

DISPLAY

Meletios Meletiou

Sinodós

curated by Ilaria Monti

30.11.2024 - 19.01.2025

The ancient Greek term “sinodós” (Συνοδός), which literally translates as “Travel Companion,” carries both practical and symbolic dimensions. It refers to the person who shares one’s journey, whether across physical landscapes or through spiritual realms. In the sacred context of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the sinodós was the guide entrusted with leading the initiate through a profound rite of passage, marking the transition into deeper knowledge and transformation. Embracing the intricate layers of references and the shared cultural language of his homeland, Cyprus, Meletios Meletiou creates a site-specific installation conceived as a disorienting journey through perceptions and spontaneous associations.

A life-sized puppet, meticulously hand-stitched from thermoplastic polyurethane, hovers in the space like an amulet or a cumbersome relic of childhood memory. It engages in a silent dialogue with a series of floor sculptures, whose patterns recall the rusticated stonework of ancient architecture, disrupting and transforming the spatial order. These seemingly disjointed elements sketch an ambiguous and displaced inner landscape, where the familiar aura of domestic and childhood realms clashes with allusions to the imposing facades of monumental buildings.

Play, affection, innocence, nostalgia, familiarity, safety, separation. Meletios Meletiou weaves a tapestry of contradictions and tensions around the associations typically evoked by the puppet as a playful object or surrogate figure of affection, and the materials and forms of classical Western architecture. The transparency of the puppet’s synthetic material conjures a visionary scenario, transforming it into an optical device, a lens that refracts and reshapes the surrounding space. In his essay *The Transparency Society* (2012), Byung-Chul Han, envisioned a “dictatorship of visibility,” describing the shift from a world conceived as theater and representation to one transformed into a domain of absolute proximity—a place of relentless exposure where the boundaries between interior and exterior dissolve. Here, “intimacy destroys distance,” erasing even the essential

even the essential separation required for play and making it impossible to trace or preserve the contours of the self.

Meletiou’s installation challenges the conventional notion of transparency as a symbol of truth, validation, and surveillance, instead presenting it as a playful and magical force that reshapes space. Through a choreography of light, shadow, and monochromatic surfaces, the artist evokes the mechanisms of a magic lantern: the hollow, transparent puppet, illuminated by a beam of light and cast as the lone protagonist on a dark stage, does not project its own form but only its texture, reminiscent of the surface of a restless sea. In this theater of transparency, with the lights extinguished, everything unfolds both within and through. The journey traced by the work is defined by its transition from light to dark, as a fantastical world that reveals itself only in darkness, activating the projection system and blurring the boundary between reality and illusion.

The oversized puppet-mannequin sheds its familiar features, transforming into an uncanny presence. The floor sculptures mirror the skin of monumental architectural facades, mimicking the hardness of concrete while concealing a soft, spongy core. By weaving together diverse materials and scenarios, Meletiou deepens his exploration of play as a tool for perception and a subversion of aesthetic codes, while also probing the ethics and aesthetics of urban ornamentation. In a space devoid of familiar references or clear markers, the artist creates a reverse narrative grounded in the ineffable and in the epiphany of an inner story.

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Meletios Meletiou, *Sinodós*, 2024, exhibition view, DISPLAY, Parma, Italy



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Meletios Meletiou
The Companion n. 4, 2024 (detail)
Thermoplastic polyurethane
Custom-made to human scale



Meletios Meletiou
The Companion n. 4, 2024 (detail)
Thermoplastic polyurethane
Custom-made to human scale



Meletios Meletiou
Untitled, 2024
Polyurethane foam, cement, pigments
Dimensions variable



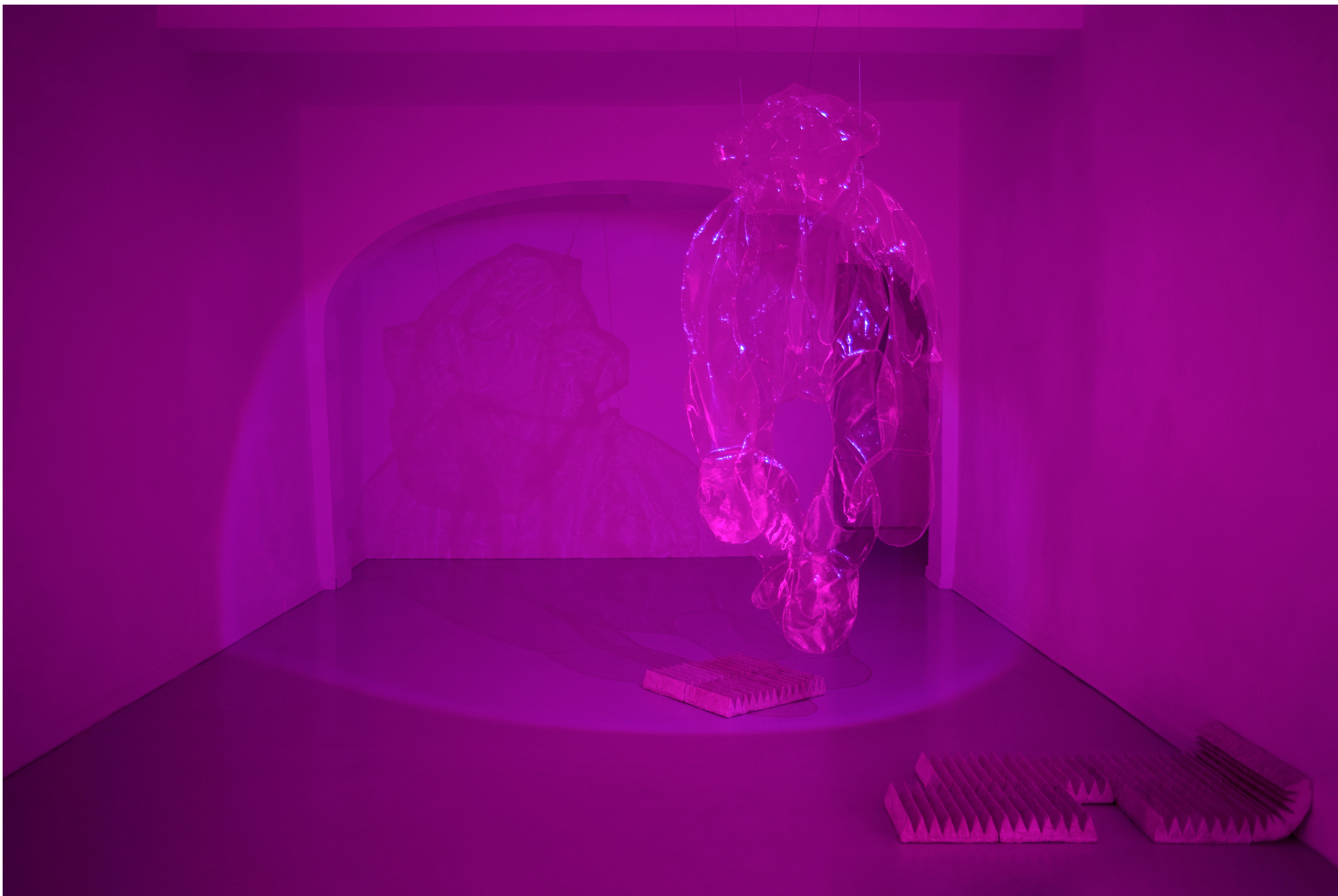
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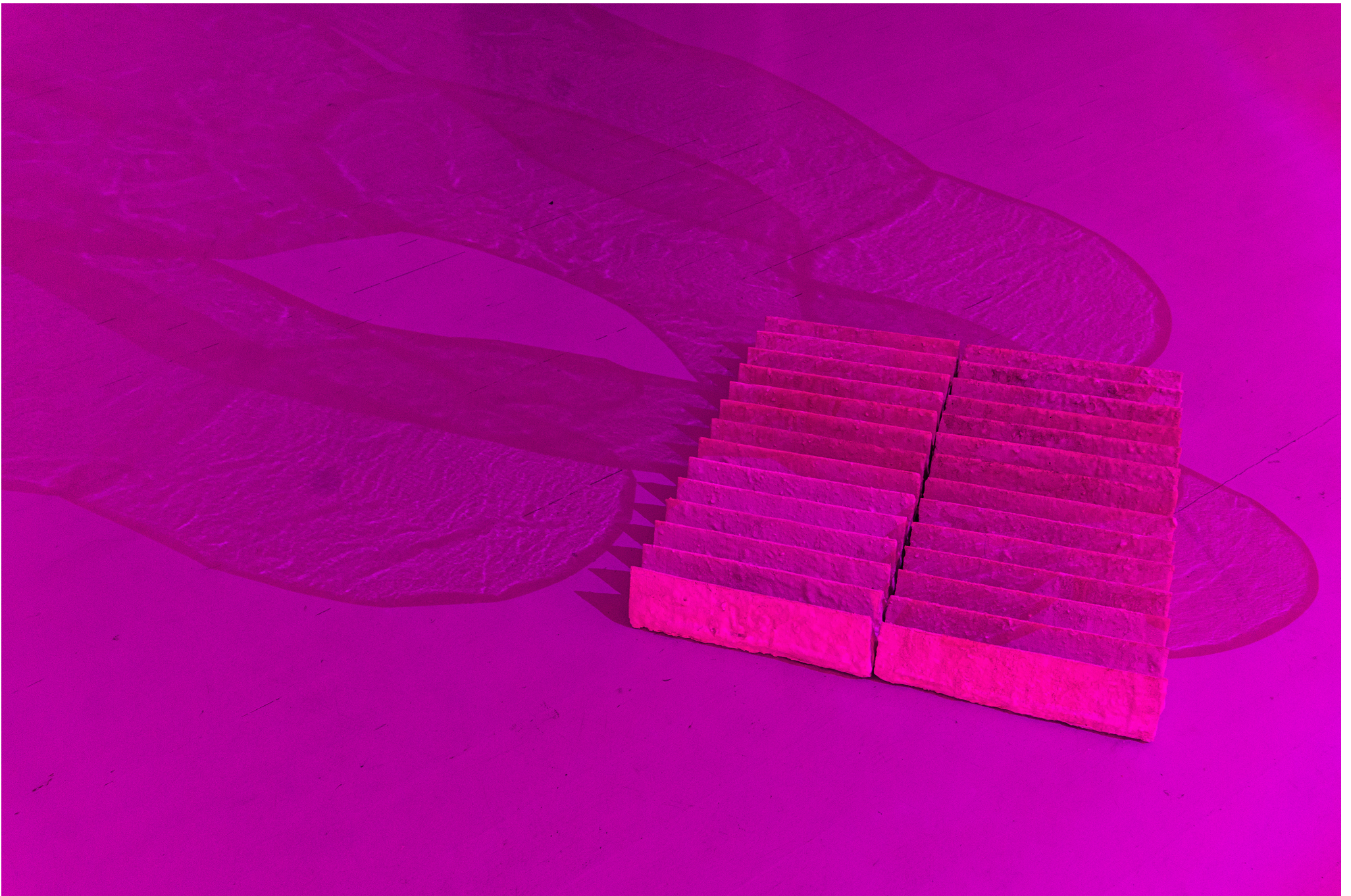
Meletios Meletiou, *Sinodós*, 2024, exhibition view, DISPLAY, Parma, Italy



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Letteralmente “Compagno di viaggio”, nell’antica Grecia il termine “sinodós” (Συνοδός) aveva un’accezione sia pratica che simbolica: indicava la persona con cui si intraprendeva un viaggio, fisico o spirituale – come ad esempio accadeva durante i Misteri Eleusini, dove il sinodós era la guida che accompagnava l’iniziato nel proprio rito di passaggio. Abbracciando la complessità celata dietro i riferimenti e la lingua comune alla propria terra d’origine, Cipro, Meletios Meletiou realizza un’installazione site-specific concepita come un vagabondaggio disorientante tra percezioni e associazioni spontanee.

Un pupazzo di poliuretano termoplastico, cucito a mano e a misura d’uomo, abita spesso lo spazio come un amuleto o un ingombrante ricordo d’infanzia, dialogando con una serie di sculture pavimentali, il cui pattern richiama il bugnato dell’architettura antica, che interrompono e contaminano l’articolazione dello spazio. Gli elementi apparentemente disconnessi delineano un paesaggio interiore ambiguo e dislocato, dove l’atmosfera raccolta e della dimensione domestica e infantile stride con il riferimento alle cortine esterne di edifici monumentali.

Gioco, affetto, innocenza, nostalgia, familiarità, sicurezza, separazione. Meletios Meletiou costruisce un sistema di contraddizioni e frizioni sulle categorie normalmente associate al pupazzo come oggetto ludico o come figura di sostituzione affettiva, e ai materiali e le forme dell’architettura classica occidentale. La trasparenza del materiale sintetico del pupazzo attiva uno scenario visionario, trasformando l’oggetto in un dispositivo ottico, una lente che plasma e riformula lo spazio circostante. Byung-Chul Han, nel suo saggio *La società della trasparenza* (2012), ipotizzava l’esistenza di una “dittatura della visibilità”, descrivendo il passaggio dal mondo come teatro e forma di rappresentazione, al mondo come spazio di prossimità assoluto, luogo di pura esposizione dove si annullano i confini tra dentro e fuori, dove “l’intimità distrugge la distanza”, anche quella necessaria al gioco, dove è impossibile delimitare i confini di se stessi. L’installazione di Meletiou rovescia il concetto stesso di trasparenza come elemento di verità,

validazione e controllo, suggerendone piuttosto un utilizzo magico e ludico con cui trasformare lo spazio.

Nella partitura di luci, ombre e superfici monocrome, l’artista simula il funzionamento della lanterna magica: il pupazzo trasparente e vuoto, attraversato da un fascio di luce ed esposto come unico protagonista su un palcoscenico buio, non proietta la forma di se stesso, ma soltanto la propria texture, simile a quella di un mare mosso. Nella teatralizzazione della trasparenza, a luci spente, tutto accade dentro e attraverso. La transizione tra ambiente diurno e notturno è il viaggio tracciato dall’opera: come un mondo fantastico che si manifesta soltanto al buio, innescando il sistema di proiezione, l’opera rivoluziona lo spazio valicando il confine tra realtà e finzione.

Il grande pupazzo-manichino sembra perdere i connotati di riconoscibilità e familiarità, diventando piuttosto una presenza inquietante; le superfici scultoree riecheggiano la pelle di palazzi imponenti, simulano la plasticità e la durezza del cemento nascondendo un’anima di spugna. Intrecciando materiali e scenari diversi, Meletiou offre una nuova declinazione della propria ricerca sul gioco come pratica di percezione e rovesciamento dei codici estetici, e sull’etica ed estetica del decorativismo urbano. In uno spazio privo di altre coordinate e indizi specifici, l’artista intesse un’anti-narrazione basata sull’indicibilità e sull’epifania di una storia interiore.

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DISPLAY

artist – run/project space h24/7

Founded and curated by Massimo Allevato & perfettipietro
Vicolo al Leon d'Oro 4/A, Parma, Italy

Meletios Meletiou (b.1989, Lemesos, Cyprus) lives and works between Cyprus and Rome. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, where he graduated in Visual Arts and Decoration in 2016. Solo and group exhibitions: 2024, The Companions no.4, International Short Film Festival of Oberhausen, GE; 2023, Playground, curated by Panos Giannikopoulos, Eins Gallery, Limassol, CY; 2022, Buffer Zone, curated by Gaia Bobò, Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Rome, IT; 2021, Porta Portese, SPAZIOMENSA, Rome, IT; 2020, ReSize To Fit (site-specific installation), curated by Giulia Pollicita, Una Vetrina, Rome, IT; 2018, Fenêtre Jaune Cadmium, curated by Sarah Linford, Istituto Francese di Cultura, Rome, IT; Maps-Spam, curated by Alessandra Arancio, Società Geografica Italiana/Villa Celimontana, Rome, IT; Developing Cities, curated by Angelica Gatto and Emanuele Riccomi, Superstudio, Milan, IT; 2016, Quattro artisti al Castello, curated by Cecilia Casorati, Castello di Santa Severa, IT.

DISPLAY is an artist-run/project space based in Parma (Italy), founded in 2018 and directed by Massimo Allevato and perfettipietro.

Taking a cue from a curatorial and artistic approach based on researching and collecting images found on the Internet, the exhibition space is conceived as a hybrid device, an analogical and digital display visible 24/7 through its glassdoor.

Full documentation of the past exhibitions at DISPLAY is available at www.spaziodisplay.com

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