

TITLE:

Object documentation as a contemporary art practice or what we can learn from artists.

AUTHOR:

Katerina Konstantinou, art historian, PhD candidate, Panteion University

Contact information: konstantin.kat@gmail.com, +306972370047

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews two case studies of objects documentations presented recently as artworks in contemporary art shows in Athens, Greece. Object documentation as a method that draws from the fields of archaeology and museology, has recently gained an increasing interest in the art world. Artists that employ a variety of methods and practices from fixed disciplinary fields represent today a turn in contemporary arts that are related to the so-called “artistic research” an area strongly characterized by interdisciplinarity. Processes of collecting, arranging, contextualizing and manipulating objects are being appropriated by artists not only for the purposes of their research but also for producing artworks that are consequently exhibited in contemporary art exhibitions. Visual artist Natasa Biza recently presented a record of kitchenware stored in the Agricultural Museum of the Agricultural University of Athens. *Campus Novel*, an art-collective based in Athens, presented their research-based work “Buca #17” whereby they involved with post-excavation processes in order to document the social life of the lignite mines of Kalogreza in Attica. Both examples are related to the Marshall Plan and foster the political and social dimensions of this period. Focusing on the documentation practices of these two cases, this paper addresses issues concerning the creative nature of object documentation as a different mode of engagement with the multifaceted history of sites, museums, and collections. Is there anything to be learned by the often unexpected ways artists deal with collections?

Keywords: artistic research, contemporary art, object documentation

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