

Mikhail Karikis: No Ordinary Protest

18 August 2018 – 6 January 2019

Galleries 5 & 6, Free Entry

#MikhailKarikis

Whitechapel Gallery is delighted to present its 10th Children's Commission, *No Ordinary Protest*, an immersive new installation that combines film, sound and performance. Over the course of one year, artist **Mikhail Karikis** (b. 1975, Greece) has collaborated with a group of local 7 to 8 year-old school children to create this work especially for the Gallery.

Launched in 2009, Whitechapel Gallery's Children's Commissioning Programme offers young audiences the opportunity to create a new work of art with a leading international contemporary artist. This work is then exhibited within the main galleries. Previous artists commissioned for the series include **Assemble** (2017), **Rivane Neuenschwander** (2015) and **Eva Rothschild** (2012).

Sofia Victorino, Director of Education and Public Programmes, Whitechapel Gallery, said "*Karikis' work touches upon themes that affect us all: a sense of belonging, the environment and the power of a collective voice. The collaborative process he developed with the children inspired them to expand their activist imagination and claim other possible futures.*"

No Ordinary Protest is inspired by *The Iron Woman* (1993), a children's science fiction novel by the British writer Ted Hughes.

In this story, the world's seas, lakes and rivers have become majorly polluted. Through the figure of a female superhero, the Iron Woman, children are gifted with a mysterious power - the ability to hear a supernatural noise, transmitted by touch, which echoes the collective howl and suffering of creatures affected by pollution. In protest against the unfolding ecological catastrophe and apathy of the adult population, children infiltrate factories and 'infect' grown-ups with their cry for immediate action and change.

As part of the Whitechapel Gallery's longstanding commitment to seasonal exhibitions organised in collaboration with local young people, *No Ordinary Protest* is devised with students from Mayflower Primary School in East London. In a series of workshops, Karikis invited the children to reflect on the environmental themes, to imagine the enigmatic noise heard by the children in the story. Improvising with vocalisations, musical instruments and toys, the group conducted experiments in which noise and vocals took on visual forms.

Press Release

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In the resultant film and installation, Karikis echoes the narrative of *The Iron Woman* as an eco-feminist parable on the power of sound to effect physical and socio-political change. Through group debate, the children explore their responsibility towards the environment, and the urgent need for solidarity with all creatures. Allowing the children to probe the boundaries between the real and imagined, communal noise-making and deep listening become tools which ignite an activist imagination with the potential to transform the world. The artist gives voice to the students' responses to an unstable ecological future; voices demanding to be heard.

Following its display at the Whitechapel Gallery, *No Ordinary Protest* will be on show at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art in Summer 2019.

Notes to Editors

- Commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art and Whitechapel Gallery, London. Supported by Arts Council England
- Curated by Sofia Victorino, Director of Education and Public Programmes, with Helen Davidson, Curator: Children and Families
- With special thanks to Benjamin Jones, Class Teacher and Creative Arts Lead, Mayflower Primary School
- Programmed by our Education team since 2009, Galleries 5 & 6 at Whitechapel Gallery are dedicated to showing three new exhibitions per year that provide opportunities for young local people to collaborate with artists
- List of previous Children's Commissions: Jessica Voorsanger (2009); Jake & Dinos Chapman (2010); Alan Kane (2011); Eva Rothschild (2012); Simon & Tom Bloor (2013); Francis Upritchard (2014); Rivane Neuenschwander (2015); Edwina Ashton (2016); Assemble (2017)

About Mikhail Karikis

Mikhail Karikis is a Greek/British artist based in London and Lisbon. His work embraces moving image, sound and other media to create immersive audio-visual installations and performances which emerge from his long-standing investigation of the voice as a sculptural material and a socio-political agent. He often collaborates with communities and his works highlight alternative modes of human existence, solidarity and action.

Karikis' work is exhibited widely in museums and international biennials including, Ear to the Ground, New Orleans Museum of Art, USA (2018-2019); State of the Union, Ian Potter Museum of Art, AU, (2018); Artists' Film International, touring sixteen countries (2017-2018); British Art Show 8, UK (2015-2017); Remembering the Future, Tate Liverpool, UK (2017); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, (2016) IN; Steirischer Herbst, AT (2015); Art in the Age of Energy and Raw Material, Witte de With, NL (2015); 19th Biennale of Sydney, AU (2014); Mediacity Seoul/SeMA Biennale, Seoul, KR (2014); Inside, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR (2014-2015); Assembly, TATE Britain, London, UK (2014); 2nd Aichi Triennale, Nagoya, JP (2013); Videonale 14, Bonn, DE (2013); Manifesta 9, Ghenk, BE (2012); and Danish Pavilion 54th Venice Biennale, IT (2011).

Solo exhibitions include 'The Chalk Factory', Aarhus European Capital of Culture 2017, DK (2017), 'Love Is the Institution of Revolution', Casino Luxembourg Forum d'art Contemporain, LU (2017) and 'Children of Unquiet', Villa Romana Florence, IT (2014). Upcoming solo

exhibitions will be presented at Mori Art Museum, JP, Turku Art Museum, FI, De la Warr Pavilion, UK, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, IT

About Whitechapel Gallery

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. It is a touchstone for 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.

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Nearest London Underground Stations: Aldgate East, Liverpool Street, Tower Gateway DLR

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About Film and Video Umbrella

Film and Video Umbrella commissions, curates, produces and presents artists' moving-image works that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, FVU has been at the forefront of this vibrant and expanding area of practice, promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting figures on the contemporary scene. During this time, the organisation has commissioned and produced nearly 200 different artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film and video pieces, as well as numerous online commissions. fvu.co.uk

About Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA)

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, part of Teesside University, develops a civic agenda to reconnect the museum with its social function and to promote art as a tool for change. Its programme includes Middlesbrough Collection displays, exhibitions, learning activities, commissions, community-focused projects and events. It plays a key role in the cultural ecology of North East England, particularly Teesside, and is internationally recognised for its mission. It is funded by Arts Council England and Middlesbrough Council. <http://mima.art/>

Whitechapel Gallery Press Information

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Whitechapel Gallery



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