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CHRISTOS TZIVELOS
INSECT

June 5, 2024 – September 28, 2024
Wednesday four – eight p.m., Saturday two – six p.m.
and by appointment

opening concurrently with Christos Tzivelos
and Kitty Kraus: *The Nights are black as ink*
at Radio Athènes (Petraiki 15), and Christos
Tzivelos: *Pour Tromper le temps* at Melas
Martinos (Pandrossou 50)

Sometimes, a lot of work looks like nothing at all
and sometimes slight work can signal prodigious
worlds. To work with light may seem immaterial but
it requires control of everything around it. The
environments encasing it, the backdrops against
which it becomes scene, the openings that allow for
other light to provoke it. These are all heavyset,
wedged, stationary, defiant and reluctant structures.
If the light is to be graciously received or received at
all, they require adjustment. Whatever that might
be: architectural, cosmetic, ergonomic, temporary,
permanent, expensive, cheap, involving light gels,
curtains, walls built, bricks laid, blinds installed and
drawn, transparencies made opaque, openings
carved out, pathways created for the light to enter or
exit; these form part of the light in its journey to find
a guard, its eventual blockade. Together with the
lightsource, environments are locked in a siege that
has felt cruel or tender at times, and which can
motion anything. The two, will always be codepen-
dent, and at the same time capable of great freedom,
and great feeling.

In *Insect*, thin painted mdf boards are fitted on the
windows to block out the light. These were cut,
painted, and nailed on the window frames. Where
outside light would enter the room through thin
slithers between the windows's separable parts, were
painted by thick paint which dried solid. Each
swath applied produced a little more darkness,
erased a little more lightness, until the room was
closed. The work was hard on the wood, and put the
glass at risk, and yet now these shields look like
they've always been there, and like nothing much
was done to the room. But now, suddenly, we see a

chair, a flashlight, and a lightbulb. More faded, we
also see an entombing.

Christos Tzivelos' installations as we see them
today in photographs cannot really be taken apart
because one cannot separate his self-illuminated
sculptures from the sites he chose to display them in,
and the interventions he performed to the architectu-
re. Tzivelos would build walls, create alternate
floors, adjust his supports to enhance or antagonise
what was there before. He achieved practical results
this way (controlled the light and our attention) but
more so he tuned the rooms to a passionate pitch. To
this day, that pitch can be felt, sharply, in shards, or
as a soft wave rushing over us or springing and
spreading from within, but still, it cannot easily be
attributed or orientated. In truth, what is it? And
what is it not? Where does it begin, and where does
it end?

As much as this pitch might appear abstracted and
levitating in its own plane, it finds associations and
teases origins in familiar places. In this series of
works where flashlights cast shadows to the walls, a
theatre play is put on except it lacks its usual
players. It holds a line that goes back to found
pitches, found situations, found encasings of light.
The insect series draws in moths attracted to the
lamp above the dining room table at night, and thick
island rocky walls tickled by geckos, nightlamps and
babies, windswept thyme bushes on nights without a
moon, small enclosures in buildings without win-
dows, corners of a room observed from the floor
where one was laying, and I am sure many more
things that can't be imagined in this text, always
emphatically romantic. Propped up by various
supports; industrial stools, glass cubes, used paint
cans, custom glass cascades, or a chair, the flash-
lights perform on a wall a revived presence. Their
performance extends beyond the wall out to the
room, and it doesn't end. It performs on the presicipe
of being switched off a few clicks away or intruded
upon by a sudden rush of light pirated in.

A small favor or misty blessing. Unsearchable
and autonomous, it feels like something that was
there before, but will quickly pass and no longer be.
We know upon seeing it, that we won't get enough of
its presence, as it is improbable and ephemeral, and
decidedly not practical. Yet by the time that it'll be
gone, we'll be left perfectly satiated by its limitations.

WORKS

FIRST ROOM TO THE LEFT

CHRISTOS TZIVELOS, *Untitled (dog)*, n.d.
Flashlight, chair, handpainted transparency, lamp,
dimensions variable

MAIN ROOM

CHRISTOS TZIVELOS, *Untitled (insect)*, n.d.
Flashlight, chair, handpainted transparency, lamp,
dimensions variable

CHRISTOS TZIVELOS, *Untitled (insect ii)*, n.d.,
Flashlight, chair, handpainted transparency, lamp,
dimensions variable

OFFICE

CHRISTOS TZIVELOS, *drawings and preparatory sketches*, n.d., pencil on paper

CHRISTOS TZIVELOS, *lamp prototype*
bronze, paper

CHRISTOS TZIVELOS, *recreation of a table used as alternative support for the flashlight pieces*, iron, mdf, castors

NOTE:

The installation will change in the course of the exhibition. Alternative supports for the flashlights will host a larger selection of transparencies. These changes will be announced throughout.

BIO

Christos Tzivelos (1949 – 1995) was an artist and set designer active in Athens and Paris from 1972 until his untimely death. He 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. He worked as an artist assistant for Costas Tsochlis and later Takis. While participating in exhibitions, he also designed theatre sets for directors Gilberte Tsai and Leonidas Strapatsakis for productions in Marseilles, Strasbourg, and Nice. 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.