

biennále:9

THESSALONIKI BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

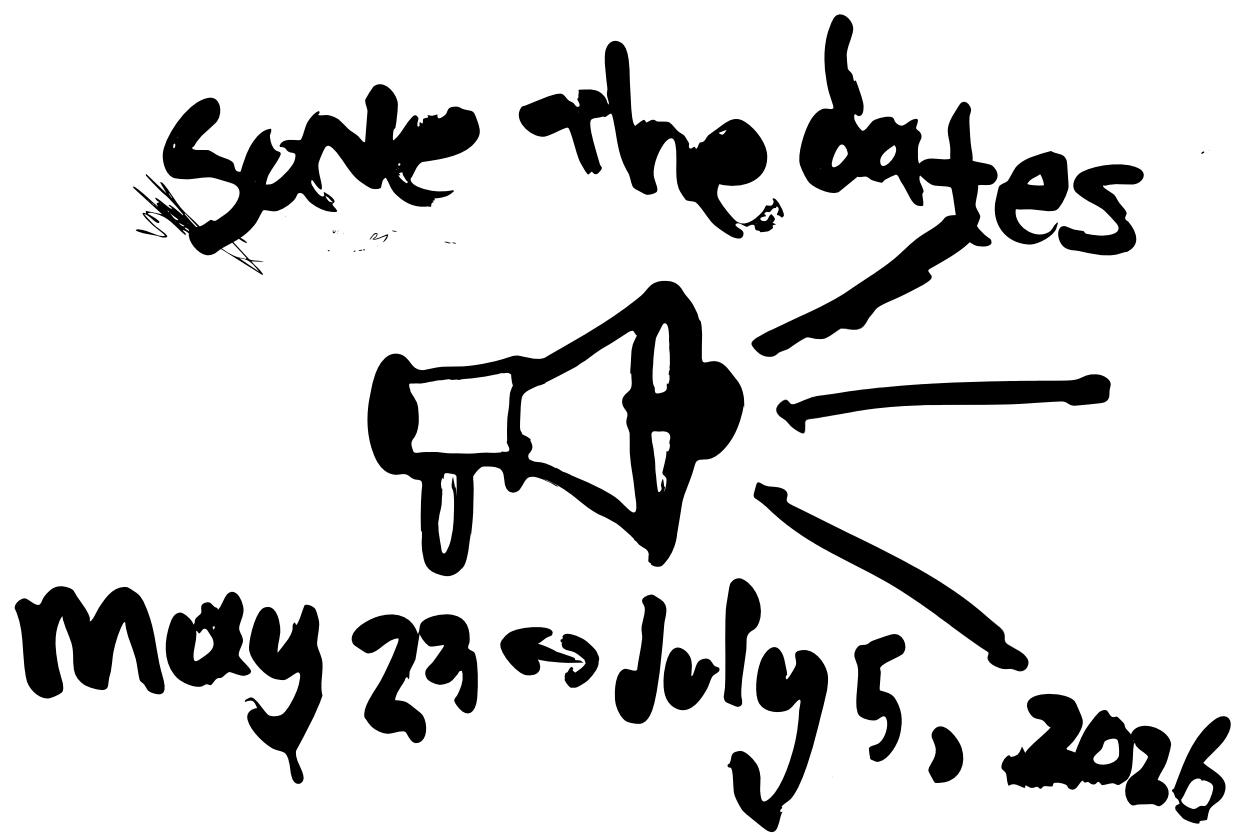
everything
must
change Rigg



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Culture



MOMUS
MUSEUM



TEXT & IMAGES

VIDEO

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ANNOUNCEMENT

title
everything must change
 Radical Intelligence. Saloniki 9

curator
Nadja Argyropoulou

organization and implementation
**MOMUS-Metropolitan Organisation of Museums
 of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki**

The Thessaloniki Biennale
 of Contemporary Art is co-financed
 by the European Union (NSRF - “Central
 Macedonia” Operational Programme).

main exhibition dates: **May 23 - July 5, 2026**
 press & professional preview: **May 22, 2026**
 public opening events: **May 23 & 24, 2026**

main venues
Thessaloniki International Fair - Helexpo
 Pavilions 2 & 3, 54636 Thessaloniki

MOMUS-Museum of Contemporary Art
 154 Egnatia Av. (TIF-Helexpo premises),
 54636 Thessaloniki

Kalochori Lagoon
 Axios Delta National Park, 57009 Thessaloniki

With the ambiguous title, **everything must change.** **RIS9**, the 9th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art is organized by MOMUS and curated by independent curator Nadja Argyropoulou.

It engages with a common(place), yet (re)current, urgent, and plural demand that, with its punchiness, can feel like a revolutionary cry and echo like an empty slogan, ring like a rage bait and work like a charm; there is something in it for everyone, and it does not belong to anyone. It is a phrase that is now, more than ever, wielded by social revolutionaries and technofeudalists alike, by persecuted activists and fascist-adjacent demagogues, by rival social classes and diametrically opposed collective forms of expression, by countercultures and institutional propaganda. It is being used to erase the gap between the home and the streets, the click and the walk, to highjack ambivalence and twist solidarity.

As its curator notes, “Through its shared utterances, visual frequencies, think pieces, terrible mixtures and abundance of f(r)ictions and glitches; through its peripheral place and minor scale in the artworld; through its precarious position in the structural container and its economies, Biennale 9 employs a mode of close narration and is marked by what it proposes. It engages with the incommensurability between our available vocabularies and that which we are asked to describe; with forms of play, with fugitive tactics of dismantling, with collective magic, the feedback loop of call and response, or what Arthur Jafa has described as the ‘quantum dimension

5 of emancipation.’ This ninth edition is cast as a para-biennale that acknowledges paradoxes of enclosure and escape, takes pleasure in errant paths and improvisation, and sides with tactics of joyful militancy and the intimate labor of attending to the unrecognized. If indeed, ‘in the face of new tyrannies encroaching, we should use art not to “ask questions” but to give audacious answers that nobody asked for’ (as per Luce deLire), Biennale 9 enters by flipping questions, experimenting with an anarchy of answers, refusing the proper and the proposed in outright censorship but also beyond its obvious mandates. It takes a bold stance on the power of imagination, suggests a kind of intelligence that is radical (the shorthand ‘RI’), and sides with a non-fascist AI (as per Dan McQuillan) that does not reproduce forms of dominance but supports autonomy and freedom based on collective activity and suppressed knowledges.

If new solidarities and vocabularies, a ‘social otherwise,’ need to be crafted in order to change life shaped by genocidal capitalism, and the tools cannot be those of the master’s own, then Biennale 9 wishes to experiment with the unfolding, metamorphic possibility of shared refusal. It chooses to be inspired by Saidiya Hartman’s method of ‘critical fabulation’ and take recourse to her research on waywardness as ‘the avid longing for a world not ruled by master, man or the police... the social poesis that sustains the dispossessed... a short entry on the possible.’

It is made by sensorial manifestations of aesthetic sociality, works that imagine into existence ways to refuse, riot and explore un-settling paths and divergent stories, ways to speak truth to power and spell difference that does not devolve into

6 separability; works that suggest when to rant and how to whisper, when to laugh and how to love. If ‘the revolution is like housework – you have to do it every day’ (G. C. Spivak) – then *everything must change*. RIS9 wishes to be part of this every day and, while exploring it, to attempt a bewildering, vibrant proposition.”

The shorthand “S9” evokes a popular, older, eastern in origin, name of Thessaloniki (Saloniki), thereby inserting in the Biennale’s utterance a double movement, towards and away from the city, an attempt to foster a sense of togetherness – however temporarily – with Thessaloniki’s obscured, neglected spaces, agents, ghosts, and symbols.

After a prelude realized during October–November 2025 around the revolutionary potential of science fiction (“Plot twist: science fiction as change”), and through a host of interim cooperations (with the Thessaloniki Film & Documentary Festivals, as well as with the Greek Film Archives) and off-site manifestations, **the Biennale will realize its main exhibition between May 23 and July 5, 2026.**

The venues that will host it co-create a crucial space of (d)rift:

- Buildings within the Thessaloniki International Fair–Helexpo complex that highlight the site’s ties to modern Greece’s foundational socio-economic narratives and political ceremonies since the 1960s, as well as its current significance as the battleground of competing plans around the function and future of public space; situated there and hosting part of the Biennale is also the MOMUS–Museum of Contemporary Art, home to the Alexander Iolas collection.

7 • The unique Kalochori Lagoon on Thessaloniki's western outskirts, a landscape shaped by immigrant communities, industrial growth, and the gradual emergence of a wetland as a result of land subsidence, groundwater depletion, and the mixing of river and sea waters. Now part of the Axios Delta National Park, the lagoon is rich in rare biodiversity, hosts more-than-human activity, and participates in contradictory narratives of "symbiotic living" as the city inexorably expands to this side too.

Curator: Nadja Argyropoulou

Visual Identity: studio precarity

Architectural Design: Y2K Architects

Curator's Assistant: Evelyn Zempou

MOMUS Production Team: Angeliki Charistou, Silia Fasianou, Eftychia Petridou

Organization and Implementation: MOMUS-Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki

Co-organizer: TIF-Helexpo

Partners: Municipality of Thessaloniki,
Thessaloniki Film Festival

Creative Partners: Heinrich Böll Foundation -
Thessaloniki Office, Another Football, Mamega

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9th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art:
total duration October 31, 2025 - July 5, 2026

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Nadja ArgyropouIou short bio

Nadja ArgyropouIou is an independent curator, art historian and writer based in Athens and working internationally. She holds a BA in History and Archaeology from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and an MA in Art History and Theory, with focus on Late Surrealism, from the University of Essex, UK. ArgyropouIou has curated numerous exhibitions and interdisciplinary projects in Greece and abroad and has worked with a wide range of cultural institutions and independent art entities. She researches entanglements of the social and the artistic, ecocritical practices and forms of de-growth, neglected archives and deviant narratives. She has written texts on contemporary art in books, art catalogues and the press. She is a founding member of the artistic/research-scientific collective Saprofyta, and a member of AICA (International Association of Art Critics) and of IKT (International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art).

organization/implementation



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