

Iris Touliatou

Outfits

7 October – 16 December 2023

Outfits is a new commission and the first solo exhibition in a UK public art organisation by Athens-based artist Iris Touliatou. Using framing as a practical and conceptual device, Touliatou's exhibition at Peer comprises sculpture and a series of architectural and behavioural adjustments that explore the access to, and the safeguarding of, public and private space.

Building on her previous work, with its interest in cyclical economies and the infrastructural qualities of objects, this exhibition draws attention to the interdependent behaviours of people and institutions. Hundreds of ornaments of guard dogs sit waiting in a museum display unit, an exhibition wall is undressed, a replica door installed, and an address manipulated. Each acts as an 'outfit', or facade for redressing a set of organisational and personal requirements.

Touliatou's exhibition at Peer takes as a starting point the history, location and function of Peer's back door, which leads onto a large residential carpark, as well as her research into the building's archive where she found descriptions of Peer's location as a poorly lit site that attracts "antisocial behaviour". Motivated by questions of what constitutes good and bad behaviour, security and perceived threats, Touliatou's exhibition produces new sightlines and access routes from the front of the gallery to Peer's back door.

In the exhibition space, *KNOCK-OFF SAFETY RETROFIT* (2023) comprises a doorframe and fire door newly installed by Hackney Council's maintenance team, mirroring Peer's existing backdoor and providing a permeable access to the adjacent office space and a clear view through to the rear of the building. In *PARTYWALL COMMON FIT* (2023) sections of the gallery wall have been removed. In doing so, Touliatou draws attention to the architectural structures shared between Peer and the three residential flats above the gallery space.

Central to the exhibition is *NATIONAL STYLE (JENNINGSERSATZ)* (2023). Four replicas of the famous "Jennings Dog" also known as "The Dog of Alcibiades", sit among hundreds of statues and household ornaments of seated guard dogs of various breeds, all bought from UK-based eBay sellers. Mapping the mutation of objects and their value, the work takes the origins of the Jennings Dog – a Roman marble copy of a 2nd Century Hellenistic bronze statue of a seated Molossian dog – as a protocol for the research and purchase of all the seated dogs included in the installation.

A museum standard Proform archive shelving unit mounted on a Monotrak mobile system provides a framing device for the objects and considers the legacy of ownership and care of the Roman marble sculpture, which is thought to be one of only a few animal sculptures surviving from antiquity. Named after the object's first British owner, Henry Constantine Jennings (1731 – 1819), a colonist, antiquarian, collector and gambler, the sculpture became a signal of social status within the British upper classes of the 17th Century. Sold by Jennings to pay his gambling debts, it was eventually bought by the British Museum, partly through Heritage National Lottery Fund, where it resides today.

Combining her emotionally informed and architecturally bold interventions, Touliatou's commission at Peer extends her ongoing interest in the conditions and relations that create behaviours that constitute social status – be it security, access, taste, proximity, wealth or lack thereof, as well as how we navigate relationships to one another.

Biography:

Iris Touliatou has recently held solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel (2023); Rodeo London/ Piraeus (2022); Grazer Kunstverein (2022); EXILE Vienna (2020); Radio Athènes (2019). Her work has been included in the group exhibitions *Siren (some poetics)*, Amant, NYC (2022); *Driven by Desire*, Rongwrong, NL (2022); the New Museum Triennial, *Soft Water Hard Stone*, NYC (2021); the 7th Athens Biennial, *Eclipse* (2021); *Work and Leisure*, Milan (2022); *When I state I am an anarchist*, PLATO, Ostrava (2022); *Anabasis*, Rodeo London/ Piraeus (2022); *Lives of an object* ARCH / Melas Martinos (2021); *The Way In*, Haus N Athen (2021); *Anti Structure*, DESTE Foundation (2021); *The Same River Twice*, Benaki Museum, Athens (2019); *Manifesta 12*, 5x5x5: Selected Projects, Palermo (2018) among others. She was an artist in residence at ISCP, NYC (2021) and at NTU CCA, Singapore (2019), an ARTWORKS SNF Fellow (2021) and the recipient of Europas Zukunft / The Future of Europe Prize from GFZK Leipzig in 2012.

List of works:

1. *KNOCK-OFF SECURITY RETROFIT* (2023)

New doorway, part glazed fire door complete with frame, glass, ironmongery and decorations in black Satinwood, fabricated and installed by JH Contract Services (Ltd).
198 x 89 x 98 x 83cm

2. *PARTYWALL COMMON FIT* (2023)

Alteration to Peer gallery wall, grey paint, brick, wood, concrete, plasterboard.
229 x 202 x 59.5cm

3. *DEPUTY DIRECTOR PIN CHANGE* (2023)

Google maps, 97-99 Hoxton Street address moved to Peer's back door entrance, via the residential carpark by Peer's Deputy Director

4. *NATIONAL STYLE (JENNINGSERSATZ)* (2023)

Four Jennings Dog 'Grand Tour' Replicas; 154 seated guard dog ornaments and garden statues; Proform archive shelving unit mounted on a Monotrak mobile system.
300 x 270 x 400 x 1970cm

Offsite:

ADDRESS (124 City Road, London, EC1V 2NX)

For the time of the exhibition the artist acquires a local trading address.

Talks, Events and Workshops:

Extended Sunday opening hours and exhibition tour:

Sunday 8 October, 11am - 6pm, tour at 2pm

A special extended opening of Iris Touliatou's exhibition with a tour of the exhibition.

Artist talk with Iris Touliatou:

Friday 13 October, 1pm

Join artist Iris Touliatou and Ellen Greig, Director of Peer, in conversation.

Community coffee morning and tour of Iris Touliatou's exhibition:

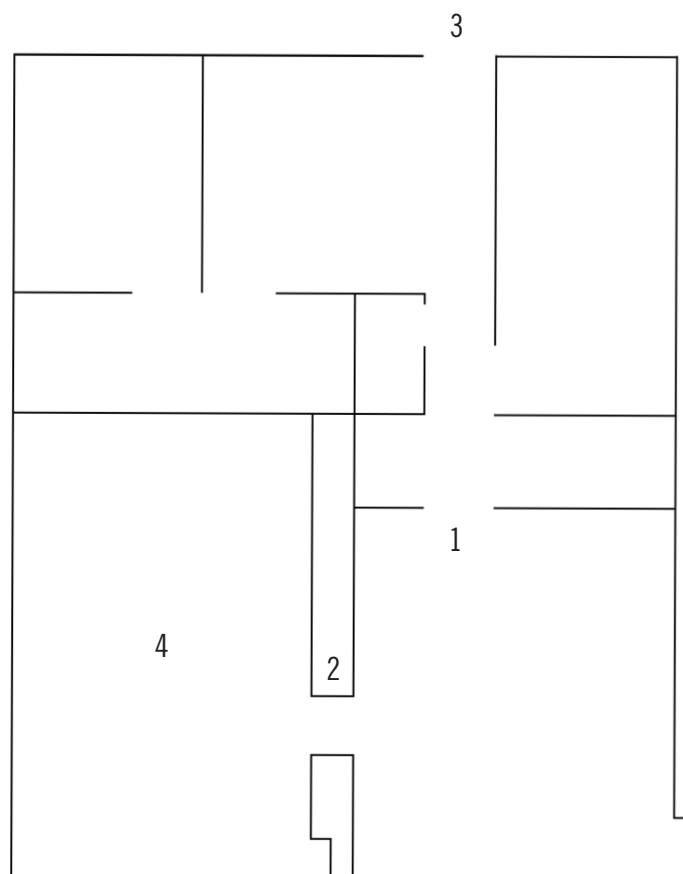
Thursday 19 October, 9.30am

Join us for a coffee morning at Peer, for the chance to meet others living and working in the local area, with an introduction to the exhibition by Ellen Greig, Director of Peer.

A reading with Aurelia Guo:

Saturday November 25, 2pm

Writer and researcher Aurelia Guo responds to Iris Touliatou's exhibition with a reading of her essay, *London (Poverty)* (2022), which was first published in her book, *World of Interiors* in 2022 by Divided Press.



Four Questions to Iris Touliatou:

Why have you titled this exhibition *Outfits*?

The title *Outfits*, references how we dress something. And as you very poignantly described in our email correspondence, it refers to the dressing of a building, of an institution, of a social status. It also nods to a set of provisions, of tools, of necessary equipment for being in the world. An outfit refers to the construction and experience of identity. The outfits here in this show (a wall, a door, an address, these ornaments and this excessive arrangement), mirror and redefine or reclaim an identity of a place or a person, via a re-orchestrated system of social signs. These outfits, or thresholds, are really between our bones and the world, between our public and private bodies. As works-come-uniforms of activities, needs and desires, they are composed by common objects, ordinary materials, ready mades, as well as with site maintenance and art technicians.

Framing and reframing as a process, as well as a literal structure, is important to this exhibition. Why have you used framing as a device here?

Because of its inherent design as a liminal space a frame is a device that serves to extend the work's location or placement within the systems it exists within, be it cultural, social, etc. and the interrelationships that govern these systems. This liminal zone or intersection is a site to undo or reveal layers of interplay between material object and its conditions of production and aesthetic experience, as well as an object's display, accessibility, provenance and value. Frames are also both embedded and intersecting, as are the often contradictory and paradoxical principles of our professional and personal lives and the autonomies and dependencies we operate with and without in our visible and invisible support systems. And while a frame is usually thought of as a rigid container and one definitely acknowledges what it contains, I see framing and reframing as a stretch, or as a critical space for inclusion.

The redistribution of objects, economies, human relationships and methods of production reoccur throughout your work. What is the importance of redistribution to your practice?

I am very attracted formally by the slight, ephemeral, and sometimes invisible nature of modes of redistribution, by their affect value – the pleasure and pain that comes with an engagement with something. Distribution networks, either by rupture or rerouting of a protocol destabilize hierarchies such as social and economic class, rank, ownership, gender and gentry, economic cycles of hereditary access and lifetime titles. They reconsider the unique and precious object, resisting grand narratives and models.

I often use a modest economy of gestures and means, things are made entirely on site using existing infrastructures, communication channels and methods. They are made as collective, unauthored, unofficial impulses and open systems to include failure and cracks, and operate in reflective engagement with their conditions of production and function.

Security, safeguarding and protection are central to this exhibition. What possible dangers are you acknowledging in this exhibition?

Contingencies, uncertainties, risks, dangers... I have read that we flourish when we're exposed to them, but we have to keep within certain limits that preserve our sense of safety and agency.

I am often drawn to this tension, or balance, or even gamble, and the subtle threshold taken from practices of enhancing, sustaining, endangering, or losing safety. I think of this exhibition at Peer as building upon each of my previous projects with new readings, perspectives, inquiries, material interests and references. What does it mean to redress or undress functional and dysfunctional behaviour, legitimate and unconforming statuses, social and antisocial agents, gentleness and criminalization, deviance, and normalcy? In this exhibition I want to deal with the reality of these tensions.

From this concrete and material reality, the ingredients of the exhibition were taken: Peer's location is not a fiction, its history is not a fiction, its administration is not a fiction, its audience is not a fiction, its secure tenancy is not a fiction, its shared walls are not a fiction, its backdoor is not a fiction, its funding is not a fiction.

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premises, flat shares, sublets, councils, ex-councils, tenants of, bodies, functions of, sex, security, shortage of, landlords, estates, benefits of, living together, living alone, chances of, interiors, furniture, types of, doors, frames of, locks of, maintenance, repairs, conditions of, emergency exits, escapes of, security bars, screws of, windows, view out of, cleaners of, brick walls, party of, house break ups, partitions, retrofits, the price of, waiting lists, time of, data sets, warmth of, local responsibility, complaints, revisions, institutions, statutes of, charities, lotteries, prizes, grants, nations of, poverty line, inequality, multiple deprivation, social progress, probability of, indexes of, general public, counter-public, behaviours of, social deviants, noise, blood, carriers of, questionnaires, answers of, funds, eligibility of, addresses, change of, names, change of, partners, change of, activities, change of, previous life experiences, forget of, jobs, reduced hours, number of, services, bills, debt of, companies, states, transfers, loops, exchanges, gates, servers, money, annual return of, friends, gardens, seasons of, care of, guard dogs, shit of, sculptures, proxies of, grand tours, class of, crime, normalcy, violence of, lewdness, Libby Adler, nightlife, light of, power, inheritance, uniform of, daily life, activities of, sleeping, eating, lovemaking, urinating, washing, texting, reparative reading, paranoid reading, aging, dancing, displacing, gambling, cigarette breaks, scratch cards, desire, object of, return of, outfits of

Thank You

157 UK eBay sellers, Aidan Moss, Aroosa Hussain, Aurelia Guo, Capital Office, Chen, Charlotte, Duncan Morris, Dimos and Eleni Touliatou, Elina Bergmark Wiberg, Ellen Greig, Jennifer Teets, John, Katie Green, Maria Hassabi, Max Jefcut, Paulina Michnowska, Phoebe Cripps, Quinn Latimer, Rosa Harvest, Sylvia Kouvali.

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