

ΔΕΣΤΕ

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Ίδρυμα ΔΕΣΤΕ
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Andra Ursuța: Apocalypse Now and Then

DESTE Foundation Project Space, Slaughterhouse, Hydra

Duration,
June 24th, 2025 —
October 31st, 2025

Opening Hours,
Daily 11:00–13:00 & 19:00–22:00
Tuesday Closed (exception: open on Tues., June 24th)



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The DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Apocalypse Now and Then*, a solo exhibition by Romanian artist Andra Ursuța. The show will be on view at the Foundation's Project Space, a former slaughterhouse on the island of Hydra between June 24th and October 31st, 2025. This marks Ursuța's first major exhibition in Greece.

Ursuța draws from the visual language and display strategies of archeological museums to invent faux-historicist artefacts belonging to a defunct civilization whose relics seem to speak to the anxieties of our present. Both familiar and absurd, the artist displays fragments of sculptures and studio detritus that have been successively built up and destroyed with analog and digital tools. These works explore the history of object-making and sculpture and the ways in which this manually-derived system of knowledge and speculation has come to shape our visual world. *Apocalypse Now and Then* plunges viewers into a truncated historiography where passingly familiar ancient tropes, grotesque votives, and scarred bronze figures hover between archaeology and fiction.

The exhibition introduces *Desolation Ware*, a new series of lost-wax cast bronze sculptures. Part inspired by decorative art objects and interior design, the forms are the distilled accessories of existential uncertainty: a monstrous platter of snakes issuing from a bicycle helmet to invoke a Gorgon; a zoomorphic jug that features landscape elements from a pre-Renaissance desert - the kind of place St Anthony might have been harassed by demons; a chair resembling an orthopaedic throne or the hug of an iron maiden; a conveyor of bodily fluids heralding organ failure. Doubling down on the cliché art medium of cast bronze with verdigris patination, *Desolation Ware* also engages with the misconceptions of art history, such as the false understanding of classical sculptures as originally white when, in reality, they were polychrome, and examines how these errors can become momentous, generative forces.



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Installed both inside and outside the Slaughterhouse, the show transforms the space into a notional museum. The DESTE Foundation's Slaughterhouse—a former abattoir perched above the sea—becomes a stage for Ursuța's monumental yet spectral figures. *Apocalypse Now and Then* is not about a single moment of collapse but about the recursive fantasy of endings—the ancient world looking toward the abyss, and our own time mythologizing ruins that never were.

This exhibition continues the DESTE Foundation's tradition of commissioning bold, site-specific installations that reimagine the boundaries of contemporary art.

About the artist

Andra Ursuța (b. 1979) was born in Salonta, Romania, a town on the Romanian-Hungarian border, and left for the United States in 1997. She moved to New York in 1999 and received a BA in art history and visual arts in 2002 from Columbia University, New York.

From 2018 to 2019, a solo exhibition of the artist's work, *Vanilla Isis*, was presented at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy. *Alps*, which was on view in 2016 at the New Museum, marked the artist's first museum show in New York. Ursuța's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at prominent venues internationally, including Kunsthalle Basel (2015); Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (2014–2015); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014); Kölnerischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany (2014); and Peep-Hole Art Center, Milan (2014).

Ursuța's work has also been included in group exhibitions worldwide, such as *Making Their Mark*, curated by Cecilia Alemani, Shah Garg Foundation, New York (2023); traveling to Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive,



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Berkeley, California; Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; and Newfields, Indianapolis, Indiana (through 2027); 59th Venice Biennale (2022); *ARS22: Living Encounters*, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2022); *Souffle de son souffle*, Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles, France (2021–2022); 58th Venice Biennale (2019); *The Warmth of Other Suns: Stories of Global Displacement*, The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2019); *The Trick Brain*, Aïshti Foundation, Beirut (2017–2018); 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017); *High Anxiety: New Acquisitions*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2016–2017); 13th Lyon Biennale (2015–2016); *Artists and Poets*, Secession, Vienna (2015); *Busted*, The High Line, New York (2013–2014); 55th Venice Biennale (2013); Expo 1: New York, MoMA PS1, New York (2013); and *Ostalgia*, New Museum, New York (2011).

In 2024, a sculpture by Ursuța was selected to be installed as the Fourth Plinth Commission in London's Trafalgar Square. The sculpture will be on view from 2028 through 2030.

Ursuța lives and works in London and New York.

About the DESTE Project Space, Slaughterhouse, Hydra

In 2008, the Municipality of the Island of Hydra granted DESTE the island's old slaughterhouse. The recently restored and renovated building retains the features and traits of the past, preserving the original elements of its old identity while serving as a unique exhibition space. Functioning as the DESTE Project Space, Slaughterhouse since 2009, every summer the Foundation invites a single artist or team to stage a unique, site-specific exhibition on the island.