

PRESS RELEASE

March 2026

Ίδρυμα ΔΕΣΤΕ
Εμ. Παππά & Φιλελλήνων 11.
142 34 Νέα Ιωνία
Αθήνα Ελλάς

DESTE Foundation
11 Filellinon & Em. Pappa St.
142 34 Nea Ionia
Athens Greece

WWW . DESTE . GR
T — 30 210 27 58 490
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TALES FROM THE FORGOTTEN GENERATION

DESTE Foundation, Athens
11 Filellinon & Em. Pappa St., Nea Ionia 142 34

Opening,
Wednesday, June 17th, 2026 | 19:30–22:00

Duration,
June 18th, 2026 —
November 26th, 2026

Opening Hours,
Tue, Wed, Thu 12:00–20:00



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The DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Gen X: Tales from the Forgotten Generation*, a group exhibition with selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection. Curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Artistic Director, New Museum with Calvin Wang, Curatorial Assistant, New Museum, and Taeyi Kim, Curatorial Fellow, New Museum, the exhibition will be on view at the DESTE Foundation in Athens between June 18th and November 26th, 2026. The opening is scheduled for June 17th at 19:30.

In the opening pages of Douglas Coupland's defining 1991 novel *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, the three protagonists contemplate a barren Californian landscape—a “blank space at the end of a chapter.” Having left behind promising corporate careers for low-wage jobs, they embody a generation suspended between fading postwar optimism and uncertain futures, shaped by economic precarity and detachment from an increasingly commercialized world.

Drawing from the holdings of the Dakis Joannou Collection, *Gen X: Tales from the Forgotten Generation* brings together works by artists born between 1960 and 1980, the decades traditionally chosen as bookends for this generation. Outnumbered by the demographic dominance of baby boomers and millennials, this cohort grew up in the shadow of 1980s prosperity and the subsequent recessions. They became known as the “Forgotten Generation,” a moniker that also reflects the lack of parental supervision common in dual-income households.

Witnessing the transition from analog to digital culture, Generation X came of age just before computer technologies fully permeated everyday life. While the internet and cell phones began to spread in the 1990s, the mediascape of this generation was originally dominated by television, video, and cinema. The explosion of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the Gulf War unfolded live on television, giving birth to the



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twenty-four-hour news cycle. On MTV, international audiences witnessed the infancy of reality shows while new music genres, like grunge and hip-hop, completely blurred the line between the underground and the mainstream.

The artists in this exhibition responded to these seismic shifts with varying degrees of sincerity, irony, and even cynicism. Often described as the “slacker” generation, they combined lowbrow aesthetics, self-deprecation, and a healthy disregard for convention. Others explored the shifting borders of a new world order, capturing the early signals of a multicultural, globalized future. Debates around sexuality, gender, and the ongoing effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic exerted a significant influence on the ways in which artists depicted bodies, birthing a disquieting army of decaying avatars, metallic cyborgs, and new mutant creatures. Identity politics emerged as a new battleground, while the media and fashion industries were analyzed, appropriated, and deconstructed in many of the works by this generational cohort.

Some artists embraced the expansive reach of “relational aesthetics”—a term that, in the 1990s, came to describe new forms of artistic collaboration and social action practiced by many members of this generation—while others responded by turning inward with works that explored personal mythologies and private worlds of the imagination. Each in their own way, the artists in Gen X forged a distinct language in response to an ever-accelerating culture that threatened to leave them behind. Rather than fading into the past, their methods for navigating precarity and transition continue to resonate and can perhaps serve as inspiration as millennials, Gen Z, and Generation Alpha prepare to confront their own unforeseen futures.



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Participating Artists

Doug Aitken, (b. 1968, Redondo Beach, CA)
Pawel Althamer (b. 1967, Warsaw, Poland)
Kai Althoff (b. 1966, Cologne, Germany)
David Altmejd (b. 1974, Montreal, Canada)
Matthew Barney (b. 1967, San Francisco, CA)
Vanessa Beecroft (b. 1969, Genoa, Italy)
Huma Bhabha (b. 1962, Karachi, Pakistan)
Kerstin Brätsch (b. 1979, Hamburg, Germany)
Maurizio Cattelan (b. 1960, Padua, Italy)
Paul Chan (b. 1973, Hong Kong)
Dan Colen (b. 1979, Leonia, NJ)
Roberto Cuoghi (b. 1973, Modena, Italy)
Nathalie Djurberg (b. 1978, Lysekil, Sweden)
Cheryl Donegan (b. 1962, New Haven, CT)
Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967, Copenhagen, Denmark)
Haris Epaminonda (b. 1980, Nicosia, Cyprus)
Urs Fischer (b. 1973, Zürich, Switzerland)
Douglas Gordon (b. 1966, Glasgow, UK)
Cameron Jamie (b. 1969, Los Angeles, CA)
Maria Joannou (b. 1970, Athens, Greece)
Dorota Jurczak (b. 1978, Warsaw, Poland)
Terence Koh (b. 1977, Beijing, China)
Sean Landers (b. 1962, Palmer, MA)
Nate Lowman (b. 1979, Las Vegas, NV)
Mark Manders (b. 1968, Volkel, Netherlands)
Matthew Monahan (b. 1972, Eureka, CA)
Tim Noble & Sue Webster (b. 1966, Gloucestershire, UK; b. 1967, Leicester, UK)
Chris Ofili (b. 1968, Manchester, UK)

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Gabriel Orozco (b. 1962, Xalapa, Mexico)
Christodoulos Panayiotou (b. 1978, Limassol, Cyprus)
Elizabeth Peyton (b. 1965, Danbury, CT)
Seth Price (b. 1973, East Jerusalem, Palestine)
Tom Sachs (b. 1966, New York, NY)
Wilhelm Sasnal (b. 1972, Tarnów, Poland)
Gregor Schneider (b. 1969, Rheydt, Mönchengladbach, Germany)
David Shrigley (b. 1968, Macclesfield, UK)
Josh Smith (b. 1976, Knoxville, TN)
Michael E. Smith (b. 1951, Chicago, IL)
Christiana Soulou (b. 1961, Athens, Greece)
Wolfgang Tillmans (b. 1968, Remscheid, Germany)
Francis Upritchard (b. 1976, New Plymouth, New Zealand)
Kaari Upson (b. 1970, San Bernardino, CA; d. 2021, New York, NY)
Andra Ursuta (b. 1979, Salonta, Romania)
Meyer Vaisman (b. 1960, Caracas, Venezuela)
Aleksandra Waliszewska (b. 1976, Warsaw, Poland)
Kara Walker (b. 1969, Stockton, CA)
Gillian Wearing (b. 1963, Birmingham, UK)
Andro Wekua (b. 1977, Sokhumi, Georgia)
Jakub Julian Ziółkowski (b. 1980, Żamość, Poland)
