

## LATEST NEWS

*Demergon Curatorial Exchange Award ,The Whitechapel Gallery*



### Demergon Curatorial Exchange Award Announced At The Whitechapel Gallery

DATE: 12 DEC 2012



Iwona Blazwick OBE, Director of the Whitechapel Gallery is pleased to announce Niekolaas Lekkerkerk as the winner of the first Demergon Curatorial Award.

The Demergon Curatorial Exchange and Award was set up in partnership between the Demergon Daskalopoulos Foundation for Culture and Development in Greece and the Whitechapel Gallery, London. Through building links between young curators in London, Athens and Thessalonica, curatorial practice is shared and new ideas developed around the presentation of contemporary art, with the aim of championing curatorial excellence. The young curators who take part in the exchange have the opportunity to draw from the D. Daskalopoulos Collection, Greece which is made up of over 500 works by 170 international and Greek artists.

Niekolaas Lekkerkerk, a second year student from London Metropolitan University whose project titled News from Spetsopoula Island has taken the award, is one of 11 students who participated in the scheme. Lekkerkerk is part of a group of MA students invited to devise a curatorial proposal based on selected works from the D. Daskalopoulos Collection, Greece.

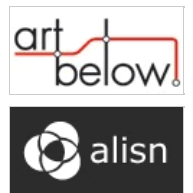
Lekkerkerk's project explores the fundamental aims of curating, using philosophical, artistic and nature-based theories to thoroughly examine the hybridisation of both institutional and curatorial forms. Speaking about the many proposals received, Chair and selection panellist Daniel F. Herrmann, Eisler Curator and Head of Curatorial Studies, Whitechapel Gallery said 'It is was difficult to select just one award recipient among so many excellent proposals but in the end we selected Niekolaas Lekkerkerk for his entry News from Spetsopoula Island. The proposed exhibition posits artists as explorers, treating their artworks as field-reports from a semi-fictitious island. Inventive, poetic and with much critical acumen, the proposal not only reflects the depth and quality of the Daskalopoulos Collection, it also takes into account the collection's specific heritage. Using the process of curating as a medium, Niekolaas' proposal demonstrates the relevance of contemporary art as analytical commentary in everyday life.'

Daniel F. Herrmann is one of three selection committee members which also includes Lucy Askew, Senior Curator, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Nico de Oliveira, Course Leader of Curating the Contemporary, London Metropolitan University.

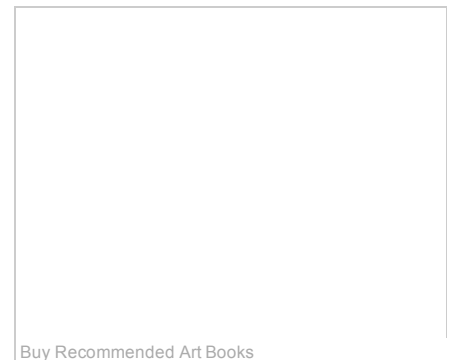
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Of the Demergon Curatorial Exchange and Award, Iwona Blazwick said 'It is a privilege to be in dialogue with this group of dynamic curators who look set to transforming the Greek art scene. Inspired by the Daskalopoulos Collection they will be setting a rich new cultural agenda at a time when creativity and innovation has never been so vital.'

Collector Dimitris Daskalopoulos says 'It is exciting to see these young students interact with a Collection that I have developed over the past twenty years and approach the works with such enthusiasm and vision. I strongly believe that art should be shared with the public and it's comforting to see the challenging and intellectually stimulating plans that this group of Demergon Curatorial Award students have for the works.'

Elina Kountouri, Director of Demergon Foundation says 'This curatorial exchange is an opportunity to encourage a constructive dialogue between young curators in three significant cultural cities, whilst exploring the works from one of the foremost contemporary art collections in the world.'

In 2012, the Demergon Curatorial Exchange and Award was open to second year students on the MA Curating the Contemporary which is delivered by the Whitechapel Gallery in partnership with London Metropolitan University. Students on the Demergon Curatorial Exchange benefit from a four-day study trip to Athens, where they take part in a guided tour of the Athenian art scene, designed to open up networking and professional development opportunities for young curators. MA students are invited to devise a curatorial proposal based on selected works from the D. Daskalopoulos Collection, with the best submission being awarded the Demergon Curatorial Award. The programme is organised by the Whitechapel Gallery and coordinated by Nayia Yiakoumaki, Curator at the Whitechapel Gallery and Project Manager of the Demergon Curatorial Exchange and Award.

Beginning in 2013, the programme will welcome candidates the Courtauld Institute of Art, Goldsmiths and the Royal College of Art. Applications for next year's award will open in Spring 2013.

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Walid Raad. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, art courses, dining room and bookshop there is always something free to see. The Gallery is a touchstone for modern and contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

Demergon Daskalopoulos Foundation for Culture and Development is a public benefit organisation committed to broadening the appreciation, understanding and creation of contemporary art. It aims to offer increased access and innovative interaction with contemporary forms of art while examining practices in contemporary curatorial activities. The Demergon Foundation is a creative partner that, beyond mere financial support, facilitates the stimulation of ideas, promotes the development and preservation of artistic production, providing long-term value for both present and future generations.

Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk was born in Rotterdam in 1988; he lives and works in London and Rotterdam.

Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk works as a curator and writer. He holds a BA in Art History and Visual Culture from the University of Utrecht, and an MA in Curating from the London Metropolitan University, delivered in conjunction with the Whitechapel Gallery. He has worked at a number of institutions including SMBA (Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam) and DRAF (David Roberts Art Foundation). Recent exhibition projects include Artists of the No, Projektraum Viktor Bucher as part of Curated by\_Vienna 2012, Vienna (2012); Reading Complex, Seventeen Gallery, The Government Art Collection, The Showroom, AND Publishing, London (2012); Swedenborg Epic., Brockmer House, London (2012). He edited the anthology and hypothetical catalogue None of the Above (2011) on curating and the curatorial in the key of fiction. His publications include, among others, 'Untitled' (Constants Are Changing) on the works of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, published in 2010.

His curatorial and writing practice positions itself on the intersection of literature, fiction, reading and writing in the expanded field in relation to contexts for contemporary visual culture and artistic practices. Activities concern the development and organisation of exhibitions and events, from conceptualisation to materialisation; the writing and editing of texts; artistic research; the publishing of books; hosting and conducting talks and lectures on curating and current artistic practices.

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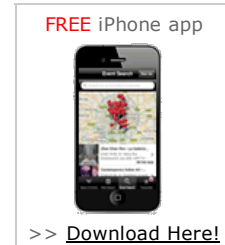
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