthew Barney**, **Paul Chan**, **Urs Fischer**, **Jeff Koons**, **Asad Raza**, and **Kaari Upson**, in dialogue with the Benaki Museum’s permanent collection of antiquities. The installation will be on view at the Benaki Museum, Athens, from April 4 through September 17, 2017.

“Liquid Antiquity” is organized by the DESTE Foundation in collaboration with the “Postclassicisms” initiative at Princeton University and the Benaki Museum, Athens.

Book launch and installation opening: April 3, 2017, at 19:30 | Benaki Museum, Main Building

Press conference: April 7, 2017, at 12:30 | Benaki Museum, Main Building, Amphitheater

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Liquid Antiquity

Edited by **Brooke Holmes** and **Karen Marta**

Published by the DESTE Foundation, 2017

English edition. Hardcover, 24 x 17 cm, pp. 303, 99 ill.

Liquid Antiquity is neither an academic textbook nor an art book, but a hybrid project that defies conventions by exploring the intersection between contemporary art and antiquity in a fluid stream of images, ideas, and voices. An experiment challenging our petrifying idea of classicism, the book is made up of two interweaving strands: a visual essay spanning more than twenty-five hundred years of art history, set in an open-ended dialogue with a series of critical texts by **Lucia Allais, Emanuela Bianchi, Joshua Billings, Joy Connolly, Page duBois, Jaś Elsner, Richard Fletcher, Devin Fore, Hal Foster, Simon Goldhill, Constanze Güthenke, Yannis Hamilakis, Polina Kosmadaki, Miriam Leonard, Glenn W. Most, Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Spyros Papapetros, Mark Payne, James I. Porter, Effie Rentzou, Rebekah Rutkoff, Giulia Sissa, Michael Squire, Maria Stavrinaki, Yorgos Tzirtzilakis, Phiroze Vasunia, and Christopher S. Wood**, and ten interviews with artists **Matthew Barney, Paul Chan, Haris Epaminonda, Urs Fischer, Jeff Koons, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Charles Ray, Asad Raza, Kaari Upson, and Adrián Villar Rojas**.

Radically breaking the traditional notion of temporality, the visual essay creates a dialogue across twenty-five hundred years by presenting images of contemporary art alternating with images from antiquity and the long history of classicism in Western visual culture. The structure and design of the book, reminiscent of that of a classical lexicon, reiterate the overall attempt to create a new vocabulary that will help catalyze connections between antiquity and contemporary art. By facilitating conversations across disciplines and eras, *Liquid Antiquity* aims to create a space in which artists and scholars can reflect on their practices, while delving deeply into the past to uncover its resonance with the present. The hope is that, through this unique discourse, readers can forge their own critical and creative connections between antiquity and its legacies, and their own perspectives on contemporary art.

Liquid Antiquity includes: a critical essay by Brooke Holmes, investigating the notion of “liquid antiquity” through the concepts of body, time, and institution; a series of twenty seven *lexemes* contributed by prominent scholars that critically rethink the traditional language of classicism; ten interviews with leading contemporary artists who work with the liquid energies and formal possibilities of bodies and matter within figurative and sculptural traditions imprinted by the classical body; folds within history, the deep past, and alternative temporalities; and the institutional contexts of art making and exhibition as they intersect with the history of archaeology and museological practices for bringing the deep past into the present.

Liquid Antiquity is distributed in the USA and Canada through Distributed Art Publishers (DAP) and in Europe through Buchhandlung Walther König. In Athens, the book is available at the Benaki Museum shop, the Museum of Cycladic Art shop and the offices of the DESTE Foundation. Accompanying Greek translations available upon request.

Images available to press may be accessed [here](#).

Download preview [here](#).

Liquid Antiquity: Conversations

Installation conceived, designed, and filmed by **Diller Scofidio + Renfro** with six conversations between **Brooke Holmes** and **Matthew Barney, Paul Chan, Urs Fischer, Jeff Koons, Asad Raza, and Kaari Upson**.

“Liquid Antiquity: Conversations” is a complement to the launch of the *Liquid Antiquity* book, a multi-voiced rethinking of antiquity and the legacies of classicism through image and text commissioned by the DESTE Foundation. Six installations are distributed through the antiquities galleries of the Benaki Museum, each structured around an interview between Holmes and one of six artists who contributed to the book: Matthew Barney, Paul Chan, Urs Fischer, Jeff Koons, Asad Raza, and Kaari Upson.

The original settings of the interviews—artists’ studios and apartments—are superimposed on the real space of the museum and the dialogue is extended to the museum visitor. The Benaki galleries are both the backdrop and context in which ancient artifacts mix with contemporary artists in dialogue with the past and present. Moving experientially from the private reading relationship with the book, to the static presence of the artifact, to the active video encounters with the featured artists, the visitor is invited not only to reassess our relationship with ancient Greece, but also to participate in the shifting scales and contours of the “we” who encounter the classical past. This creates and augments a series of singular environments and personal perspectives for engaging antiquity as liquid and heterogeneous, rather than fixed and mono-cultural.

Diller Scofidio + Renfro is a New York City-based practice that works at the intersection of architecture, the visual arts, and the performing arts. The studio is led by four partners, who work collaboratively with a staff of over 100 architects, designers, artists, and researchers.

Installation shots available to press may be accessed [here](#).

Additional information may be accessed [here](#).

Practical information:

Duration: April 4 – September 17, 2017

Location: The Benaki Museum, Main Building, 1 Koumbari St. & Vas. Sofias Ave., Athens

More info: <http://www.benaki.gr/index.asp?id=4020102&lang=en>

Opening hours:

Wednesday, Friday: 9:00 – 17:00 | Thursday, Saturday: 9:00 – 00:00 | Sunday: 9:00 – 15:00

Monday, Tuesday: Closed

Permanent communication sponsors of the Benaki Museum:

