

PRESS RELEASE
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HIONAS GALLERY

ELENI GIANNOPOULOU : *A Collection of Things That Float*

MARCH 7 – 30, 2019

OPENING NIGHT : THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 6-8 PM



February 25, 2019 – Hionas Gallery is pleased to present ***A Collection of Things That Float*** by Greek artist **Eleni Giannopoulou**. For this exhibition, the artist's first solo show in New York, the gallery space will play host to an immersive installation of sculptures that simulate the basic forms and composition of boats and floating vessels.

Giannopoulou brings together organic materials, discarded mass-produced objects, and

various ephemera – collected piece by piece during recent travels to New York and Mexico, as well as her native Greece – to construct her fleet, regardless of each item's original use or intended outcome; this process, according to the artist, is “both corrosive and integrating, often relying on forcing the amalgamation of unrelated materials.”

The artist's focus begins with investigating the anatomy of a boat, then she looks beyond that by examining the tenuous relationship humankind maintains with nature; how boats are, in a sense, designed to control what cannot be controlled. The boat is a vessel, and it is its emptiness that creates the necessary displacement of water to keep it afloat.

“I grew up watching the cargo ships coming in and out of the port of Thessaloniki,” says Giannopoulou, “and big ferries would take me and my family to my grandparents' home in Crete. Since 2015, large numbers of refugees displaced by war started using Greece as a point of entry to the European Union. When news arrived that many of their makeshift rafts were capsizing in the Aegean Sea and claiming lives, the very idea of a boat took on new meaning.”

Giannopoulou's integration of found materials and use of repetition in the series act as forms of meditation and memorial for those refugees whose lives were lost, as well as a way to engage with a subject matter that can evoke a range of emotional responses, from the tragic to the nostalgic. Together her floating armada, as it were, represents a voyage that is beginning and ending all at once.

The work *Family Meal*, for example, serves as a personal journal of intimate moments of the artist's life: a table set for four floats on a barge of thin pieces of wood; within this model of a piece of her childhood home, seemingly mundane objects become items of comfort. *Shoe Box* touches on the strangeness of and the comfort we derive from collecting and holding onto certain objects that have little value beyond mere sentiment. Delving even further into her own memories and psyche, Giannopoulou's *Twerking Workshop* and *Whatever Floats Your Boat* investigate sensuality and pleasure, while *Find From Another Time* and *Not Holding Hands* explore ideas of intimacy and relationships in a manner that seems wholly aware of their own sentimentality.

A Collection of Things That Float will open Thursday evening, March 7, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. The artist will be present.

Eleni Giannopoulou (b. 1994, Greece) is a Greek sculptor and installation artist. A native of Thessaloniki and Crete, she trained at the Angel Academy of Art in Italy before receiving an MFA at the New York Academy of Art. In 2014, she won first prize in the Art Renewal Center International Scholarship competition. She is a three-time recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant and a recipient of the Panepinto Family Foundation Scholarship and the David Kratz and Gregory Unis Scholarship. She has also been awarded with the Chubb Fellowship from the New York Academy of Art. Her work has been exhibited in Florence, Miami, Toronto, New York, Mexico City, and Athens. She is currently living and working in Brooklyn, NY.

Hionas Gallery was founded in 2011 by Peter Hionas. The gallery's founding mission is to invite contemporary and emerging artists, working in all variety of media, to participate in monthly exhibitions to showcase their latest work and artistic vision. In late 2018, after closing its Forsyth Street space on the Lower East Side and following a brief hiatus, the gallery returned to Tribeca with a new space at 356 Broadway. For more info visit www.hionasgallery.com.

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