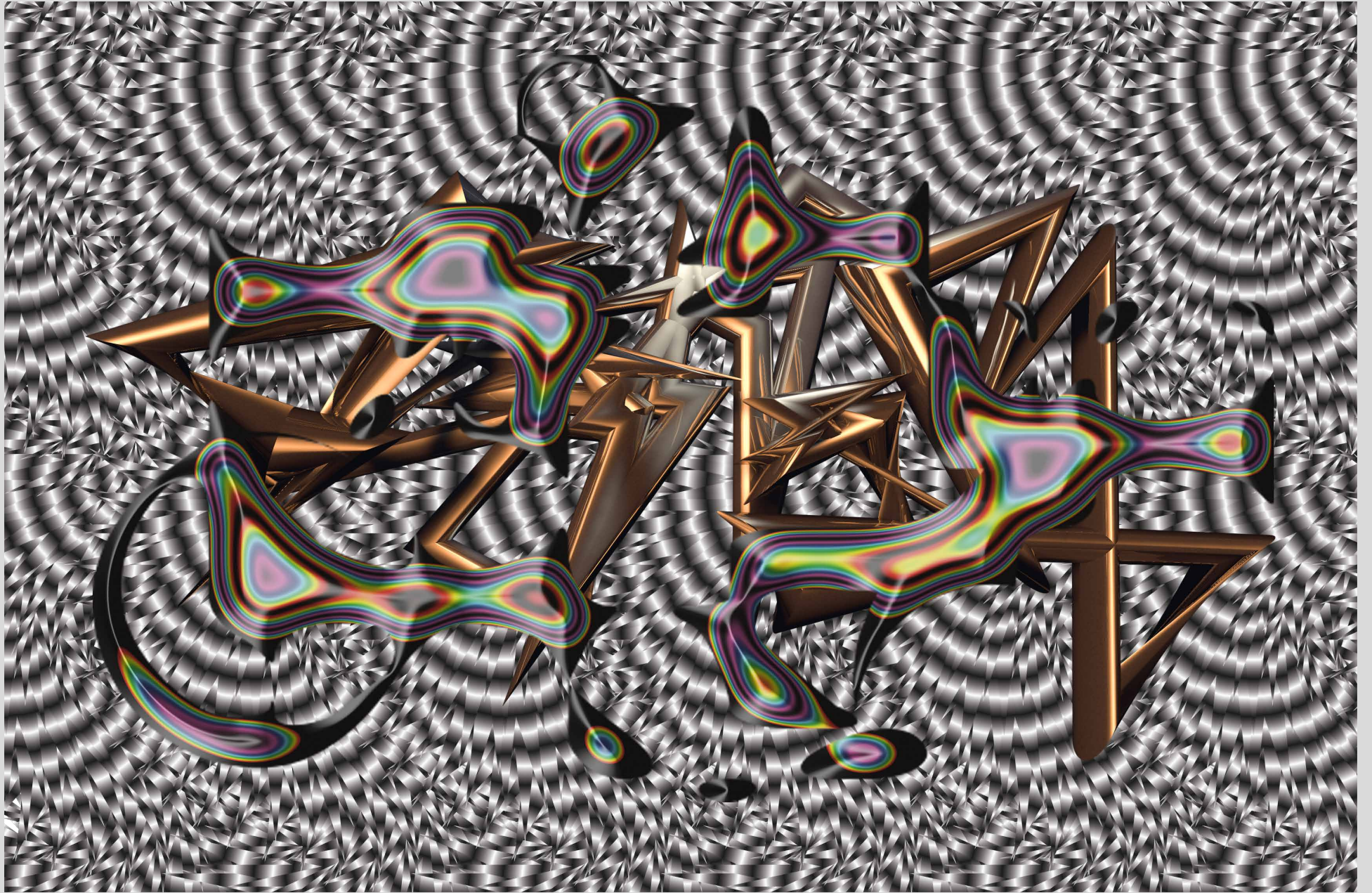


Chronotopia Echoes

Αντηχήσεις



CTM Editions 001

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Chronotopia /

Αντηχήσεις

Table of Contents

Foreword from Goethe-Institut Athen <i>by Stefanie Peter</i>	5
Foreword from Athens Epidaurus Festival <i>by Evi Nakou</i>	7
Chronotopia Echoes / Αντηχήσεις: Revisiting the KSYME Archives <i>by Anke Eckardt & Akis Sinos</i>	10
Hybrid Resonances: Tradition & Experimentation at the KSYME <i>by Ioannis Kotsonis</i>	14
Track 1: City Replica Souvenir <i>by Alyssa Moxley</i>	28
Track 2: Iterative Cast <i>by Gaspar Cohen</i>	33
Track 3: Sound Gleams from the Deep Darkness <i>by Giulia Vismara</i>	37
Track 4: Partial Patterns <i>by Max Eilbacher</i>	41
Track 5: MACC <i>by Savas Metaxas</i>	46
Post Kollisionen <i>by Sofia Eleni Xezonaki</i>	51



Posters for the Chronotopia project launch in Athens, 2019. Photo by Jan Rohlf.

Foreword from Goethe-Institut Athen

Stefanie Peter, Head of Cultural Programs,
Goethe-Institut Athen

5

This album contains the echoes of Chronotopia, and the echoes of the city of Athens, where the initiative was launched in 2019. A high sonic energy fed by the constant friction between the traditional and the very latest. Concert halls, clubs, music bars, radio stations, labels, recording studios, record shops, streets, squares, cellars, lecture halls, garages, and rooftops: these are the places where these vital echoes unfold, across genres.

Perhaps Athens' round-the-clock noise corresponds to the musical wealth of knowledge that is reflected in this release. The city was an ideal geographical starting point for the cooperation between CTM Festival and Goethe-Institut Athen, which was quickly joined by Athens & Epidaurus Festival and other partners.

Titled Chronotopia, the collaboration explored new temporalities and topographies that emerge in contemporary music from its exchange across time, regions, and cultures. Against the backdrop of sonic entanglements, dissolution, gaps, and resurfacing voices, the project fostered artistic encounters that led to the rethinking of different musical and cultural lines of development. Following a weekend launch event presented in 2019, a group of six artists selected through open call – Alyssa Moxley, Gaspar Cohen, Giulia Vismara, Max Eilbacher, Savvas Metaxas and Sofia Eleni Xezonaki – were invited to speculate on the non-linearity of time and culture in various formats and to seek points of contact between traditional and historical musical practices. The »Chronotopia Echoes/Αντηχήσεις« artistic lab was presented together with Athens & Epidaurus Festival, which later hosted the premieres of these works as well as other performances and events under the Chronotopia umbrella.

Chronotopia's focus was also on interrogating contexts in which musical practices are used to construct social identities and reinforce political projects. Functions and effects of traditional musical forms and their contemporary appropriation were as much the focus as were questions about the loss and preservation of musical heritage.

A visit to the archives of KSYME hosted by the Athens Conservatory made clear how precarious the situation is for contemporary music, but especially for its history. The archive regroups a rich collection of artifacts and objects from various private collections. Chronotopia Echoes/Αντηχήσεις thus contributes to an artistic engagement with the holdings of this archive, which will hopefully be followed by many more.

Foreword from Athens & Epidaurus Festival

Evi Nakou, Artistic Research Curator of Athens
Epidaurus Festival (2019–21)

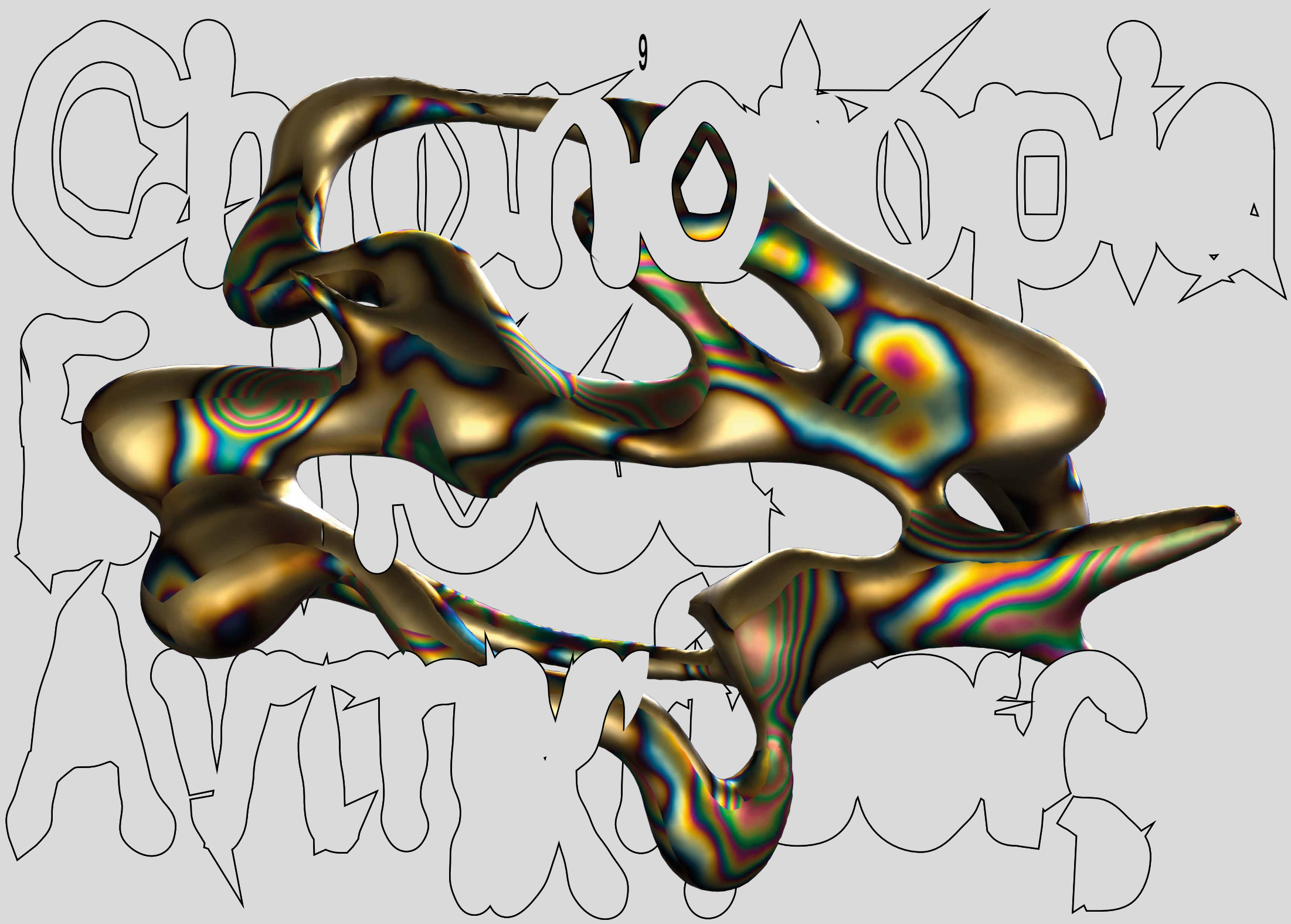
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In response to the remarkable work of KSYME – a pioneering institution for artistic as well as political developments in the local and international community of electronic and experimental music and sonic practices, founded in Athens in 1979 – the Athens Epidaurus Festival, and CTM Festival in Berlin co-designed the initiative »Chronotopia Echoes/ Αντηχήσεις« as a hybrid platform for research, experimentation, and creation in conversation with the artefacts, works, and histories of the KSYME archive. This international partnership aimed to foster a dialogue across diverse localities through sound.

Driven by our joint curiosity to tune in to the current multitude of perspectives and voices of sound artists and practitioners, both on a local and international level, we invited Anke Eckardt and Akis Sinos to lead a series of webinars contemplating the notion of the archive and the particularities of KSYME, as an archive in and of its present. Six participating artists navigate through digital and analogue materialities, and present, past, and future temporalities. Following the research process, the artists were commissioned to create original works that would reflect their unique perspectives and take on the archived material.

The compilation that you are exploring is an attempt to embody the works of those artists in a lasting object, or else a gesture that aspires to present those works beyond the ephemerality of their live presentations at Athens Epidaurus Festival in October 2021.

Chronotopia Echoes/Αντηχήσεις foregrounds the urgency for large cultural organisations to create synergies that encourage research and experimentation amongst the communities of sound and performing arts, and electronic and experimental music. We hope that you will enjoy listening to the works and reading the reflections of the people who brought »Chronotopia Echoes/Αντηχήσεις« to life.



Chronotopia Echoes / Αντηχήσεις: Revisiting the KSYME Archives

Anke Eckardt & Akis Sinos

Chronotopia Echoes – the title of this international artistic research project arouses curiosity. Intertwined in Chronotopia are the terms *chronos*, meaning »time« and *topos* meaning »place,« maybe also the Greek *ou-topos* meaning »no place« or »nowhere,« or the almost identical Greek word *eu-topos* meaning »a good place.«

The reverberations in *Echoes* seem to refer to the starting point of the project, the artistic engagement with the KSYME Archive, founded in Athens in 1979. Under the direction of Anke Eckardt and Akis Sinos, the artists Alyssa Moxley, Gaspar Cohen, Giulia Vismara, Max Eilbacher, Savvas Metaxas, and Sofia Eleni Xezonaki traced points of contact between the past and the present, between music, art, and documents from that archive. In the process, KSYME proved to be a haven for a hybrid network of political, historical, aesthetic, and social developments of its time, which not only shaped Greek electronic music since the late 20th century, but also visioned the construction of new societies before the waking memories of World War II. How should we today view the idea of a past »futuraity,« where the world seemed to be moving forward? How does this engagement affect us in times of war in Europe, the spectre of more regularly occurring pandemics, and the rise of authoritarianism worldwide? Last but not least, where does the questioning of the concept of »progress/progression,« i.e. the critical reflection of an apparent linearity of history, lead to, and how can we make this artistically fruitful?

The project proved to be a great opportunity in its concern. A heterogeneous mix of participating artists with different backgrounds and knowledge of Greek reality met with the openness to activate new changes of perspective on the present. However, challenges soon arose in the working conditions of 2020 and 2021. Due to the pandemic, the archive was closed, which transformed the workshop into an open ended, online, nomadic process. Since access to the archive was only given to Katerina Tsioukra, a young musicologist in Athens, who selected the material and sent it online to the group, the material

we worked with was exclusively digitised, without being categorised. We ultimately found ourselves in a mesh of specificities, yet we managed to take advantage of this shifting situation: dealing with archive, memory, and their mutations in the digital domain we initially delved into the diverse and complex temporalities that emerged both within the KSYME archive and our contemporary condition. Touching on translation processes and aural transpositions, we studied the repositioning of source documents into other cultural and temporal dimensions, as well as the recasting of space onto objects and of memory onto place. In our effort to explore all possible strands of the available archival material, the workshop's scope broadened to include topics such as past and current media practices, the historicity of the future, and speculative thinking.

From the onset of the project, we sought to make these »chronotopic« points of contact tangible by encouraging the artists to bring elements of their personal practice into the collective body of research, so that their own distinctive approach would be incorporated into the works presented: Alyssa Moxley's orchestration of foley sounds made in real time and field recordings in her enactment of Xenakis's unrealised proposal for an »Athens Polytope«; Max Eilbacher's implementation of Sieve Theory in his algorithmic composition; Sofia Eleni Xezonaki's exploration of spatial expansions of a graphic score by Anestis Logothetis; Savvas Metaxas's sociological vantage point in his reworking of Adamis's original music; Giulia Vismara's investigation of the symbiotic relationship between space and sound; Gaspar Cohen's examination of epistemological tensions and onto-technological disruptions in his processing of archival audio fragments.

The very term »Chronotopia« invites listeners to use this compilation as a guidebook in order to navigate the multiplicity of possible configurations of time, space, and identity that are at play in this collaborative project. Composed during a period of extreme weirdness, these works seem to encapsulate how past and present can implode, highlighting narrative folds and instantiating aspects of our memory ecology as it is catalysed by mediatic time-machines.

Anke Eckardt is a sound and media artist based in Cologne, Germany. Her work includes cross-media installations, teaching, and research. She has taught as Professor of Sound at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, and was Visiting Professor of Sound Art at the Mainz School of Music, Johannes Gutenberg University in Germany. Eckardt is a member of the transdisciplinary platform *Building Art Invention*, which is dedicated to the development of innovative materials systems at the convergence of art and science. Her works have been presented internationally in exhibitions at *Ars Electronica*, *NEMO*, and *CTM Festival* among other.

Akis Sinos studied social sciences in Athens and digital media in London. He has been an active member of the Athenian music scene over the last decade, and a founding member of *Romvos*, a collective platform for the promotion of contemporary creative production in experimental and exploratory art and music. In 2015 Sinos co-founded *Hypermedium*, a record label and production team that has amassed a diverse roster of international artists. Since 2016 he has taught at the *Sound Synthesis and Electronic Music Workshop*, which operates at *KSYME*.

Hybrid Reason-
and
Experience
at the C.M.R.C



Hybrid Resonances: Tradition and Experimentation at the KSYME

Ioannis Kotsonis

The Contemporary Music Research Center (CMRC or ΚΣΥΜΕ in Greek) came into existence in 1979. It was conceived by John G. Papaioannou, Stephanos Vassiliadis, and Iannis Xenakis with the expressed aim to support and advance research and development of electroacoustic music in Greece. Each unique in their own way, these three figures espoused and promoted ideas about music, education, and art that still resonate in several obvious or subtler ways with contemporary music in Greece and beyond.

Xenakis' shadow looms large over the KSYME, the »/ks/« sound at the beginning of the Greek acronym acoustically reflecting how the X in the composer's surname is pronounced in Greek. Xenakis was a singular figure in the European avant garde at the time. In many ways he embodies the archetypal polymath auteur. His compositional methods draw elements from wildly diverse sources, incorporating mathematical, statistical, and architectural concepts as well as themes from ancient Greek mythology. His works incorporate classical instrumentation alongside electronic electroacoustic sources and musique concrete manipulations. He often presented his works as large-scale events, somewhere between sonic theatre and installation work. By the late 1970s he was already an established figure, and among the few composers in the international new music scene that pushed boundaries while still managing to reach large audiences far exceeding the Greek context where he was by comparison little known.

Stephanos Vassiliadis' compositional work is intrinsically connected to contemporary theatre, both through his capacity as a music director in the National Theatre of Northern Greece and as a music teacher in the Drama School of the National Theatre of Greece for many years. He composed music for many theatrical performances (ancient Greek tragedies as well as contemporary plays). He was also active as a musicologist and researcher and worked extensively on documenting local traditional music idioms all over Greece. In the few recordings of his work that have been made widely available we hear an idiosyncratic compositional language where synthesisers and tape manipulations are intertwined with field recordings and traditional folk instruments, evoking at the same time futurist and

archaic associations. Vassiliadis also collaborated closely with Jani Christou, Michael Adamis, and Iannis Xenakis.

An architect, pianist and, crucially, musicologist, he ceaselessly acted as curator and instigator of avant-garde music since the late 1950s. As co-director of the Goethe-Institut Athen initiative, Workshop for Contemporary Music (alongside Günther Becker), since 1962, he was instrumental in creating one of the first electronic music studios in Greece in 1969. He regularly gave lectures showcasing, contextualising, and supporting Greek avant-garde composers and organised the »Hellenic Contemporary Music Weeks« concert series (1966–1976). In his theoretical writings and his practice he proposed an expanded view of music creation and performance as inter-media practice that incorporates elements from diverse art practices including painting, sound installation, light design, theatrical and dance performance, film projection etc. To describe this concept he used the term »polytechno« (πολύτεχνο) and was always trying to curate events in this spirit.

The year 1974 marked the end of the seven year military dictatorship in Greece, the far-right regime that had dissolved democratic institutions and stifled free speech. In 1976, Xenakis received an official pardon (he had been sentenced to death for activities in the left-wing resistance in 1947). These first turbulent years during which democratic institutions re-emerged in Greece were imbued with a new optimism. Xenakis' proposal to create a »Scientific Research Centre of Music« in Athens that would be subsidised by the Greek state and would, in his own words, be »the flower of the most progressive artistic-scientific thought in music« perfectly reflects that particular moment.



KSYME archive. Temporary space.
Photo by Yiannis Hadjiaslanis

Documenting the Present, Archiving the Past

Currently within the KSYME archive lies a treasure trove of live and studio recordings, original scores, programme notes, photographs, letters, and handwritten notes, as well as instruments and pieces of equipment. These were collected from several disparate sources, including personal archives of composers, musicians, collectors, and new music enthusiasts. Among these documents we find hours of tape recordings of unreleased works by local and international artists, graphic scores by Anestis Logothetis, and the correspondence of Iannis Xenakis. Parts of the archive have been made available to the public for limited periods either as part of exhibitions or of online libraries. The conservation and availability of the archival material raises complex issues of copyright, authorship, funding, and institutional prestige. For the time being, since 2018, CMRC functions as part of the Athens Conservatory and its archive has been integrated in the Conservatoire's collection, which also includes other archives and private collections that intricately interconnect, for example the Janni Christou archive.

As all archives, the KSYME archive presents a narrative. It is the story of Greek avant-garde music and the primary narrator is John G. Papaioannou. Most of the archival material that covers the period from the 1930s until 1979 is largely drawn from his own collection which was back then already an authoritative archive of 20th century Greek music. The story that it tells begins with seminal composer Nikos Skalkottas (1904–1949), whose personal archive Papaioannou cared for and dissemi-

nated after Skalkottas' passing. Another big part of the archive is connected to a group of composers that were showcased during the »Hellenic Contemporary Music Weeks,« a series of events that had created a sense of cohesion in that loose heterogeneous circle of composers. They perceived themselves as the new Greek avant-garde and that is how Papaioannou had presented their activities, as both a part of the Western musical avant-garde (many among them had studied outside of Greece) and also decidedly Greek. Most of them aspired to attune themselves with what was happening in the international contemporary music and art scene. They began to experiment with electronic instruments, musique concrete techniques, and other new music currents, without necessarily doing away completely with acoustic instruments and more conventional compositions. Ancient Greek mythology, philosophy, and theatre appear to be a recurring source of inspiration for many of them. Some tried intently to re-contextualise Greek folk and Byzantine music traditions in ways that give a pre-eminent position to mysticism and ritual. In this broad milieu we find figures like Jani Christou, Anestis Logothetis, Michael Adamis, Theodore Antoniou, Nikos Mamagakis, Yorgos Sicilianos, Dimitris Dragatakis, Dimitris Terzakis, and George Leotsakos.

The texture of the archival material changes slightly from 1986 onwards, as the CMRC begins functioning as a studio for young composers. The material is no longer associated with the past but directly connected with what is happening in the moment. This period, between 1986 and 1999, is also the most active in terms of music production within the KSYME and the organisation of unconventional concerts and mixed media events, still under the guidance of Papaioannou and Vassiliadis, who re-

ΘΟΔΩΡΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ
Theodore Antoniou

ΠΑΡΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ II
PARASTASIS II

1977

FOR PERCUSSION TAPE (DANGER) AND CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
BARENREITER KASSEL · BASEL · TOURS · LONDON · BA 6752



ΑΝΕΣΤΗΣ ΛΟΓΟΘΕΤΗΣ
ANESTIS LOGOTHETIS

I, 42

694

ΑΝΕΣΤΗΣ ΛΟΓΟΘΕΤΗΣ

"Cycloide III" (Chorus), "Cycloide II" (Schlagwerk),
Cycloide I, II, III", "Cycloide I" (Streicher + Bläser)

ΟΛΑ ΔΙΠΛΑ

nikos mamangakis

onstruktionen

edition modern

mained very active as curators, organisers, teachers, mentors etc. Panos Kanelopoulos, who attended seminars in the KSYME in the early 1990s and followed closely the concerts organised by the Centre around this period, vividly recalls the Aixoni Festival where wildly experimental compositions were performed alongside the works of Nikos Mamagakis in the unique Aixoni sculpted theatre (designed by the artist Nella Golanda).

Many among the composers and musicians that gathered around the studio around this time had been taught by the preceding generation (Xenakis, Papaioannou, Adamis etc.) and in many ways are seen as the continuation of that lineage. At this time there was much greater technical literacy and familiarity with electronic equipment among them and the music that was being produced documents the gradual move from analogue to digital technology. Some favoured purely electronic sound and many were active in the production of music for dance, theatre, film, and radio, while others were interested in more popular musical idioms. Charis Xanthoudakis, Dimitris Kamarotos, Akis Daoutis, Costas Mantzoros, Petros Fragistas, Panayiotis Velianitis, Dimitris Karageorgos, and Nickos Harizanos are a few of the composers who were active at the KSYME at that time. The relative openness around the Centre gave many composers the opportunity to pass through its doors and become loosely associated for specific time periods before moving on. For others it offered a long-term roof and a sense of community as they started to also assume increasingly more administrative positions. Perhaps quite tellingly about the general orientation of CMRC and how it promoted ideas of artistic hybridisation (already stated in the »polytechno« concept), some of the more engaged practitioners that remained present throughout the years came

from the milieu of fine arts and poetry (Costis Triantafyllou, Spyros Feggos). Presumably, the centre's growing emphasis on digital electronic media and cross-arts approaches allowed those with a non-musical background or less formal training in music to feel welcome, and to experiment freely with KSYME's resources.

Archival and studio activity within the CMRC began winding down around the end of the 1990s. Many factors contributed to that deceleration: new technologies that allowed electronic music to be produced at home using personal computers, but also a lack of funding and institutional support, played a significant part. Moreover Papaioannou and Vassiliadis were becoming less active in the years leading up to their deaths in 2000 and 2004 respectively.

By the mid-2000s CMRC premises functioned primarily as a meeting place where electronic musicians, composers, and improvisers of different generations got to hang out and share knowledge, ideas, and sounds. Around that time, the younger artists drawn to the Centre came from diverse backgrounds. Composers like Nicoleta Chatzopoulou, Yiorgis Sakellariou, and Marinos Koutsomichalis are equally connected with underground music scenes and formal music education. Listening sessions and discussions, and several (small scale) electronic music concerts were organised. In the 2000s a very large effort to digitise all the tape recordings in the KSYME archive was completed. This was a very long and arduous endeavour, but also one with significant impact.

This smaller scale of activity allowed also for a communal music endeavour to come into being with many of the affiliated



The EMS Synthi 100 stored at KSYME archive, temporary space. Photo by Yiannis Hadjiaslanis

artists collaborating as a loose unit with the name KSYMEnsemble (Costas Mantzoros, Nickos Harizanos, Nicoleta Chatzopoulou, Akis Daoutis, Petros Fragistas, and Costis Triantafyllou among others). This group effected a series of performances, operating between electronic composition and free improvisation, and often incorporating elements of poetry and film in line with the hybrid media culture already developed by previous CMRC generations.

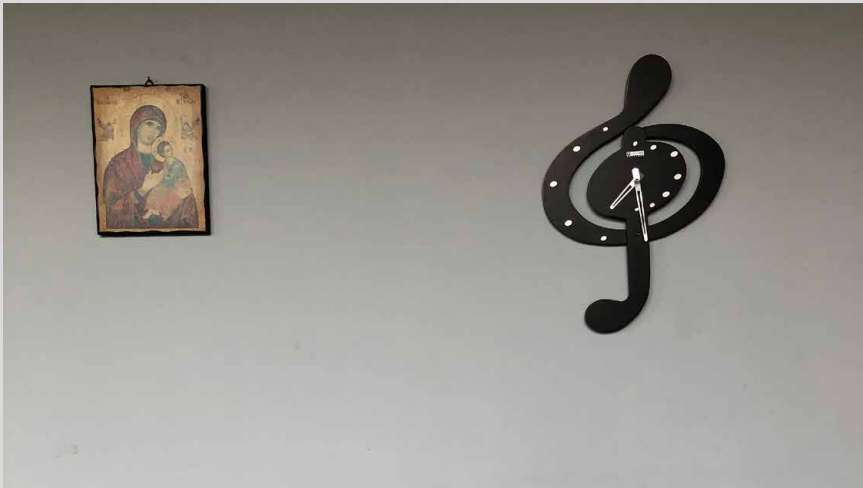
A Place to Share Knowledge – The Electroacoustic Studio

The educational aspirations at the heart of CMRC's mission statement started coming to fruition as the Center found a permanent home in the Athenian suburb of Cholargos around 1986. Electronic electroacoustic composition at the time relied on obtaining large, heavy, and costly pieces of equipment. Several electronic instruments and music tools found their way into the basement of KSYMEnsemble in Cholargos. Among them was the EMS VCS-3 synthesiser, several reel-to-reel tape recorders, Xenakis' UPIC system, and the imposing EMS Synthi 100.

UPIC is one of the first electronic instruments that employs a graphic interface allowing the composer to draw volume and pitch envelopes. It was developed by Xenakis in 1977 at the CEMAMu (the research centre he directed in Paris) and

had been used by many iconic composers through the years. Although initially designed primarily as an educational tool, it proved to be a unique intuitive instrument which added a visual component to sound creation and allowed for the development of intermedia practices. The UPIC system was used extensively during the first years of the KSYMEnsemble in both its intended functions as a teaching tool and as an instrument in its own right. Several pieces were created with the aid of UPIC, both by members as well as residents (Katerina Tzedaki, Spyros Faros, Akis Daoutis, Panagiotis Velianitis, Dimitris Karageorgos, Dimitris Kamarotos, Charis Xanthoudakis). It could be argued that the existence of UPIC had an additional, more symbolic function in the CMRC, reinforcing its connection with Iannis Xenakis himself, who only occasionally visited the Centre, and with Xenakis' research centre in Paris. Even though by the mid-1990s the UPIC had stopped functioning and is since on display as a historical item, the connection with Paris' Centre Iannis Xenakis (CIX), as it is currently called, is still very much alive to this day.

Another instrument, the EMS Synthi 100, has an intimidating presence. A digital / analogue hybrid synthesiser, it was EMS's largest model intended to function as a complete stand-alone production studio. Procured at some point in the 1970s and used briefly in the first years of KSYMEnsemble, it subsequently fell into disuse and disrepair. In 2016–17 it was repaired as part of a collaborative project between the KSYMEnsemble and the Documenta 14 exhibition, which took place in Athens. The whole project was coordinated by Marinos Koutsomichalis and culminated in a residency with four musicians that premiered original works us-



KSYME archive, temporary space.
Photo by Jan Rohlf.



Iannis Xenakis' UPIC graphic composition system at KSYME archive, temporary space.
Photo by Jan Rohlf.

ing the Synthi 100 (Panos Alexiadis, Lisa Stenberg, Jonas Broberg, and Koutsomichalis himself) at the Megaron Concert Hall in Athens. Koutsomichalis recalls how the aspiration behind the refurbishment of the instrument was twofold, to revitalise KSYME activities with artist residencies organised around the Synthi 100 and »to really make the most of this unique underused piece of equipment as an instrument in its own right, not just as a sample source.« Since its restoration many international artists have had the opportunity to work with the instrument and record new music as part of an ongoing residency in the new studio at the Athens Conservatory (Anna Zaradny, Zoe Efstathiou Stelios Giannoulakis, Jørgen Teller and Egil Kalman among them). Composer Paul Pignon, who co-designed the Synthi 100, visited the KSYME in person and coordinated a workshop/performance in 2019.

Access to compositional tools like these was very rare in the 1980s and 1990s and made the Centre really stand out in Greece. For many young artists and composers during this period the KSYME became the point of entry into the practical aspects of electronic music composition. Sharing technical and compositional knowledge became reality as several pieces of equipment became available to composers that wanted to explore new sounds and techniques. Vassiliadis, Xanthoudakis, Kamarotos, Velianitis, and Karageorgos shared their knowledge and helped interested artists to familiarise themselves with the fundamental functions of this equipment following the example of established electronic music studios of the time, such as IRCAM in France. Stelios Giannoulakis and Nickos Charizanos, who teach and coordinate the current seminar on Electroacous-

tic Music Creation at KSYME, have a long history with the Center and have been involved in different capacities since the 1990s either as students, members, or teachers. Nickos Charizanos remembers how during those days many different classes were happening at the same time, and all the rooms were full of people working all day on different pieces of equipment.

The diversity of classes on offer throughout the years make the KSYME unique as they extend far beyond education in the purely technical aspects of electronic music-making. Among the more notable educational initiatives was the state-subsidised three-year programme »Chroai« that focused on the use of new technologies to document and archive traditional music and oral traditions. The composer and academic Katerina Tzedaki is among this programme's alumni. The research of Greek folk and Byzantine music traditions was a big part of the KSYME agenda, not only as archiving practice but also as a part of contemporary musical thinking in dialogue with avant-garde practices. Lykourgos Angelopoulos, who was head of KSYME in the 2010s, was a chanter of Byzantine hymns that had also collaborated with the composer Michael Adamis.

Cross-pollination between the centre's wide array of approaches and subjects was encouraged. Classes on psychoacoustics, choral singing, notation, inter-media, composition, eastern music, and improvisation were on offer and temporary communities of people from diverse backgrounds were formed around the exchange of ideas. These diverse subjects were often taught by people visiting from abroad and the mode of instruction, whether intentionally or not, encouraged a less sys-



Workshop at KSYME
All photos: Courtesy of KSYME



tematic view of contemporary music, open to different ways of communicating knowledge. An example of this less formal approach was a series of seminars by Papaioannou in the early 1990s, where he played piano works in their entirety, interspersed with his own musicological comments and formal analysis of the pieces. Improviser & music education philosopher Panagiotis Kanellopoulos recounts how powerfully different this educational experience felt at the time.

After a long period of relative inactivity since the late 1990s, the KSYME educational activity was revived around 2012 when media artist Marinos Koutsomichalis began a series of lectures on composition touching on themes of aesthetics, philosophy, and creative coding. These gradually became known as KSYMEclass and ran until 2017–18. During this final year, the seminars were co-taught with Akis Sinos and Stratos Bichakis, attracting a wide and varied group of younger generation practitioners. With KSYME official relocation to the Athens Conservatory in 2018 Nickos Harizanos and Stelios Giannoulakis were appointed as the new course leaders and the seminar was relaunched with its current format and title, »Electroacoustic Music Creation.«

Reflecting on the current iteration of the electroacoustic composition classes at KSYME, Giannoulakis and Harizanos consider the present moment and the different challenges it poses. As access to cheap music-making software and hardware has become very easy, »working with an instrument like Synthi 100 offers an insight into how early electronic composition worked in practice and can unlock creativity by the limitations it imposes on the composer.« Also, the notions of structure

and musicality keep coming up as necessary tools for young composers from less formal musical backgrounds.

The KSYME acted as an essential springboard for avant-garde electronic music in Greece in the 1980s and 1990s. Many important composers, educators, musicians, and researchers found their footing there and moved on to several different directions. Importantly, it is also an institution that encouraged mixing different artistic media, finding in-between spaces, and sharing practices. Interestingly, even though the beginning of the institution was decidedly in line with »high art« music, a great sense of openness during the centre's course allowed for the formation of connections with underground scenes and for a distinct and unapologetically weird aesthetic space that sits comfortably between the avant-garde and the underground.

In its current form KSYME functions primarily as the electronic music department of the Athens Conservatory giving the opportunity to a new generation of musicians and artists to connect with electroacoustic music practices. A tension between tradition and progress, technical innovation and experimentation, remains at the core of this centre's long course, encouraging and tempting a diverse body of local and international practitioners, researchers, and curious listeners to join its journey.

Ioannis Kotsonis is a sound artist, electronic music producer, and educator based in Athens, Greece. Active as an independent workshop, residency, and concert coordinator since 2009 he currently teaches Sound at the postgraduate program of the University of Piraeus and is a researcher at ERC MUTE – Soundscapes of TraA pruma. He produces and hosts several podcasts and radio shows («Sound Unfolds» on Stegi Radio, «Resonator» on Concertzender, and «Proschedio» on Strummer Radio) and has released music as Sister Overdrive and under his own name. He is part of the experimental intermedia duo, *acte vide*.

With special thanks to Stelios Giannoulakis (composer, educator), Nickos Harizanos (composer, educator), Marinos Koutsomichalis (artist, lecturer), Panagiotis Kanellopoulos (professor of music education) – all personal friends involved in KSYME activities in different capacities, who agreed to hold extensive interviews and discussions that greatly shaped the contents of this text.

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City Replica Souvenir

Alyssa Moxley

A composition reflecting on Xenakis' unrealised »Athens Polytope,« and the energies and movements in the city.

In 1981, Iannis Xenakis wrote a proposal to John Papaoiannou, then director at KSYME, to develop the »Athens Polytope« in a year when the city was designated as the Cultural Capital of Europe. This letter, found within the KYSME archive, detailed a composition beginning with helicopters circling the city, troupes of singers and percussionists descending from the surrounding mountains of Imitos and Parnitha to eventually join musicians already performing at the Acropolis, the release of carrier pigeons carrying messages of peace, the simultaneous ringing of all the church bells in the city, as well as police sirens, car horns, boat horns, and a finale involving gunfire and total urban blackout. The proposed work was never performed, in part due to its high cost.

In »City Replica Souvenir,« I attempt to translate Xenakis' proposal for the »Athens Polytope« to a smaller scale, combining field recordings with foley rhythms created with the use of tiny, motorised machines. The foley machines are laid out in a series of interconnecting hexagons that suggest an abstraction of the city and its sites of sound. The politics of these sounds and the coordination of movements between different regions of the city, would in the proposed composition require a vast network of telecommunications and crowd control; in this souvenir-sized model, politics and space are deconstructed into aesthetic abstraction.

The visual aspect of the work was inspired by the graphically striking diagrams attributed to John Papaoiannou, also found within the KSYME archive. In one of the diagrams, a series of overlapping cellular forms marks the boundaries of neighbourhood community relationships; in another, daily tasks like buying bread are mapped as trajectories of energy usage.

These images are part of »The Human Community Project« (HuCo), a post-war study of urban Athens, initiated in 1961 by the architect Constantinos Doxiadis. The HuCo study documented urban life in terms of movements, energies, and community networks, and was essential to Doxiadis' development of the discipline of Ekistics, the science of human settlements. The five principles of Ekistics – the human individual, society, nature, shells (shelters/buildings), and networks (communication) – elaborate on the radiuses of energies and points of contact between humans, nature, and the technologically constructed environment. Papaoiannou worked as an architect in Doxiadis studio during this pivotal period, as well as organising performance programmes of contemporary experimental music compositions there, before the founding of KSYME.

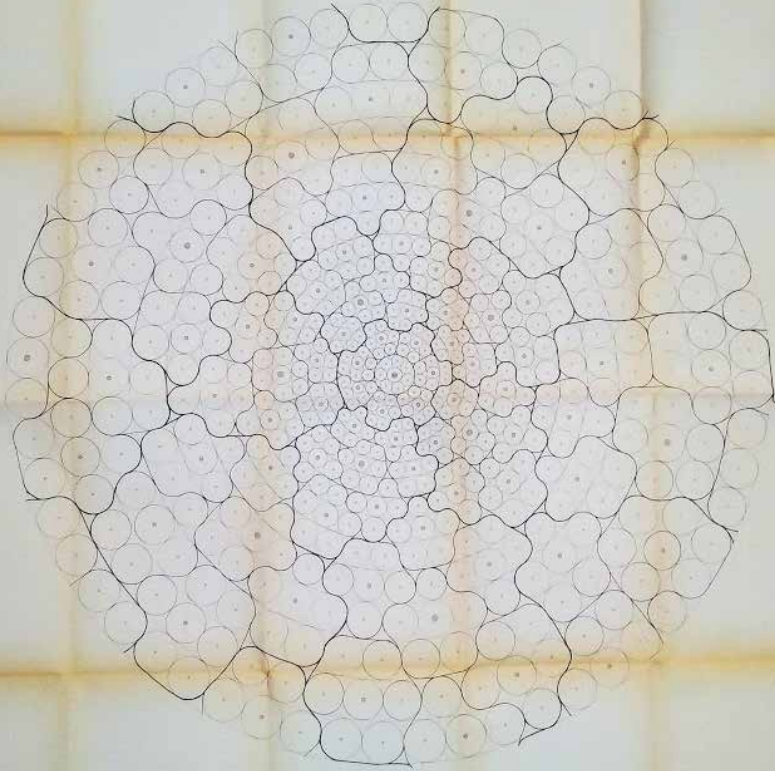
In both Doxiadis' models of human movements of energy from HuCo and in Xenakis' scores for Polytope sound events, richly repeating textures based on stochastic laws can be seen to scale macro movements into micro models. In Xenakis's

»Mycenae Polytope« and the proposed »Athens Polytope,« sound is a binding energy that moves throughout groups and locales, chaotic yet predictable; imitable but never exactly repeatable.

In »City Replica Souvenir,« characteristic sounds from contemporary Athens serve to stand in for the ritual sound events proposed in the »Athens Polytope.« Recorded moments of helicopters, marchers, singers, and percussion interweave with the imperfect rhythms of motorised foley actions that evoke marching feet, helicopter blades, bird wings, and church bells. The symbolic space of the coordinated citywide composition is referenced through these small, stochastic, and tactile machines.

Alyssa Moxley *is an artist who works with sound, listening, memory, and environment. Her works include field recording, musical composition and performance, film sound design, choreography, interactive sculpture, and sonic interventions.*

GEOMETRIC MODEL FOR COMMUNITY LAYOUT*
CASE II: QUASI - CIRCULAR SHARES



LEGEND

— UNITS CORRESPONDING TO COMMUNITIES CLASS IV
— " V
— " VI

* RADIAL GROWTH FOR AREA EQUAL TO OBSERVED
AVERAGES FOR ATHENS (1961)

Geometric model for community layout from Doxiadis' HuCo study, 1961. Photo: Courtesy of KSYME



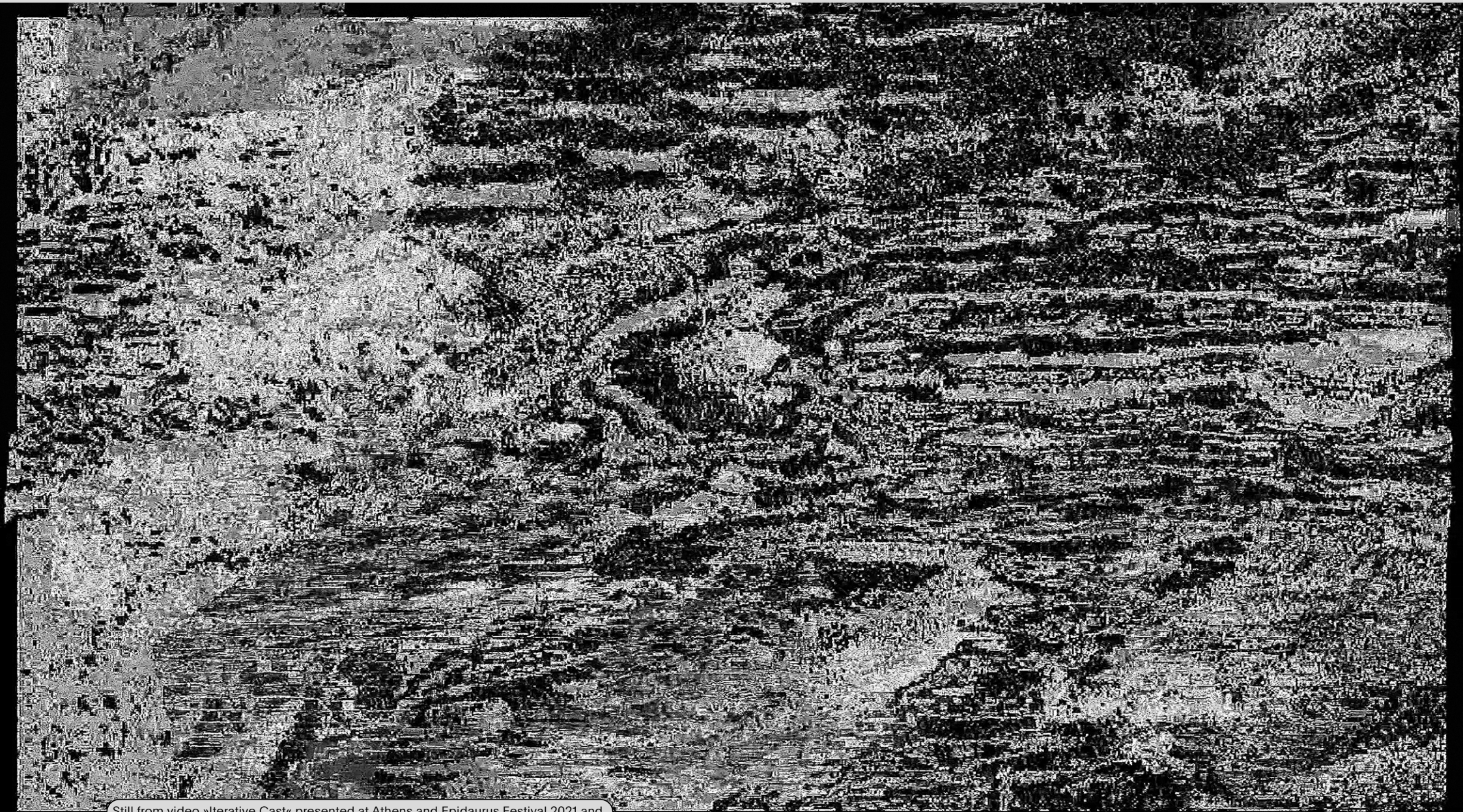
Alyssa Moxley performing »City Replica Souvenir« at Athens & Epidaurus Festival. Photo: Gerasimos Mavrommatis, 2021



Iterative Cast

Gaspar Cohen

Aiming to reflect on the emergence of digital objects and a persistence of synthetic environments, this piece serves as the documentation of a saturated digitality seeking a post-machinic dream, a non-algorithmic hearing. These sounds are aimed at a purge of the industrial consciousness, a noisier-than-desirable ambience at the brink of a destructive accumulation.



Still from video «Iterative Cast» presented at Athens and Epidaurus Festival 2021 and the CTM 2022 exhibition «Connected Alienation». Image: Gaspar Cohen, 2022

In an effort to elaborate on something that is both container and inner form, this is an approach to time as both noise and signal and an affirmation of uncertainty as a potentiality of the present. »Iterative Cast« is a mold in which every negative space is in constant transformation. The work translates audio fragments collected from the archive of KSYME into an auditory and visual space using live-processing digital techniques and improvisation.

Considering the effects of Cartesian linearity, the Enlightenment, the colonial era, and Western Modernity on the material conditions of today and, in turn, their impact on the livability of the planet, the piece is call for a deviation, a desertion from the programme of chronology and progress.

This track is an excerpt of an inquiry on the fringes, silent moments of the archive, the unwanted in between contents, the unarchivable – it explores cyclical ideas of time and spirals of history, narrative folds, reconfigurations of cultural circuits, and techno-ontological disruptions. It re-articulates time and space in discontinuation, in untranslatability, as a reproduction

of granular meaning, and a departure from the vectorial paradigm. Here time is a fragile, fleeting, breathing multiplicity that manifests beyond any description. Deceleration and de-growth are the exhalation of time itself, they are the healing of a brittle fracture caused by the enduring colonial process.

Gaspar Cohen *produces text, image, sound and spaces amplifying the relational of an experimental urbanity. Their works format as unstable concept-driven systems, which address the city from its thresholds of augmentation and dissidences. Also working under the name 130_IVXX, the artist looks for alternative interfaces for expression and composition, critical publishing formats, performances and installations that exert the politics of noise and error.*

Sound Effects
from the
Darkness



Sound Gleams from the Deep Darkness

Guilia Vismara

37

The initial contemplation of music by Iannis Xenakis was not focused on a specific musical entity, but rather on broader considerations encompassing nature and its countless micro-events. This perspective was intertwined with his artistic practice, establishing rich connections between sound and architecture. Through the exploration of graphic design, mathematical principles, and the formulation of compositional hypotheses, a central concept emerged in Xenakis' creative vision: the realm of structures, which brought him to develop the idea of Polytopes.

Polytopes, as self-contained entities, defined space through their physical boundaries and internally organised themselves through strands of light. When constructing Polytopes in outdoor settings, Xenakis harnessed the potential offered by specific locations and their historical significance.

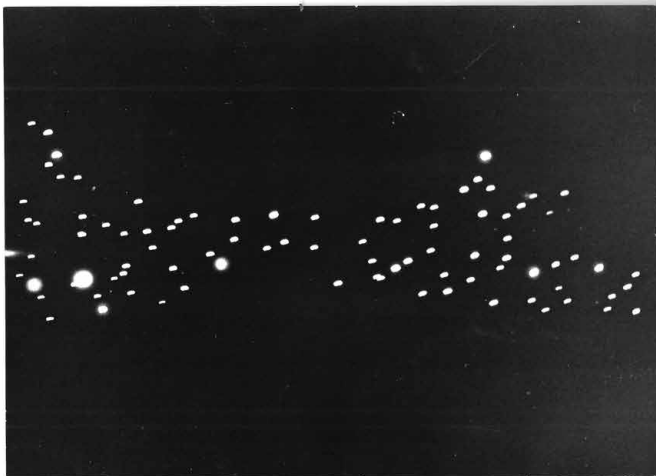
While perusing the archival materials of KSYME, I was particularly captivated by three monochromatic photographs showcasing the Polytope. These images portray the interplay of light and shadow, evoking the concept of exploration as well as the dispersion of light within space, and resonating with the idea of granular synthesis and the inherent granular qualities of light. These photographs exist as temporal objects, simultaneously layering the past, present, and future. In the realisation of the polytope, a diverse array of lights played a pivotal role, ranging from the subtle haze of fog lights to the vivid intensity of torches. These luminous elements infused the space with a dynamic interplay of illumination and shadow, contributing to the overall sensory experience.

Photograph number 3, among the collection, presented a compelling inspiration for conceiving a composition that transitions from a contrast between darkness, intricately woven with micro-events embedded within the texture of sound, to a luminous expanse filled with bursts of light that subsequently

dissolve, only to reconverge into darkness once again. The elements captured in the photos served as essential cues for envisioning and crafting a score and spatial mapping that seamlessly integrated sounds into the dynamic interplay of light and dark, enriching the overall movement and experience of the composition.

Recordings from Xenakis' performance of the polytope captured the essence of the event. From these recorded materials, I extracted rhythmic patterns, weaving together the temporal aspects of the past performance into the fabric of my current composition. This process not only attempts to add historical significance to the new creation but also imbues it with a sense of continuity, bridging the gap between past and present artistic expressions.

Giulia Vismara is a researcher and an electroacoustic composer interested in sound spatialisation. Currently she is a postdoctoral researcher at Antwerp's Royal Conservatory and Academy of Fine Arts, where she is involved in speculative research on the relationship between space and sound in virtual reality; co-founder of the SSH! Sound Studies Hub at Luav, University of Venice, as well as a member of music technology research group RISME digitali. Vismara's works range from electroacoustic and theatre music, to sound installations, performance, and video art.



»Mycenae Polytope« by Iannis Xenakis 1978.
Photos: Courtesy of KSYME

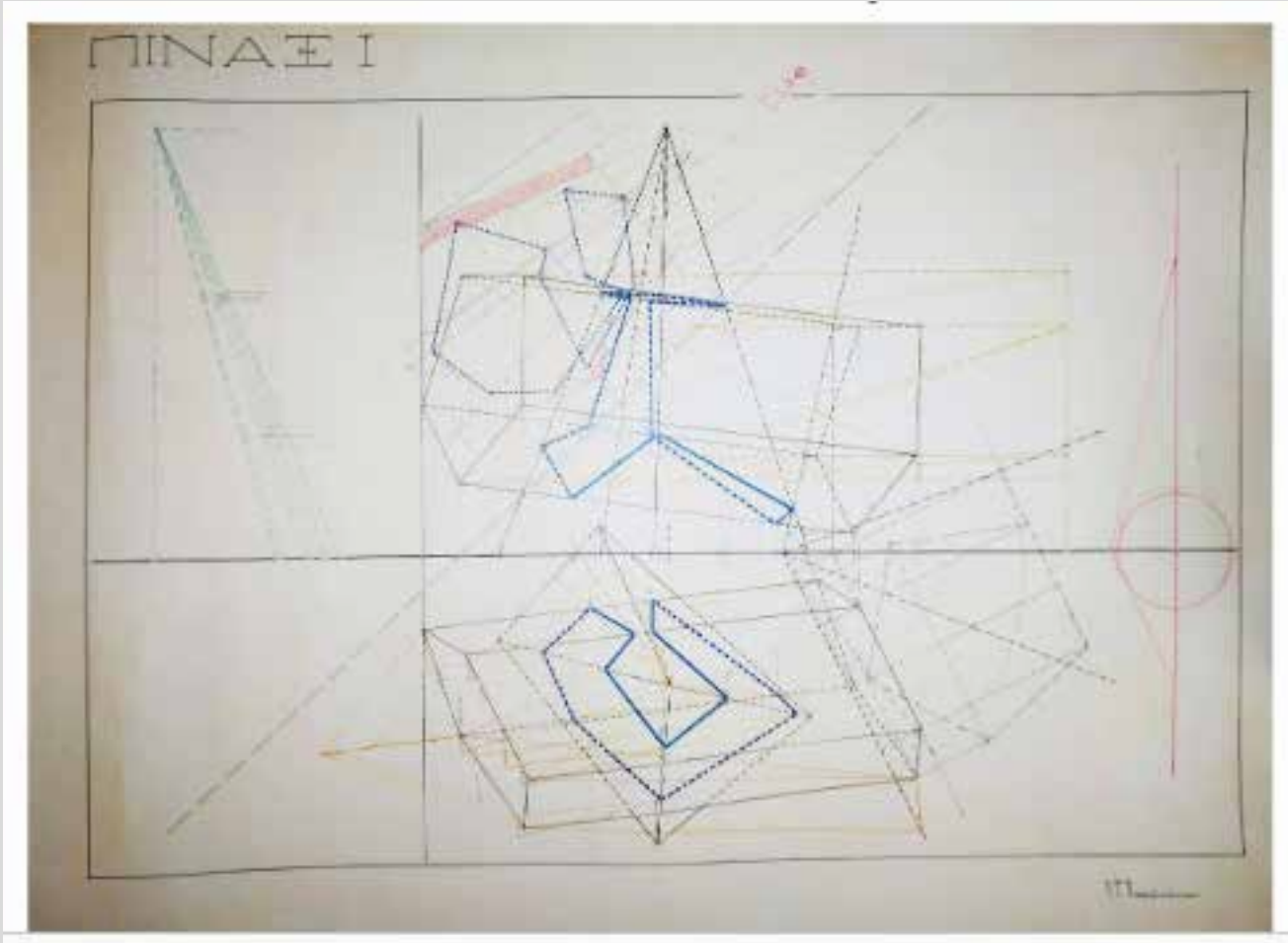


Partial Patterns

Max Eilbacher

41

Browsing through the digitised KSYME archive I was drawn to a stereometric drawing by KSYME founder John Papaioannou. The vague historical traces surrounding the drawing – all the archivist could tell me was that the drawing was made early on by the artist – exemplified my own artistic desire for how I wished to approach the archive and instantiated a physical intermediary between what is extant in the archive and what is not. How is a political history not only directly recorded in the archive but also intrinsic to it?



Drawing by John Papaioannou.

KSYME was founded in 1979, just four years after the end of Greece's neo-fascist junta government. In the immediate wake of this political change, artists, intellectuals, and those deemed generally undesirable who were lucky enough to escape Greece could now safely return home. The composers Iannis Xenakis and Mikis Theodorakis were among those who could now return without fear of reprisal for their participation in communist and leftist struggles during the Greek Civil War. A new enthusiasm for the arts, especially music, swept over Greece. Intrinsicly, then, the establishment of KSYME functioned as a political statement articulated against years of brutal suppression by Greece's former right-wing government.

I became interested in exploring ways in which concert programmes, notation, and recordings are all tangible delineations of Greek history. Represented but not necessarily documented in the archive, the historical struggle and persecution of the Greek left is an extremely loud yet silent presence, one which I wish to amplify in my work. Papaioannou's unnamed and contextual stereometric drawing not only hints at this history, but is also a perfect conceptual container for further exploration

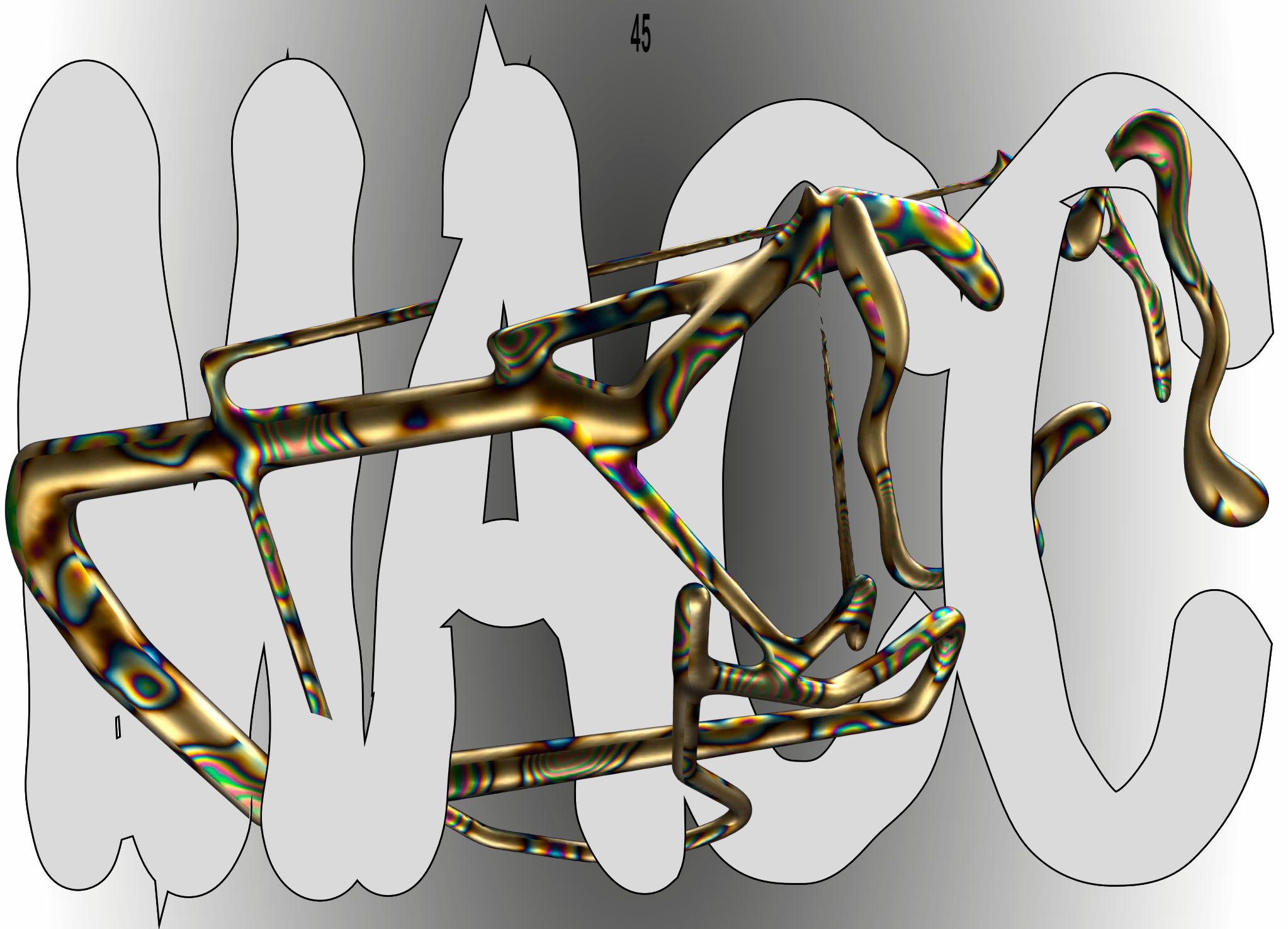
of structure and sound. Using the drawing as a starting point, I first converted this flat representation of 3-dimensional space into a collection of structures with 3-D properties using Euler's formula for polyhedra to find the faces, vertices, and edges of each of the shapes in the stereometric drawing. I then used the Sieve of Eratosthenes to generate relationships between different number sets, thereby generating more sets to guide my rhythmic and timbral decision-making process. My aim was to create an architectural junction where the anatomy of the location is constructed entirely of tangible experiences in the form of the audible. The construction and the temporal delineations of this sonic space, the »now« of the listener's experience, varies. It could be the four speakers in a concert hall in Athens, or your headphones.

This 20-minute piece is composed of patterns and colours that were both energetic and urgent to a Xenekian notion of music and politics. Sieves are the main compositional tool used to create structures that are independent of time. By changing the role of the temporal in the work, orderings of high and low geometric symmetries can be examined from differ-

ent perspectives and take on a multitude of different meanings. These meanings I find pertinent and pressing, though neither detailed nor closed in their political and social claims.

I find Papaioannou's drawing and the lack of context attached to it to be a document that could be positioned to be historically pertinent yet still pointing towards tangible but unknown progress. The drawing seemed to exemplify in a similar manner, the way in which Xenakis' work positions the synergy between technology and the complexity and beauty of nature as a progressive form. With »Partial Patterns,« I wanted to follow through on the unclear possibilities representative in the drawing into a sonic realm.

Max Eilbacher *is an intermedia artist from Baltimore, Maryland. He studied computer music and cinematic arts while maintaining an active touring schedule. With a number of different groups and projects, he works with conceptual and intuitive compositional systems that square the circle of the raw moment and the controlled display of an outcome. He has presented works in various galleries, clubs, museums, and basements all across North America, Europe, and Japan.*



MAACC

Savvas Metaxas

46

Greek society is heavily rooted in the past and in tradition. Even in 2023 it feels like a common secret that modern Greece operates with dynamics that are different than most Western societies. We want to believe it is similar, but everyday facts and practices point towards the opposite. Most of the time, it becomes a burden to look at past ideas of tradition and heritage and create something new, modern, and groundbreaking, let alone to incorporate these notions in your practice towards modernity. This is the main reason I was drawn into the life and work of Michael Adamis, who perfectly balanced tradition and modernity, creating his own unique artistic sphere.



Portrait of Michael Adamis.
Photo: Courtesy of KSYME

Theodore Karathodoros wrote in the liner notes of the release, *Michael Adamis. A Selection of Electroacoustic Works 1964–1977* (Rekem Records) that Adamis is »... recognised internationally as a pioneering composer who created a contemporary musical genre founded upon the Greek musical tradition. He has established a school of thought within contemporary musical practice that makes reference to a Byzantine aesthetic perspective and morphological accomplishments. At the same time he questions traditions and calls for the creation of a form that rejects tonality.« Having studied theology, Western and Byzantine musics, composition, electroacoustic music, and Byzantine music paleography, Adamis produced more than 400 works. He established the first electronic studio in Athens (1965) and served as president of the Greek Association of Contemporary Music (ΕΣΣΥΜ) from 1978 to 1988. Adamis' integration of choral music and the use of the Cantor (Psaltis) in his compositions, combined with the use of synthesisers and tape machines, managed to bridge novelty and tradition in a way that was never done before.

Throughout the Chronotopia project I had the opportunity to see how one might approach the past, working with the KSYME archive as a starting point. The ideas of how the past lives into the present, of media archeology, translational processes, deconstruction, recomposition, utopia and dystopia, and more, provided me with the framework within which to work

with the compositions of Michael Adamis that are found in the KSYME archive.

This piece of music is my own interpretation of Adamis' work by using sampling techniques with modular synthesiser, reel-to-reel tape players, and samplers. It references several compositions by Adamis that I found in the KSYME archive: »Glaros« (catalogue number: 119A), »Kratima« (1071), and »Apocalypses 2nd Seal« (1398B).

Savvas Metaxas is a musician and sound artist who works in the fields of experimental music, field recordings, and modular synthesis. His music has been released on multiple labels such as Granny Records, Orila, Glistening Examples, Neologist Productions, and More Mars, and he has performed in numerous concerts hosted in experimental art spaces, museums, galleries, and venues. In 2008 he co-founded Granny Records, focusing on publishing works by contemporary electronic musicians moving in the range of free improvisation, noise, electroacoustic composition, and contemporary electronica. Metaxas also composes music for installations and site-specific performances and short films, and hosts workshops for highschool students.

REVOX

A 77 - STEREO - TAPE RECORDER



A Revox A-77 reel-to-reel tape machine, which was used to play back sounds found in the KSYME archive. Photo: Savvas Metaxas, 2023



Post Kollisionsionen

Sofia Eleni Xezonaki

The sculptural installation »Post Kollisionen,« inspired by the score »Kollisionen« by Anestis Logothetis, is about creating physical space through a graphic notation system.

Anestis Logothetis (1921–1994), is considered to be an important pioneering composer of the 20th century. He became internationally known for the peculiar system of graphic notation he developed in the late 1950s. Logothetis' graphic scores are black and white. The various charts are drawn on paper and the performer follows a predetermined or free course, according to the instructions of the symbols.

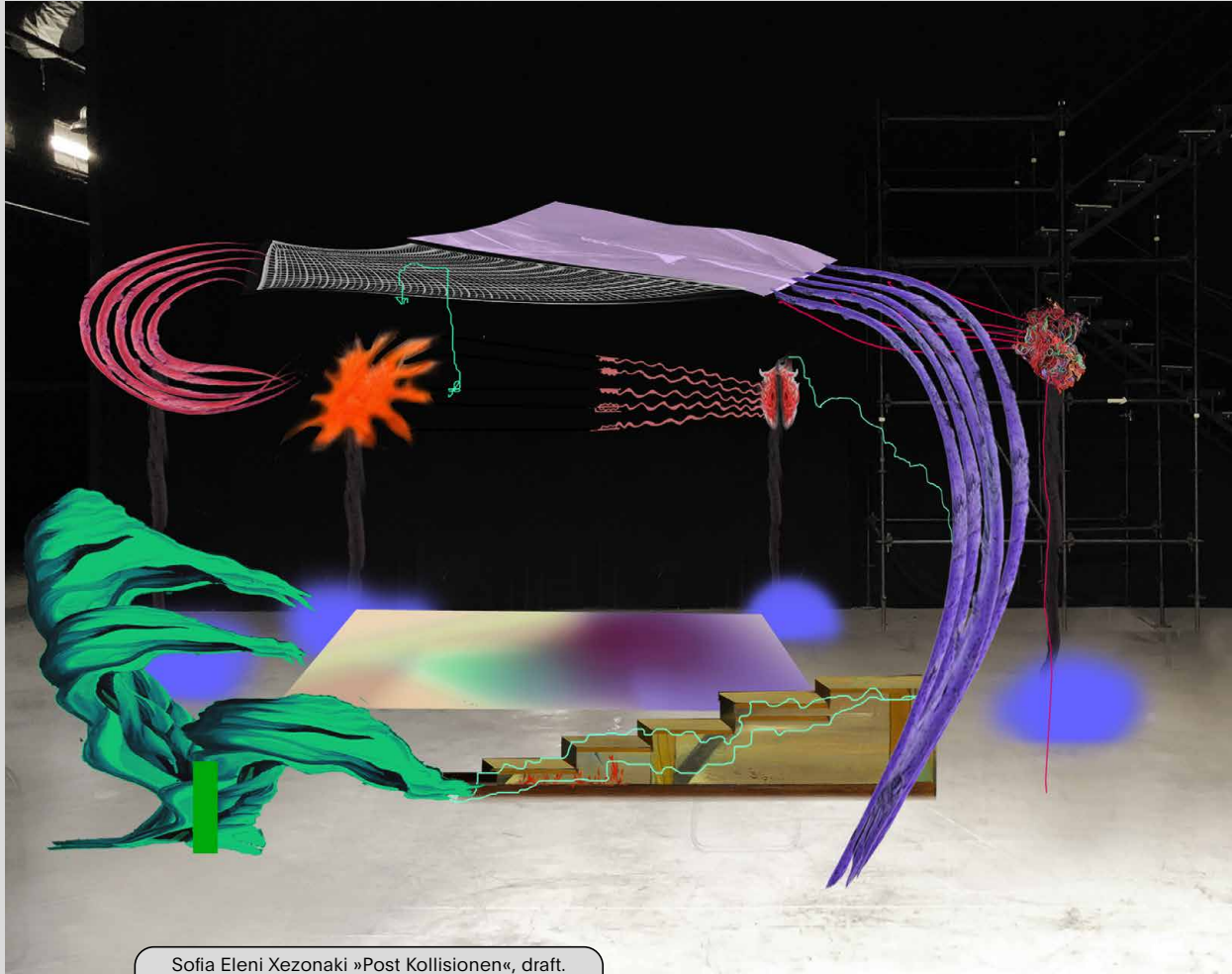
»Kollisionen« belongs to the category of Logothetis' orchestral works, written in 1970 using his method of polymorphic notation (on a single piece of paper), which contains all the elements of musical composition – pitch, (approximate) note duration, dynamics, ways of articulating a sound – but with no indication of orchestration or direction of reading the score, both of which may be variable.

What does collision mean for every single one of us? How do we experience collision and how does it feel directly afterwards? My main source of inspiration was the way that some of the figures were formed on the score; their appearance, and the way they helped Logothetis depict his musical self. My materials of choice were mostly parts that formerly belonged to old broken items found in the garage of my childhood home combined with trash from my everyday life during the creative process. It felt right to use small bits that suffered a collision one way or another.

While discovering and going through Logothetis' work, I found myself wanting to find out what would happen if I tried to turn his abstract, experimental scores into something easier for the senses. Something more approachable. Something more pop. The result: A sculptural installation of an over 60 year-old score, unfolding into today's space.

It was a privilege to be able to explore the vast archive provided by KSYME as it helped me become familiar with this past generation of composers. My instinctive reaction was to try to bring their musical world into contact with people today more directly, by allowing them to wander within my installation. The installation occupied an area of approx. 15 m² and a potential height of approx. 2,5 m.

Sofia Eleni Xezonaki *is an Athens-born artist that seeks a non-narrative form to help her unfold her stories and thoughts. Theatre is a recurring element in her artistic pursuit but her language is audiovisual and technology is her tool for creation.*



Sofia Eleni Xezonaki »Post Kollisionen«, draft.
Image by Sofia Eleni Xezonaki



Sofia Eleni Xezonaki »Post Kollisionen«, installation view at Athens & Epidaurus Festival. Photo: Gerasimos Mavrommatis 2021

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