

Press release #16

November 20, 2024

Extraction in the Cyclades: Digital Traces

How are the traces and histories of extraction revealed or remembered in the Cyclades today? How will mineral extraction and its legacies continue to shape the Cyclades in the future?

From the green marble quarries of Tinos to the iron mines of Serifos and the bentonite mines of Milos, the Cyclades' rich mineral resources have shaped the islands' social, cultural, and physical environments. Although mining and quarrying has been prevalent in the Cyclades since antiquity, mineral extraction intensified and diversified in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Traces of these modern industrial activities are etched into the landscape and collective memory of the island's communities, anchoring stories of labor struggles, technological advancements, and environmental change. In most cases, the islands' economies today rely more heavily on tourism than industrial mining. Yet the past, present, and future of mineral extraction in the Cyclades raises urgent questions about economic and environmental sustainability and reveals the interplay of local island histories and identities with global economic, geopolitical, and environmental forces.

In alignment with its mission, Archipelago Network launches a new multi-layered research project to explore and document these interconnected aspects of mineral extraction in the Cyclades. Titled *Extraction in the Cyclades: Digital Traces*, the project focuses on Antiparos, Milos, Naxos, Serifos, and Tinos—five islands of diverse scales and geological composition, with significant mining activity over the last several centuries. The project seeks to preserve the historical memory and cultural heritage of this activity from the late nineteenth century to present day, while also offering contemporary interpretations through photographic and moving image commissions.

RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION & DIGITIZATION

AN's research team, led by Jacob Moe and Eleni Zaras, first conducts field research to document, organize, and digitize endangered photographic and audiovisual archives from both private and public collections on each target island. Highlights include an audiovisual collection on emery mining in the villages of Naxos, photographic collections concerning labor organizing and sulfur mining in Milos, oral histories, studies and photographs of iron mining in Antiparos and Serifos, and audiovisual collections from the marble quarries in northern Tinos.

COMMISSIONING & PRODUCING NEW ARTWORKS

In parallel, Archipelago Network invites artists Sofia Dona and Ignacio Acosta to create two new digital artworks, based on their field visits and archival research. Specifically, visual artist and architect Sofia Dona will reconstruct an archive of movement, capturing women's involvement in the historic 1916 miners' strike in Serifos through an essay film. Visual artist Ignacio Acosta will carry out a photographic investigation of modern infrastructure and spaces of memory related to mining on each of the project's islands.

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Both the historical archive and the visual works address labor histories, material culture, and the contemporary imprint of mining communities, as well as the geological significance of these areas. As valuable elements of cultural and environmental heritage, they function as an interpretive tool to stimulate public dialogue around social and environmental issues in the Aegean region and beyond.

Selected archival material and the artists' audiovisual works will be available on the open-access platform archipelagonetwork.org and presented on the islands through a public program.

The project is implemented in collaboration with local partners, including the Manolis D. Manolas Ecomuseum of Koronos-Naxos, the Megalo Livadi Association of Serifos, Kotoki Art Space in Serifos, Theotikos Sotiros Greek Marble, Dionyssomarmble, Imerys Industrial Minerals Greece S.A., and the Milos Mining Museum. It is realized under the auspices and with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture.

Principal investigators: Jacob Moe, Eleni Zaras

Steering committee: Leda Papastefanaki, Charles Stewart, Konstantinos Mavrogonatos

Invited artists: Sofia Dona, Ignacio Acosta

Communication: Maria Paktiti

Special thanks: Giorgos Alexopoulos, Leonidas Chalepas, Kostas Danousis, Alekos Florakis, Andreas Lapourtas, Spyros Souvlakis, Angelos Sinanis, Christos Loukos, Eirini Toliou, Petros Anamateros, Katerina Manolas, Giorgos Sideris, Kostas Revynthis, Giorgos Magoulas, Natalia Roumelioti, Matthias Neumann, Dimitris Rotas, Ioannis Spilanis, Anna Tavoulari, Geli Dougiekou, Thodoris Livanios, Michalis Richter, Stratos Tsiolkis, Anna Vogli, Ioannis Fafoutis, Periklis Ninos, Manousos Kantzos, Manolis Mikelis, Labor Center of Milos

ARTISTS' BIOS

Ignacio Acosta is a Chilean born visual artist and researcher working with photography and video in territories under pressure from extractive industries. His multi-layered collaborative practice and spatial installations seek to connect audiences with these complex yet critical concerns. His projects focus on resistance to territorial fragmentation produced by extractive industries and the so-called "green transition." His research is communicated through exhibitions, public events, publications and online platforms. It can be used as a resource for education, activism and visual culture.

Acosta is based between London and Jokkmokk. He holds PhD from the University of Brighton, UK, as part of the Traces of Nitrate collective (tracesofnitrate.org) and contributes to their new AHRC funded project *Solid Water, Frozen Time, Future Justice: Photography and Mining in the Andean Glaciers* based between the University of Brighton and the Royal College of Arts. He leads the FORMAS funded collaborative research *Indigenous perspectives on forest fires, drought and climate change: Sápmi* based at CEMFOR, Uppsala University, Sweden.

ignacioacosta.com

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Sofia Dona is an artist and architect based in Athens and Munich. In 2023-24, she was a resident at the Onassis AiR program and in 2020 an ARTWORKS fellow at Stavros Niarchos Foundation. In 2018 she was awarded with the City of Munich Prize for Architecture and in 2015 with the Fulbright scholarship for visual artists.

Her work has been exhibited in various spaces such as the Gropius Haus of the Bauhaus foundation in Dessau (2021), the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart (2020), the Instituto Municipal de Arte y Cultura in Tijuana (2019), the nGbK in Berlin (2017), the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Torino (2016), and the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens (2013). As a member of the Errands group, she has participated in exhibitions such as the 1st Istanbul Design Biennial (2012), the 7th Sao Paulo Biennial of Architecture (2007), and the 2nd Athens Biennale (2009). Since 2022 she is a member of Nionia Films who aims to create a queer-feminist film archive in Athens.

sofiadona.com

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Vimeo: [@archipelagonetwork](https://vimeo.com/archipelagonetwork)

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For all media inquiries, please contact Archipelago Network at comms@archipelagonetwork.org.