**ATHENS AND EPIDAURUS FESTIVAL**

**Marking Time. The Pandemic and the Festival Theatres**

**Photography: Michalis Kloukinas**

Available in bookstores this week, the Athens and Epidaurus Festival photo book *Marking Time. The Pandemic and the Festival Theatres* is a unique photographic project that captures the Festival theatres in the time of the pandemic. Photographs of the Festival theatres by acclaimed photographer Michalis Kloukinas are placed in dialogue with selected excerpts from plays of the world canon that were originally scheduled for the 2020 programme but were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A collector’s edition showcasing beloved venues of the Athens and Epidaurus Festival (Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus, Little Theatre of Ancient Epidaurus, Odeon of Herodes Atticus, Peiraios 260) through a contemporary lens, in anticipation of a time when audiences and artists meet again, *Marking Time* is a palpable, invaluable testament to the absence of live performances, which we have been denied due to the pandemic.

This special edition includes forewords by the Artistic Director of the Athens and Epidaurus Festival, Katerina Evangelatos, and photographer Michalis Kloukinas.

*Marking Time* is available in both Greek and English.

**Design and Art Direction**: Nowhere Studio

**Edited by the** Athens and Epidaurus Festival Publications Department

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**Note by Katerina Evangelatos**

**Artistic Director of the Athens and Epidaurus Festival**

**A Time of Unnatural Stillness**

The book in your hands is an artistic testament to a landmark year for humanity. No aspect of human life has been left untouched. The arts have been hurt at their very core and not just due to the lack of live artistic events and live audiences. We the artists have been hurt, as this mandatory inactivity has taken a toll on our minds and bodies. We will certainly continue to experience the impact of this dark period for months to come after this crisis is over—when it is over.

Since March, the mood at the Festival offices has been through so many ups and downs that even the wildest imagination could not have foreseen. Even though we managed to salvage a fraction, a *Fragment* of our original programming, the ‘whole’ was lost. In this atmosphere, the image of empty theatres kept gnawing at our minds as a visual symbol of a time of unnatural stillness, deprived of artists, words and images.

Theatres have both soul and memory; their hearts beat to the rousing presence of the audience, to the ardent rehearsals of the artists. Theatres are made to welcome people. In their dual capacity, as both receivers and transmitters of energy, they infuse us with life, inspiration, and hope. For many of us theatres are our homes. By that I do not only mean the artists and creative teams working in a production, but also audiences. The Athens and Epidaurus Festival is home to thousands of spectators, who avidly return to their favourite destination each summer. For the past 65 years, the Festival has been synonymous with road trips to Epidaurus, strolls among the pines, the marble embrace of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, just a stone’s throw from the Acropolis – and for the past 15 years, the verve and youthful energy of Peiraios 260.

Michalis Kloukinas presents a one-of-a-kind ‘conversation’: images of our vacant theatres side by side with fragments of plays that were scheduled for the original 2020 Festival programme but were cancelled due to the pandemic. Not only do these images capture a moment in time, they also create a non-place, the setting for a new work of art: text and images bereft of performers. Each location acquires a voice of its own. However, this voice is fragmented, reaching us only in snippets—only our eyes, never our ears—, emphasising absence, stillness, a sense of being suspended in limbo. An uncanny feeling emerges from every page. At the same time, we bear witness to an absolute certainty: our theatres, ancient and contemporary alike, stare back at us from the pages of this book, their eloquent silence affirming that they will always be there.

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Expanding its summer programme, the Athens and Epidaurus Festival continues to build a strong presence as it seeks to establish an active connection with audiences that goes beyond time constraints. With that in mind, the Festival focuses on **Publishing**, as a vital link of artistic creation. For the first time ever, the Festival publications will be available in bookstores.

Festival fans and followers will have the opportunity to purchase *Marking Time* at bookstores in Athens, Thessaloniki, and various other locations in Greece.

The book can also be purchased online through the Kapa Publishing House e-shop. (kapaekdotiki.gr/shop)

**Points of sale**

ATHENS: Politeia (Asklipiou 1-3), Ianos (Stadiou 24), Public (Syntagma & other stores), Lemoni (Irakleidon 22), Pleiades (Spyrou Mercouri 62), Protoporia (Gravias 3), Patakis (Akadimias 65), Evripidis (Andrea Papandreou 8, Chalandri), Free Thinking Zone (Skoufa 64), Little Tree Books (Kavalotti *2*), Bibliotheque (Themistokleous76), Lexikopoleio (Stasinou13), Fotagogos (Kolokotroni59b), Epi Lexei (Akadimias32), Par’ Imin (Charilaou Trikoupi 11), En Athinais (Mavrokordatou 9), Literature House (Ι. Drosopoulou 67, Kypseli)

THESSALONIKI: To Kentro tou Vivliou (Lassani 3), Saixpirikon (Patriarchou Ioakeim 8), Ianos (Aristotelous 7), Kentri (Dimitriou Gounari 22), Tsigarida (Olympiados 108)