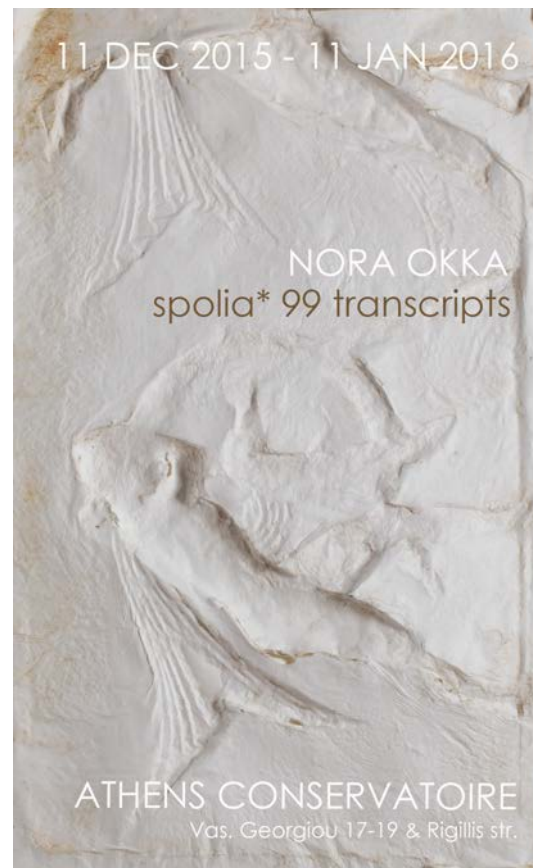


NORA OKKA

spolia* 99 transcripts

*The term 'spolia' concerns the re-use of earlier construction material on new buildings.









[illegible]

spolia*

The term 'spolia' concerns the re-use of earlier construction material on new buildings. However, the meaning of the Latin word 'spolium' derives from the ancient Greek word 'spolas' [σπολάς] which meant originally either an animal skin that was used for practical purposes or even the excoriated skin of the defeated opponent that was displayed as a trophy.

Later the word 'spolas' was used for the protective leather garments of warriors and for their bronze cuirass which were acquired by the victors or were dedicated as precious offers to the temples. Alexander the Great sent a votive of 300 Persian panoplies to the Acropolis and dedicated them to Athena with the inscription: "Alexander, son of Philip and the Greeks except the Lacedaemonians [dedicate these spoils] from the barbarians who live in Asia".

In the Greek-Roman era the meaning of the word 'spolia' extended to the spoils of war and looting. During the Roman Empire, especially since the time of Constantine the Great, architectural spolia were used extensively in state and religious buildings according to the new aesthetics of re-use.

Over time the practice of architectural spolia acquired the sense of protection and conservation; the example of the Little Metropolis makes a unique case in point about the aesthetic ideology of spolia as opposed to the brutality of the word's original meaning.

99 transcripts

The architectural installation, measuring 44m x 7m in total, consists of 99 paper squeezes capturing architectural spolia, from Ancient and Roman times until the early-Christian and middle Byzantine period, which were among those reused for the construction of the Little Metropolis of Athens.

The squeezes bring the spolia into the exhibition of Athens Conservatoire to highlight their various reliefs on a real scale and demonstrate their integration in architecture. By capturing on paper the spolia that are incorporated in the building and presenting their relief face as an exhibit, the project focuses on the practice of spolia as a micrography of the constitution of architecture itself.

Evaluating the concept of spolia as a central architectural idea in a long series of cultural mixes, and researching the scattered network of architectural spolia, the present project constitutes an example of identifying and mapping these architectural traces of the past into the present as a form of a broader cultural sustainability.

The proposed project seeks to be interpreted and experienced as a symbolic reconstitution of the authentic architectural spolia but also as a performative continuity of the practice of spolia. Furthermore, the squeeze-exhibit generates a surplus of meaning through its integration into the exhibition space, allowing us to perceive the contemporary cultural techniques as continuous transcripts and displacements.

η τεχνική

Το παρόν έργο αποτελεί έναν σημαντικό σταθμό στην ιστορία της τέχνης, καθώς αποτελεί το πρώτο έργο που παρουσιάζει την τεχνική της ζωγραφικής σε αυτή την μορφή.

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Prof. Dr. Kostas Vekris
Department of Art History, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Athens

the technique

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the little metropolis

The church of Panayia Gorgoeipikoos and Saint Eleutherios, known today as the Little Metropolis of Athens, dates from the 11th or 12th century and is built to a cross-in-square or crossed-dome plan. It is a monument of Byzantine architecture made entirely of marble spoils from the Ancient Greek, Roman, Early Christian and Byzantine eras. The façades present a unique example of spolia architecture, combining disparate reliefs with decorative and figurative motifs of different origins.

Three of the sides are built using large, horizontal rectangular blocks while the west façade has smaller ones and the sanctuary is made of oblong upright blocks that emphasise its perpendicular aspect. The relief-decorated spolia form the upper part of the wall as well as the faces of the three arms of the cross. The church is thought to have been built over the ruins of the Ancient temple to Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth; the crepidoma of that temple has been positively identified.

Most of the spolia are panels from Early Christian and Byzantine iconostases, and the rest are Greek and Roman tombstones, inscriptions, metopes, cornices and column capitals. Most spolia carry a number of crosses, many of which were carved deliberately to atone for the pagan themes. One typical example is the Ancient Zodiac Calendar with three Byzantine crosses carved over it, one of the 141 spolia recorded in this survey, of which only 99 have been published.





space and spolia: from topos to tritopoi

To the architect Nora Okka, spolia present both iconographic interest and immediate spatial experience. It is for this reason that the exhibition concept for the spolia of the Little Metropolis of Athens focuses on the hanging of the squeezes as much as on their staging in the exhibition space. With an acute sense for the importance of a spatial representation of both spolia and architecture, the architect transforms the white gallery space of the Athens Conservatoire into a 'tritopoi*', a complex configuration of past and present spaces.

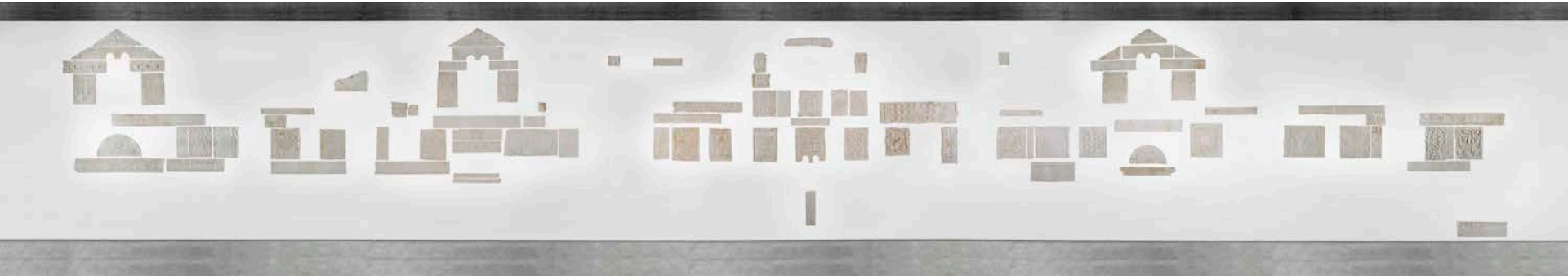
The large-scale installation of the numerous spolia on paper sees the artefacts as well as the spatial dimensions of the church migrating into the museum space and resulting in both temporal and spatial overlays. Unseen, but suggested by the relief character of the isolated spolia, is yet another architectural space, that from which the artefacts originated.

Lighting becomes a central scenographic agent in the articulation of the 'tritopoi', as through the chosen light sources and their direction the negative squeeze imprint appears transformed into a positive, three-dimensional representation of the Little Metropolis relief stone image. The spolia's seemingly hierarchical history of production, removal, appropriation, and exhibition is thus intriguingly rewritten as a simultaneous, triple spatial narrative.

Dr Thea Brejzek

Professor of Spatial Theory, University of Technology, Sydney

*The proposed term of 'tritopoi' builds on Liverani (2011), who describes the visitor's visual experience of historical spolia as 'triplopia', i.e. the involuntary experience of the 'triple vision' of objects.



SPOLIA OF NORTH FAÇADESPOLIA OF EAST FAÇADESPOLIA OF SOUTH FAÇADESPOLIA OF WEST FAÇADE[illegible]

99 μετατοπίσεις

The exhibition is a collection of 99 photographs that explore the concept of displacement. The images are arranged in a grid, with each photograph accompanied by a short text in Greek. The text discusses the historical and contemporary context of displacement, as well as the impact of migration on the individual and the community.

The photographs are taken from various locations around the world, showing people in different states of displacement. Some images show people in transit, while others show people in their new homes. The images are arranged in a way that suggests a journey, from the left side of the wall to the right.

The text accompanying the photographs is written in a simple, clear font. It is arranged in a way that is easy to read, with each paragraph corresponding to a specific photograph. The text is in Greek, but the meaning is clear from the context of the images.

The exhibition is a powerful statement on the human condition. It shows the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity, and the importance of community and support in times of need. The images and text work together to tell a story of hope and perseverance.

The exhibition is a must-see for anyone interested in the history of migration and the human experience. It is a beautiful and moving collection of images and text that will stay with you long after you have seen it.

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space and spolia: from topos to htopoi

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the technique

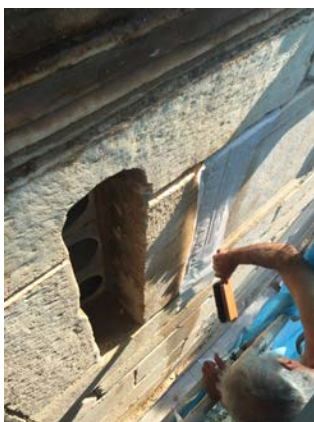
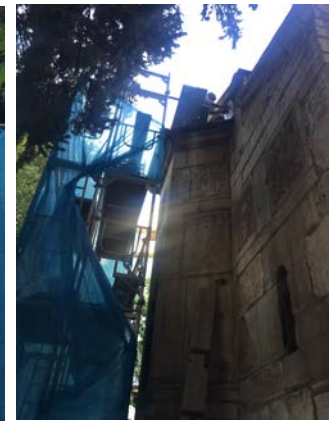
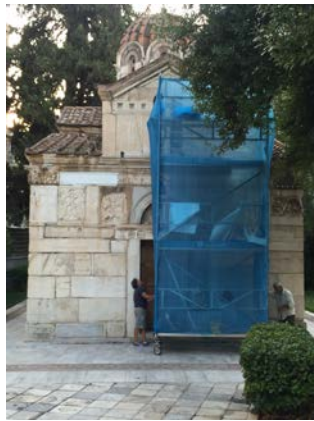
The exhibiting of spolia squeezes by the architect Nora Okka is a unique artistic approach to the study of spolia. It introduces a new method of reproducing the relief-spolia based on the technique commonly used in the study of ancient inscriptions.

Together with photography, paper squeeze (French *stampage*, German *Abklatsch*) is one of the most important and widely used tools for the study of inscriptions. A squeeze is formed by pressing wet-strength paper with a special brush into the relief of the inscription and allowing it to dry on the original. When the paper is removed, it provides a multidimensional image of the inscribed surface.

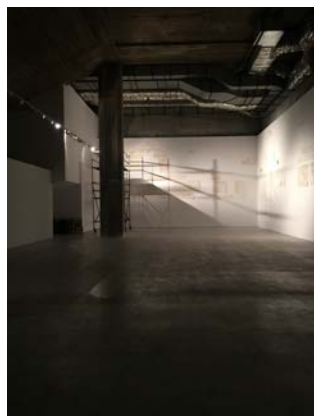
The first paper squeeze of an Ancient inscription was made by the Flemish humanist Stefan Pigghe or Pighius, who in ca. 1550 reproduced with paper a Latin bronze-tablet from Peltunium. The first description of how to make a squeeze is due to the Italian antiquarian Rafaello Fabretti in 1699. Yet it was only the German Egyptologist Richard Lepsius who used paper squeezes in a systematic and methodical way. During an expedition to Egypt between 1842 -1846 he made 517 series of squeezes, which are now kept in the Berlin - Brandenburg Academy. The example of Lepsius was followed by others. In 1902 the great scholar Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff founded the archive of squeezes of Greek inscriptions at the *Inscriptiones Graecae* in Berlin, which is probably the biggest in the world, followed by that of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton.

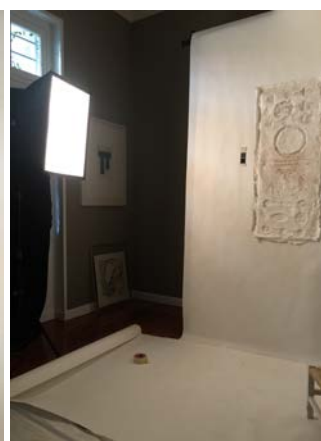
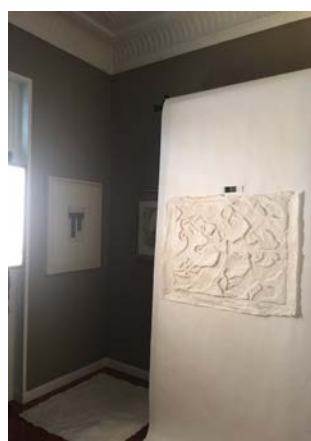
Prof. Dr. Klaus Hallof

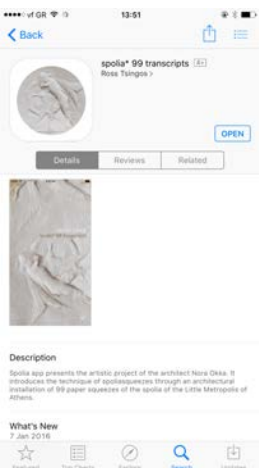
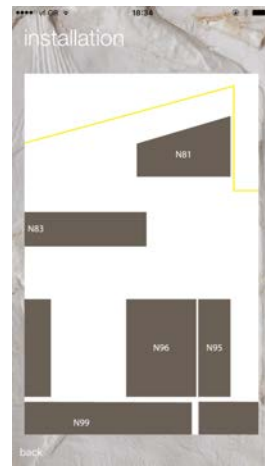
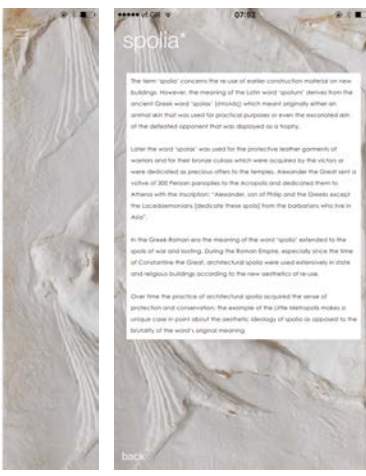
Inscriptiones Graecae, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities











Concept and Realisation

NORA OKKA

Curation and Exhibition Design

NORA OKKA

Photography

KONSTANTINOS IGNATIADIS / GIORGOS SFAKIANAKIS / BORIS KIRPOTIN

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CHRISTOS BAROUS

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STERGIOS TZANEKAS / ANTONIS MPAIMPAS / YORGOS ARGYRIS

Squeeze Brushes

IOANNIS HAJIPROKOPIOU

Squeeze Conservation

SOTIRIOS BECKIARIS

Installation

ARIS PETROU / JASON SPILIOTAKOS / NIKITAS GERAKIS

Lighting

BRIGHT SPECIAL LIGHTING

Translating and Editing

TONIS MOSER

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