

# ZEUGMA

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«Zeugma» is the title of the New Media and Mixed Media Art Project, inspired from the Hellenistic twin city Zeugma, now covered by the river of Euphrates. So, six Greek young Artists, traveled to Istanbul, also a twin city built on the two banks of Bosphorus to experience a cultural zeugma, in such a way, that to implement it in contemporary artworks.

### Introduction

Zeugma was an important Hellenistic city on the opposing banks of Euphrates, in the area of the contemporary South - Eastern Turkey, comprised of the twin cities Seleukia and Apamea.

In 2004, six young Greek Artists, being aware of the Zeugma project, traveled to Istanbul to live in situ the experience of a “zeugma”, in such a way as to allow them to implement the knowledge in contemporary artworks. In the Greek language, “zeugma” means “link”. The term, or word, can be applied to any place where dissimilar elements meet, co-exist and are bridged together in harmony.

They were searching in modern Istanbul for a “zeugma” of Ancient and Modern times, for an intercultural node of East and West. Though the idea to transform the concept of “zeugma” in contemporary artworks was started from the twin Hellenistic city, the workshop finally took place in Istanbul which is also a twin city built on two sides of the Bosphorus.

Istanbul was the apple of Eris among many claimants in the old times, but also the cultural meeting point of ethnicities that were living around the no-border areas of East-Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. It remains a hub for Balkan – Mediterranean and Eastern areas, a kind of a timeless Cultural Capital. The goal of the Greek artists was to bridge through their artworks concepts like: “Diversities”, “Past and Modern Times”, “Local Culture and Intercultural Digital World”.

### Brief Analysis of the Project

Key Notions: The artworks that emerged from that journey - workshop, carry the following key notions: “Twin Elements”, “Vis-a-vis in a Mutual Axis”, “Contra Position”, “Nodal Point”, “Joint”, “Sacred and Profane in a Dialogue”, “Intercultural”, “Inter Religion”.

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### ART "GLOSSARIES":

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They have investigated art "glossaries" to conclude that they may be links among all kinds of cultural diversities.

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### MEDIA:

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They used mixed techniques and media. Techniques like constructions and installations out of Metal, Electric Light and Plexiglas. Media like, Video Installations, Interactive Multimedia Installations, Video Performance and readymade.

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## THE AESTHETIC IDEA:

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Avoid to undermine the autonomy of diversities, but rather link them, building a horizontal network without any hierarchy, like a kind of cultural rhizome. Is this perhaps the bet of the 21st century?

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## The Artworks

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### “PRAYER”

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By Constantine Tiligadis, Multimedia Interactive Installation, 2006.

Jesus and Allah meet each other harmoniously, into the interactive work “Prayer” of Constantine Tiligadis. It is a Π shaped installation. In its central side, a digital picture is projected displaying two hands in prayer. An audible environment is activated by the visitor’s presence. It is either a Byzantine or a Muslim prayer, depending on where the visitor stands, while it is possible to hear a symphony combining both prayers. Tiligadis ponders on the everlasting subject of Truth. In Istanbul, which is full of temples and mosques, he focalizes on the meaning of the word “faith”, the backbone of every religion according to Emmanuel Kant.

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### “THE MEMORY OF POLIS”

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By Andreas Sitorego, 3D Animation, 2006.

The geographical and urban structure of Istanbul, as seen from Galatas’ bridge, inspired Andreas Sitorego the idea for the digital work “The memory of Polis”. Using a 3D animation technique, he presents three interlocking bones moving very slowly around their common joint, and allowing through their transparent material on their imaginary axis of abutment to slowly emerge a faint kaleidoscope effect. A note of the artist in Istanbul states:

Spirit and matter have been kneaded by the experienced hands of time, offering unsparingly to the next generation the magical remnants of the faiths gone by, etched into the material.

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### “BORDER”

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By Andreas Sitorego, Video Art, 2006.

The artist sets a double projection (on the floor and on the ceiling on the same vertical axis) of a nautical cork that floats on the surface of the water. The viewer becomes a bridge between the elements of air and water, elements that he perceives from two opposing sides. The viewer stands in the middle of the two worlds the aquatic and the ethereal. While on the ceiling, the image of the cork in the water is like someone is watching it from underwater. The other projection, on the floor, shows the cork as it floats on the surface of the sea.

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## “FEEDBACK”

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By Ioanna Myrka, In situ installation, readymade, electric light.

It is an in situ installation, made of used empty carton boxes and electric light. It is the disposable packaging of Today's Consumer Society with standard decals for evaluation and information about the content, identity, distinctiveness and evaluation. For Ioanna, this is

the leftover traces of a civilization that we throw away and in which the air is now stored in those carton boxes. It is garbage, collage and pieces of Time, the image of Polis from afar, a puzzle that is somehow dirty, somehow arbitrary, anarchic and random.

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## “SPHINX”

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By Yannis Melanitis, Video Art, 2006.

The lens focuses on the face of a woman which is stone like. She portrays the new Sphinx. The theme derives from the ancient Greek Sphinx, a hybrid of a triple nature – with the head of a woman, the body of a lion, and the wings of an eagle, a treacherous and merciless creature. Those who were unable to answer the riddle of this mythical creature were killed and eaten by her. The contemporary Sphinx, while talking to herself, places a new riddle:

My definition of Man is not a riddle.... every word I say comes out of my despair about language...  
Language is my greatest problem.

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## “THE HOLY LIQUID”

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By Andreas Lyberatos, Installation of 2 sculptures, 1 painting, electric light and readymade objects, 2006. These three works have been fitted in such a way as to create the impression of a sacred place. The central composition is the figure of a human head that insinuates its shape and receive a kind of Holy Communion from the electric light. The other two wall-mounted works are facing each other. One is sculptured while the other is a painted composition which consist of variants of the central figure. The human head opens into two profiles looking at each other while they are connected with thin tubes, representing aquifers that end between the faces in a composition of transparent water glasses. The correlation between the human body and the holy place arises from artist's state:

The body as a building, the face as a whole city, the whole body-city, shaped as a church, fallen on its knees, praying. The shape of the cross on my face.

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## “VIDEO PERFORMANCE”

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By Helena Poca, White dress with hook mechanisms, everyday objects and video projection.

## Conclusion

The first presentation of the artworks that emerged from the journey – workshop in Istanbul in 2004 with the collaboration of the Centre for Contemporary Art of Rethymnon, took place in 2006 with a

group exhibition at the archaeological site of artillery tower at Rethymnon, Crete. The project remains open with the same or an enriched form at other cultural Zeugmas.

We can say that this project applies not only to the lost Hellenistic city and to contemporary Istanbul, but also to all Mediterranean areas because this exceptional Sea is a kind of liquid Zeugma among Asia, Africa and Europe.

### **References and Notes:**

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