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The nights are black as ink, writes Gustave Flaubert in a letter to George Sand.²

Basically, light determines space, and it dissipates, it goes everywhere—any space you give it, it will occupy it: that’s what it is like on a human scale. On a cosmic, interstellar scale, the same does not apply: light is diffused but it does not determine space. Space is black around us even if there is light—the play of black and white, day and night, of the opposites! Whatever is antithetical—the negative and the positive, and whatever is sculpture, writes Christos Tzivelos.³

Cold things grow hot, hot things grow cold, a moist thing withers, a parched thing is wetted, writes Heraclitus.⁴

I think it was in 2005 when I had this thought that I wanted to enclose a light in complete darkness, to have nonvisible light. The first work I did was an enclosed light in a mirror box. So it became like a light bomb, an endlessly reflected light in a closed box; it also got very hot, as heat is an inherent quality of light. The mirror is mute when there is no light. The pictures or the things we usually need to experience light are excluded. This ‘emptiness’ was endlessly reflected by the means that makes visibility possible: light. When I opened one border of this box, the light traced the endlessly copied borders on to the wall. I also compared this work to a head. I did several different works to explore these qualities. I think (in)visibility and space have, since that time, remained prominent in my work, writes Kitty Kraus.⁵

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Two years ago Radio Athènes, Melas Martinos, and Akwa Ibom presented an exhibition in three parts exploring the work of the late photographer and essayist George Tourkovasilis. Returning to this format in which visitors can view historical works framed by distinct architectural features and curatorial approaches, the three exhibitions *The Nights are Black as Ink* (Radio Athènes), *Pour tromper le temps* (Melas Martinos), and *Insect* (Akwa Ibom) are attempts to reenact and interpret a series of sculptural installations by Christos Tzivelos (1949—1995). At Radio Athènes his work is shown alongside Kitty Kraus (*1976), an artist living in Berlin.

¹ Diagram in Rosalind Krauss, *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, OCTOBER magazine, published by The MIT Press, Vol. 8 (Spring 1979), p.36.

² George Sand and Gustave Flaubert first met in April 1857, shortly after the publication of *Madame Bovary* in book form. They started corresponding a few years later. There are more than 400 surviving letters.

³ Excerpt from an interview with Christos Tzivelos on the occasion of his solo exhibition at Galerie Renos Xippas, Paris, in 1992.

⁴ The unity of opposites (*Coincidentia oppositorum*) was first suggested in the western view by Heraclitus (c.535—c.475 BC). The material world was said to be composed of an infinite, boundless apeiron from which arose the elements (earth, air, fire, water) and pairs of opposites (hot/cold, wet/dry).

⁵ Louisa Elderton, *Light Enclosed in Complete Darkness: An Interview with Kitty Kraus*, Berlin Art Link, published on Monday, October 21, 2016.

Christos Tzivelos was active in the 70s, 80s and 90s living between Paris and Athens. He left behind an impressive body of transitory, site-specific sculptural installations, hundreds of drawings, preparatory sketches, photographs, transparencies and design objects. His main material was light.

At Radio Athènes his installation *Coincidentia Oppositorum*, 1986, comprises resin sculptures placed on a brick floor. The sculptures are self-luminous; they resemble a constellation of stars in the night sky, or fish that live in the darkness below the sunlit surface waters, that is below the epipelagic or photic zone of the sea.

Kitty Kraus' materials include glass, light, ink, cloth, electricity, ice; they manifest in precise, yet precarious, temporal, fragile, and even seemingly dangerous sculptural formations. Here, she is showing two new sculptural works *Untitled* (Normal), 2024 and *Untitled* (Maximal), 2024. There is nothing normal about the rotating Norma bar, sourced from the eponymous food discount store with more than 1,300 outlets in Germany, France, the Czech Republic, and Austria. Kraus has utilized bars from other stores, such as Lidl, to create these helicopter like kinetic works. Asked by Louisa Elderton whether she is interested in fragility, or in gestures of violence, the artist replies: *These are difficult questions: what is violence or a violent gesture? I feel like my work points to violence or some kind of authority in an abstract way, with a gesture that is trying to deal with it, deconstructing or dissolving it in looking for space. Maybe relating to, for example, the rotating Lidl bar, I saw it as a truncheon. Maybe by reading everyday life as violent, considering what can happen to you, you can feel how prefabricated the tracks are on which you have to move, or where they are often trying to lead you. As art for me is mainly about freedom, I tried to clear up at least these two square metres where the shopping cart bar can go crazy. Because of the speed at which the bar spins, it almost reaches the point of invisibility.*

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Bios

Tzivelos graduated in interior design from the Athens Technological Group, commonly known as Doxiadis School, in 1971; in fine art from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in 1976; and in architectural engineering from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-La Vilette in 1990. Notable group shows include: *À Pierre et Marie: Une Exposition en Travaux*, at an abandoned cathedral in Paris (1982-1984), alongside Robert Barry, Daniel Buren, Tony Cragg, and Dan Graham, among others; *Sculptures: Première Approche pour un Parc*, at Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Jouy-en-Josas (1985), alongside Carl Andre, Anthony Caro, Donald Judd, Mario Merz, and Isamu Noguchi, among others; and *l'espace, le temps* at Fondation Danae, Pouilly (1986), alongside Alison Knowles, Charlemagne Palestine, and Ernest T., among others. Of special significance are a series of exhibitions titled *Il y a un an*, curated by Catherine Arthus-Bertrand in Paris, New York, and Rome, initiated in 1985. Notable solo shows include: *Pyro* at Medusa Art Gallery, Athens (1986), *Carte Blanche* at Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, Paris (1989), and *One Man Show* at Galerie Renos Xippas, Paris (1993). Posthumously, a retrospective exhibition titled *Modelling Phenomena* was organised by Christopher Marinos and Bia Papadopoulou at Benaki Museum in Athens (2017), accompanied by a catalogue designed by Studio Lialios Vazoura, and published under the imprint Big black mountain the darkness never ever comes. Recent exhibitions include *Bright File*, curated by Maya Tounta, Haus N, Athens (2018); *Christos Tzivelos: Six Hours Before Summer* (2019), Montos Tattoo, Vilnius; *Store in a Cool Place*, curated by Maya Tounta, Akwa Ibom, Athens, and *Frequencies (and atmospheres)*, curated by Helena Papadopoulos and Andreas Melas, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich (2023).

Kitty Kraus was born in Heidelberg, Germany, she lives and works in Berlin. She studied philosophy at Humboldt University, Berlin (1997 to 1999) and received an MFA from Universität der Künste, Berlin in 2006. Kraus has had solo exhibitions internationally including at Kunsthalle Zurich; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Heidelberger Kunstverein. Recent group exhibitions include *Extreme Collection* at Frac Grand Large-Haut-de-France, Dunkerque; *Frequencies (and atmospheres)*, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; *Collection I/Sol Lewitt-Cabinet 3: Dujourie, Palermo, Noland, Kraus, S.M.A.K., Gent; In the holocene*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge MA. She is represented by Galerie Neu, Berlin.

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Christos Tzivelos: an exhibition in three parts
June 5—September 28, 2024

Christos Tzivelos | Kitty Kraus
The nights are black as ink
Radio Athènes
Petraki 15

Christos Tzivelos
Pour tromper le temps
Melas Martinos
Pandrossou 50

Christos Tzivelos
Insect
Akwa Ibom
Valtetsiou 35, 1st floor

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List of Works

Room 1

Kitty Kraus
Untitled (Normal), 2024, Motor, NORMA shopping cart handlebar, transformer, nylon, cable, 50 cm, Ø 2,5
Edition 1/2 plus 1 AP, Dimensions variable.
Untitled (Maximal), 2024, MAXIMA shopping cart handlebar, Edition 1/2 plus 1 AP, 50 cm, Ø 2,5 cm

Room 2

Christos Tzivelos
Untitled, 1986-88, Resin, light bulb, cable, bricks, Object: 13 x 50 x 12 cm
Untitled, 1986-88, Resin, light bulb, cable, bricks, Object: 12 x L 37 x 12 cm
Sculture da camera, 1986, Resin, light bulb, cable, bricks, Object: 17 x 60 x 13 cm
Untitled, 1986-88, Resin, light bulb, cable, bricks, Object: 12 x 48 x 12 cm
Coincidentia Oppositorum, 1986, Resin, light bulb, cable, bricks, Object: 12 x 43 x 12 cm