



Virginias Mpenaki 23, 10436 Athens, Greece



“METROPOLIS AND MEEEEENTAL II” is part two in a series of exhibitions that take the psychology of city life as its starting point. Each exhibition stands independently yet remains interwoven with others, creating a dialogue across specific works, perspectives and places.

The exhibition is made possible through the support of the Danish Institute in Athens and the Danish Arts Foundation.



01. “Untitled (Solastalgia)” 2025, Inkjet print, Coyote
02. “ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΑΙΣΘΗΣΗ”, 2025, print on Iphone LCD plast, drawing, DIY epoxy copy of Copenhagen city key, found objects, Frederik Eg
03. “Midnight Green”, 2024, photogravure, chine-collé and Inkjet on paper, Benjamin Savi
04. “In The Future It Is Always Raining”, 2024, photogravure, chine-collé and Inkjet on paper, Benjamin Savi
05. “ΔΡΟΜΟ ΨΥΧΟΠΑΘΗ” (Pshychopathy Street), 2024, found intecom, sound system, mp3 player, looping sound file, Eric Stephany
06. “ΔΡΟΜΟ ΨΥΧΟΠΑΘΗ II” (Pshychopathy Street), 2025, found intecom, LED light, Eric Stephany
07. “12 AUG 20:35” 2019, C-print, Asta Lynge & Jakob Ohrt
08. “Glass Beads” 2024, laserprint, Marie Vedel
09. From the series “Vejen til byen”, 1954, woodcut, Palle Nielsen
10. “Untitled”, 2015, Injekt on paper, Albert Elm
11. “Untitled”, 2021, drawing on paper, Silas Inoue
12. From the series “Klage Sange”, 1963, woodcut, Palle Nielsen

In a small but precise woodcut made in Copenhagen in 1954, people are depicted within an urban scene— standing, sitting, traversing from one place to another. Pictorially controlled by the rules of perspective, they appear close yet somehow isolated, their postures reflecting detachment, contemplation, or quiet resignation. Whether stemming from an unrevealed catastrophe or the overwhelming conditions of modern life itself, the image presents to us a somewhat uneasy impression of urban society.

The ambiguous relationship between bodies and buildings became a central concern for those seeking to understand the special bonds between architectural space and estrangement. Among them was Danish graphic artist Palle Nielsen (1920-2000). So much so that one could be forgiven for thinking that much of his life’s work represents an iterative journey created to redeem the details of life through the lens of the urban. During the postwar period in Denmark, he dedicated much of his time at his desk studying shadow and light to capture the city’s rapid change and its reshaping of traditional spatial relationships.

For in the city, change is constant, and the art of urbanization is an ongoing process of rewriting what was and what will be, where something is relinquished to make space for the new. The intensification and technological modernization of large metropolitan areas brought about significant changes to patterns of orientation and social practices, making way for a new way of being— a new, peculiar mindset, embodying both the promises and anxieties of modern life.

These rapid transformations spurred many efforts to decode the societal and psychological shifts they introduced. But long before Palle Nielsen started to map out these tensions, writers of romanticism and realism, from Balzac to Baudelaire, had already begun charting the mental pressures brought about

COI is a curatorial project and non-profit initiative that aims to present a series of exhibitions in diverse urban spaces. The starting point for this endeavor is based on a fascination with ‘the city’ itself and some of the contested and negotiated ways in which it can be interpreted, used and imagined. The city as an overall theme is not surveyed in general, on the contrary, it is analyzed and portrayed from diverse, consciously fragmentary points of view. The city could thus be described as a loose-fit framework from which to create presentations that implicitly or explicitly engage with the subject of the city and the ways in which we make sense of, or attach meaning to the multifaceted aspects of urban culture. The name “COI” is borrowed from a billboard advertisement— It was part of a real estate slogan attempting to pitch potential buyers and investors with the message: “CITY OF INTEREST”.

(01) Coyote: “Untitled (Solastalgia)” is a photograph documenting a temporary public artwork created in the spring of 2022. The project explores how public and social spaces are shaped by the emergence of new collective memories. It is a collective interplay of several elements that allude to people’s feelings of alienation and belonging in relation to the concept of “hometown” and public space. Originally it was part of a larger project consisting of three permanent sculptural pieces, including a light sign that references Stockholm’s oldest advertising sign, ‘Stomatolskylten’, both in its appearance and its commercial intent. Coyote is a multidisciplinary artist collective, founded in Stockholm 2017.

(02) Frederik Eg: “ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΑΙΣΘΗΣΗ” is a work compiling random notes and material for this exhibition, along with objects connected to his home city, Copenhagen, and his ongoing projects there. The engine of Eg’s artistic practice is based on an interest in how societal conceptions, expressions and conflicts are mirrored in the epochs of architectural production and the city more broadly. With a fascination for the ways in which we make sense of our history through built form, he looks at buildings and spaces with the aim to reinterpret aesthetic narratives related to their tradition and idiom.

(03+04) Benjamin Savi: “The Future It Is Always Raining” and “Midnight Green” are characterized by a fragmented, montage-like visual language where the physical blends into the phantasmagoric. The imagery presents scenes of the rhythms and architectural advancements recognizable of modern cityscapes, evoking a palpable sense of disorientation where the tangible merges with the psychology of the observer. Savi is an artist and teacher whose works incorporate stylistic, cinematic or historical references. His motifs are often rooted in the contemporary world, using identifiable sections of urban reality as his point of departure.

(05+06) Eric Stephany: “ΔΡΟΜΟ ΨΥΧΟΠΑΘΗ” (Psychopathy Street) is a work created by relocating an intercom from a Polykatoikia (an Athenian condominium building). Once a vital fixture in an apartment building, it stands as a relic of a time when it served as a direct link between residents and the outside world, facilitating communication, security, and access. Through repurposing, the work plays with the tension between connection and solitude, using the intercom to symbolize the dynamics of communication and detachment. Eric Stephany’s practice involves working with and appropriating found objects, exploring their sculptural potential and their connection to emotions and psychological states.

by urban progress— a theme later expanded by surrealism and cinema, which functioned, some might suggest, as an experimental laboratory for exploring the mind, the body, and the city.

Yet it was sociologist Georg Simmel who, in 1903, in The Metropolis and Mental Life (Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben), theorized the psychological changes that occurred amidst these spatial reconfigurations. He discussed the idea of a blasé attitude— an adaptive emotional detachment necessary for navigating the sensory and social overload of the large modern city. The metropolis, he argued, does not simply demand adjustment; it fundamentally reshapes psychological conditions, forcing individuals to oscillate between heightened awareness and emotional withdrawal.

This idea resonated in epidemiological and neuroscience studies on the urban brain, showing that constant exposure to urban stimuli elevates cortisol levels and can impair cognitive function. The increasingly hyper-connected and transforming environments further reinforce these effects, revealing rising rates of chronic stress, neuroses, and spatial phobias—such as agoraphobia and monophobia— suggesting that the strains of city life are not merely psychological but systemic, embedded in the very structure of urbanization itself.

These reflections provide a point of departure for a series of exhibitions aiming to explore the modern individual’s sense of estrangement, shaped by spatial frameworks beyond their control. Beginning with Palle Nielsen’s universe, this constellation of works reacts, directly or indirectly, to the emotional, economic, or ecological weight carried by the accelerated pace and fragmented realities of 21st-century urban life. The imperceptible shift from fascination to dread is, in many of the works, a carefully arranged affair, where the built environment serves as a protagonist in defining these boundaries.

(07) Jakob Ohrt and Asta Lynge: “12 AUG 20:35” is part of a photographic series that takes a playful approach to address the contradictions between lifestyle consumerism and urban regeneration. With the architectural rendering and its inherent potential for fiction as a starting point the images juxtapose found, everyday items with large-scale urban redevelopment projects in Copenhagen. The photograph was shot in an architectural lighting lab, where a manually controlled sun can recreate lighting conditions from anywhere and anytime or simply work as a visual effect. Since 2019, Ohrt and Lynge have been collaborating on a series of projects that explore, among other themes, image-making, storytelling, urban development, climate, and fiction.

(08) Marie Vedel: “Glass Beads” is a reproduced product image from the commercial industry. Through close-ups and zoom-ins, the image reveals the interior of a weighted blanket— a therapeutic blanket filled with small glass beads, “designed” to offer deep pressure stimulation (DPS). This even, gentle weight distribution is said to mimic the feeling of being hugged, helping to alleviate anxiety and promote relaxation. Marie Vedel’s works often explore the instructed body as both a private and public space, where phenomena such as speech and medicine are exchanged with the outside world.

(09+12) Palle Nielsen: The woodcuts is part of a larger oeuvre that depict the solitary individual in urban landscapes reflecting modern anxieties, including alienation, class divides, and disconnection amid calamities, conflict and change. Palle Nielsen’s extensive body of work, often conveyed through fragmented narratives, is defined by an unsettling atmosphere. The city became a limitless framework for his imagery and cultural criticism, with his prints and drawings remaining among the most renowned in Denmark.

(10) Albert Elm: “Untitled” is a photograph capturing laborers playing cricket on the outskirts of Dubai, UAE. Elm is a photographer whose work captures immediate impressions of contemporary life, documenting diverse moments, people, places and cultures.

(11) Silas Inoue: “Untitled” is drawing that represents magnified organisms inhabiting a structure, building or skyscraper. It combines analytical observations from the scientific and botanical world with intuition and imagination. Silas Inoue is an artist whose work explores some of the ongoing discussions between nature and technology, and how these worlds merge and transform systems, bodies and environments.