




COMMUNITY - UNITED STATES - CULTURE

Artist Eleni Giannopoulou Talks to TNH about Her Latest Show in NYC, Oct. 16-30



Greek artist Eleni Giannopoulou on horseback during the filming for a video installation created by Giannopoulou in collaboration with the Mexican artist Tania Reza. (Photo by Gina Herrera)

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 By Eleni Sakellis

NEW YORK – The gallery ZAZ10TS, 10 Times Square in Manhattan, presents *The Meeting of the Horse* by Eleni Giannopoulou and Tania Reza, October 16-30. The gallery is open weekdays, 8 AM-10 PM.

According to the gallery press release, the immersive installation of theatrical sculptures/costumes presents a woman's (the artist's) meeting with the symbol of *The Horse* by Greek artist Giannopoulou in dialogue with a video installation of the same title created by Giannopoulou in collaboration with the Mexican artist Tania Reza.

The installation simulates the same meeting taking place in a cinematographic alternate universe where Giannopoulou is filmed wearing and holding her sculptures.

The Meeting of the Horse is an unconventional theatrical presentation of one of the scenes from Giannopoulou's unreleased *A Play about Rape*. The scene is an autobiographical symbolic meeting of the Artist with her Trojan horse; a coming of age moment where she soberly faces and celebrates her sexuality, perverted history, and identifies the trauma that has been manifested into her sexual encounters of the past.

The sculptures are costumes, almost like ceremonial artifacts that are meant to remain empty, holding an open space for the artist and all survivors that have the need to face the reality around their rape.

Beast, Pet, Masculine, Father, Lover, the Horse sculpture is a playful friend, dark and erotic, full of miniature scenes, myths, and stories that are hidden in his guts; a real Trojan Horse. Colorful moments, cotton candy, and embroidery are camouflaging the artist's agony to comprehend the darkness of being raised a woman.

In Reza's video, the artist faces the symbol of a male horse, a stallion, by looking at a little sculpture in the eyes that fits right into her hand while being on a horse herself. It's a gift that she struggles to understand. A horse has been a symbol of masculinity, western colonial power, and oppression. The knight that comes to the supposed "rescue" of women and natives is always on a horse.

The two artists are interested in changing the western patriarchal model of this symbol and are attempting to return it in their own service. Accepting the sexuality it holds, without fearing the objectification of the rider in the video.



The National Herald

Detail of the sculpture Horse, Pet, Beast, Father by Eleni Giannopoulou. (Photo by Maxim Ryazansky)

Giannopoulou, who is from Crete and Thessaloniki, spoke to The National Herald about this latest project and about her work in general in these strange times.

TNH: How long did it take to put the project together from idea to realization?

Eleni Giannopoulou: I have been working on this project for a year and a few months now and it seems like it will keep being my main focus for the next year or so.

There are four more characters in the play that I need to sculpt. Then I need to complete the text, the sounds and the movements. I am very excited to be working in a project that takes a bigger part of my time, it feels like I am growing as an artist.

TNH: As an artist, how are you coping with the current situation, the pandemic and the restrictions?

EG: Honestly, I consider myself very lucky. My family is all healthy and I got the chance to see them this summer. I also managed to travel a lot during these weird times in my effort to return to the USA after being in Europe. I was in NYC during the lockdown and it was dark and terrifying how many people lost their lives.

Especially the fact that the people from a lower financial background are the ones more deeply wounded by the virus is deeply unsettling for the society we live in.

I still go to my studio every day. Never stopped making work during all of this so it has not affected my personal practice. The exhibitions have turned into quieter, more anticlimactic events but the fact that they are still happening is very encouraging. Overall, I think that this huge life-altering event in our lives could also be a good wakeup call to correct some of the ugliness of the world. I believe it is giving a lot of energy to the younger generations to work and fight for huge values like equality, and justice.

TNH: How has the pandemic affected your work?

EG: I think that it has helped me slow down. It gave me a lot of time to read and think and it has attacked the overly anxious for productivity part of my character.

We do not have to produce something all the time and sometimes slowing down the process is good for the work.

I am not planning to make any work specifically depicting the pandemic so my subject matter has not changed. But I think I have.



The National Herald

Greek artist Eleni Giannopoulou, wearing and holding her sculptures while on horseback, during the filming for a video installation created by Giannopoulou in collaboration with the Mexican artist Tania Reza. (Photo by Gina Herrera)

TNH: What are you working on next?

EG: I will keep working on the same project after the show. Hopefully, I will be able to present it complete after I am done with it.

The show will go on until the end of October and then it will go back up in January for another month.

More information is available on the ZAZ10TS Gallery website: <https://www.zaz10ts.com/> and on Eleni Giannopoulou's website: <https://elenigiannopoulou.com/>.