**Announcement**

**Opening Celebrations and Prefatory Events**

**of the 9th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art,**

**“everything must change. RIS9”**

**Friday, October 31, 2025**

The opening celebrations of the 9th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, “everything needs to change. Radical Intelligence. Saloniki 9,” consist of encounters, works and other creative manifestations that act as hints and predictions, joyful signs of questioning, factual invocations, and thoughts about the Biennale. These, and what shall follow, constitute a chord of tonalities with “enduring” structure and a “fugitive” core, leading up to the broader staging of Biennale 9 in May–July 2026.

The exhibition “Plot Twist (the science fiction change)” is complemented by the ritualistic tangle of workshops, screenings, performances and live music, a non-hierarchical mix that runs (and will run) throughout this Biennale, in its attempt to probe, among others, into the possibility of critical fabulation, as this is defined in the work of Sadiya Hartman, or *the* *doing* *of the study* and the revolutionary prospect of playing in its various different forms.

**MOMus–Experimental Center for the Arts**

**18:00 exhibition opening Plot Twist (the science fiction change)**with works by Ben Rivers, Errands group, Kostas Sfikas  
duration of exhibition: Oct. 31 to Nov. 16.

The exhibition is an expression of the essential cooperation between Biennale 9 and the 66th Thessaloniki International Film Festival.

Nadja Argyropoulou, curator of Biennale 9, notes about the exhibition: “The concept of the plot twist, as it lurks in science fiction as premonition, openness and possibility, and as it is presented in this exhibition- preamble to the 9th Biennale, is perceived as revolutionary insight and a trigger of change. It is not a getaway but a necessity; it is resonance with a world of many worlds, hands-on imagination, radical futurism, as it reknits time (the entanglements of *already* with *not yet*) with the yarn of a structural understanding of unfreedom and the militantly joyful overturn of its deadlocks. The choice of this evocative exhibition for the soft opening of the 9th Biennale alludes to the importance of critical fabulation—as defined in Saidiya Hartman’s work, which serves as inspiration for the Biennale as a whole—while also presenting artistic practices of the “radical intelligence” that challenges what is established as proper and proposed, attuning to the possibility of a social otherwise, to what we elude and eludes us.

The exhibition begins with the installation of the triptych *Urthworks* (*Slow Action* [2010], *Urth* [2016], *Look Then Below* [2019]) by British artist **Ben Rivers**.

In this trilogy, the artist engages both real and fabricated times and places (the real places comprising Japan, Tuvalu, Lanzarote, Arizona, Mendip Hills, Somerset) as well as an alternating use of 16mm film and digital imaging technology, to present the stages of an environmental collapse that is not merely a possible plot twist but a lived reality that we do not recognize as such.

From the ethnographic allegory and archipelagic Utopia of *Slow Action*, to the contemplative introspection stirred by the sealed environment experiment in Arizona’s Biosphere in *Urth* (which antedated the Covid global lockdown) and to his film, *Look Then Below*, which recalls thechthonicside of life as it inhabits the un-exotic caves of Somerset, in an almost eerily poetic manner Rivers reveals something crucial in the apocalyptic: the reality that is constantly occurring within imagination and vice versa, the familiar dimension of the epic narrative, the loose boundary between documentary and invention. The exhibition will also present the artist’s book *Urthworks*, which has been created with the contribution of sci-fi writer Mark von Schlegell and draws from the mythology of the Vikings and Urth, the goddess of fate, as well as from Brian Aldiss’s dystopian novel *Earthworks* (1965).

In parallel, the official program of the 66th Thessaloniki International Film Festival will feature, in collaboration with the Avant-Garde Film Festival (a Greek Film Archive institution), Rivers’s new film, *Mare’s Nest*, which draws from Don DeLillo’s work and challenges, as does all of the artist’s work, the classic form of plot-based narratives which is often nothing more than disguised predictability. The film unfolds in an unknown and ambiguous world where the only trace of adults can be seen in the surrounding catastrophe, while the presence of children is central as they gather in community, in a hopeful for the future move.

Ben Rivers will be present at the opening of the exhibition and the screening of *Mare’s Nest*.

The exhibition “Plot Twist (the science fiction change)” further unfolds through a new work by the **Errands**, commissioned by Biennale 9 and titled *U.F.O. Lost in HEAVEN (2025) – The Journey of a Forgotten Future*. The work deals with the visionary work of Nikolaos Xasteros, the peculiar idea of retrospective futurism and the coming together of the two coeval Greek Biennales (Thessaloniki - Athens) in the dynamic field of science fiction, as a memory of the future.

Here, the Errands return to their work *TRANSPORTING UTOPIA*, which was presented at the 2nd Athens Biennale (2009), “AB2: ΗEAVEN.” In 2009, the Errands came upon a “UFO-house,” abandoned among trees in a coastal area of Loutraki; they bought it for 1 euro and transported it, piece by piece, to Flisvos beach. The UFO-house is one of the few surviving exemplars of the futuristic prefabricated dwellings made of fiberglass that were designed by Nikolaos Xasteros in the 1970s.

The Errands group re-displayed this peculiar residence that was left to abandonment and obscurity for decades – along with the name of Xasteros. Yet, one day, the UFO-house mysteriously disappeared from Flisvos, this time for good. No one knows or saw anything. Its whereabouts are still unknown, adding a new level of mystery and meaning to the work itself, but also to the wider history of prefabs, mobility, and the shuttering of the dream of mass portable habitation.

Now, at Biennale 9, the Errands return to their work, shedding light on its multi-layered trajectory: from Xasteros’s utopian vision to the collapse, artistic rescue, disappearance and, ultimately, the current fetishization of the architectural relic—how the unwanted became “exotic,” a collector's item, selling the future as memory.

Historic works by the great artist **Kostas Sfikas** (1927–2009) complement this brief exhibition tour of the concept of the plot twist through a different path. The cinematography precociously and prophetically introduced by Sfikas is an unconventional viewing experience, as the director grapples persistently and aggressively with “the snare of the eye” that holds the order of the world together, raising “a nightmarish mirror” in front of it, in the words of Christos Vakalopoulos. Sfikas grapples with the pitfalls of representation as an orchestrated cultural constant and authoritative imperative.

More relevant than ever, Sfikas’s films dissect the iconoclastic vampirism of dominant culture, the scenographic perception of the world, the shackles of narrative ritual, the time of the gaze, and all sorts of constructions including that of the “moving image” itself, the representation of time.

The critical reflection on eternal fiction and the ever-coming end of worlds, the leap into the depth of history and the dive into the New Times, are the connecting thread in Sfikas’s three famous allegories (*Allegory I* [1986]; *The Enigmatic Mr. Jules Verne – Allegory II* [1993]; *The Woman of... and the Collector – Allegory III* [2002]) that are featured in the exhibition. As Savvas Michail notes about Sfikas’s work, “the creation of such a space presupposes a simultaneous critique of the illusory representation of the epiphenomena and an Opening *to* the World / Opening *of* the World: a Denial of the Denial of Denial.” The works *Prometheus Retrogressing* (1998) and *Paul Klee*’s *Prophetic Bird of Sorrows* (1995) complete this installation in the building of the MOMus–Experimental Center for the Arts. In the universe of Sfikas, the beginning and the end of the world are the groundbreaking adventure, the vortices of images, and the search for truth in the spiral of the perpetual dialectic of power and rebellion.

The *Model* (1974), Sfikas’s groundbreaking film that dissects, in a one-shot take, the homogenizing, vitiating paradigm of the capitalist apparatus, is presented in the context of the curatorial tribute “moving in riot” at TIF-HELEXPO, Pavilions 2 & 3, on October 31.

**TIF-HELEXPO, Pavilions 2 & 3**

**19:30–01:30 film screenings moving in riot**

The body of moving-image works under the general title “moving in riot” probes, through 9+1 exemplars, into the dangerous field of e-motion. By spreading the screenings throughout the empty space of the TIF buildings, it creates the non- or pan-dimensional quantum field where things are refracted and interact without diminishing in energy or semantics. Forming a kind of hauntology that includes the future and inhabits the spaces of Greece’s most famous Trade Fair institution (TIF-HELEXPO), these works flicker in the dark in defiance and anticipation.

The works of the tribute (curated by Biennale 9 curator Nadja Argyropoulou) include:

* **Ben Rivers & Ben Russell**’s *The Rare Event* (2017), a study on the illusory condition of a philosophical round table, whose members reflect on the possibilities of Resistance.
* The historical film *Social Decay* by **Stelios Tatasopoulos** (1932, screening in collaboration with the Greek Film Archive, in the labs of which the film’s restoration took place). It is the first fiction film that dealt with the plight of the unemployed and poor working-class populations of urban centers and depicted the struggles for the unionization of industrial workers.
* The initially forbidden film*100 Hours in May* by **Dimos Theos & Fotos Lambrinos** (1964, courtesy of the Hellenic Film Academy, with the cooperation of F. Lambrinos and K. Theou). It narrates through authentic images and unknown documents the grim background of the political assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis in Thessaloniki, and outlines the social setting and the cultural/political context of that time.
* The groundbreaking film *Model*(1974) by **Kostas Sfikas**, which dissects, in a one-shot take, the homogenizing, vitiating paradigm of the capitalist apparatus. Part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA, NYC, USA), the film is its creator’s attempt to initially express the model of capitalism as it appears in Greece of the time, with building activity being its most pronounced manifestation. Along the way, the film turned to the “direct plastic transcription of the fundamental laws of the Capital” (K. Sfikas), in abstractly rendering the coordinates and automations of the production process. Machines, graves, dummy-workers, the flow of fetish products, the legendary work of Sfikas on the shoot, the use of color and perspective derived from both De Chirico’s painting and the experience of industrialization, compose a unique handmade filmic creation that embodies Sfikas’s great research and thought on work, life and emancipation.
* The work *A-Anti-Anticapitalista* (2021) by **Oliver Ressler**, which conveys the consensus in the climate justice movement that only systemic change can prevent climate disruption. Personal acts of renunciation are no longer enough. The future success of the climate movement will depend on intersectional approaches, on the possibility of alliances with (for example) anti-racist and decolonizing movements, with movements against gender oppression and others fighting intolerable forms of labor exploitation. The slogan “A-Anti-Anticapitalista” is already heard in a wide variety of left political contexts. It points toward unity, pushing aside contradictions and participants’ political differences in the moment of collective expression. The materials assembled for this film were recorded in actions by Ende Gelände and Occupy, and in the context of anti-G7, G8 and G20 and other political mobilizations. Editing of images and sound weaves these materials into a whole whose end is always already a new beginning. If indeed “everyone who ever protested knows the importance of meaningful slogans,” as per Oliver Ressler, then this work directly engages with the questions raised by Biennale 9 through its title and the way it engages with language and protest.
* The films *Antistrip* (1976) and *Le Sibylle* (1978) by the pioneering feminist group **Le Nemesiache**, which constitute the revolutionary dynamic of the collective practice that radically uses play, ritual, memory, and art.
* The films *Ouroboros* (2017) and *Deep Sleep* (2014) by Palestinian artist **Basma al-Sharif**. The films deal with the violence of the taxonomic representation that Palestinian life has endured over time, and the struggle of the people there for independence and autonomy. Al-Sharif’s work is composed of the symbiosis of scenes of beauty and destruction; it challenges politics, the didacticism of stereotypical and constructed/directed representations, and studies the cycle of the terrible litany of trauma involving both protagonists and spectators. Largely thanks to its defiant articulation, the film opposes the stasis produced by every fixed expectation.
* The film *Dédé (Ancestor)* (2025) by **Yasmine Djédjé-Fisher-Azoumé**, which delves into diasporic female identity. Featuring animated copper relief engraving, the film is a journey into the feminine cosmology and folkloric traditions of the Ivory Coast and the Bété tribe, guided by feminine icons such as fertility carvings, masks, sculptures, mythological fables and deities.
* *Return to Bog Walk* (2025-2026) by **Cecilia Bengolea**. It is a work in progress that assembles dance, performance, and a series of interviews made since 2017 in the artist’s attempt to restore context and content in reference to Jamaican dancehall (genre of music derived from reggae, in which an artist improvises vocals over a recorded or live beat). In it dance emerges as a form of refugia, a space of survival, transformation, and collective memory. The film features Jamaican dancehall performance artists, all of whom are now economic refugees, living far from their homeland due to financial hardship and limited opportunities. The teams featured in this film are Black Eagle and Overload Skankaz. Their movements carry the memory of their land, community, and culture. Dancehall becomes a cultural refuge, a living space where identity is not lost in exile but sustained and reshaped through rhythm and movement. The work is a tribute to the dancers’ ability to carry home within them, and to dance as an act of resistance, care, and regeneration. Bengolea works internationally across performance, video, and sculpture, using dance as a medium for radical empathy and emotional exchange. Movement for her is a language of resilience and transformation, shaped through collaboration and exchange with no use of hierarchy and violence.
* A special place in the tribute is dedicated to a video that heralds one of the most experimental and creative collaborations-initiatives of Biennale 9. A work in progress itself, the video is constructed gradually, using materials that are gathered through collective research, directed and coordinated by Iria Vrettou. It conveys the tone of a work in progress under the general title ***Playing Otherwise***. In the context of investigating the “social otherwise”—which is the main axis of this curatorial work, along with assertions for public space, issues of collectivity and solidarity, concerns for the revision of power relations and competition—the project-series of activities titled “Playing Otherwise” will unfold with Another Football platform and the Heinrich Böll Foundation as creative partners, and will include, with football at the forefront, a multitude of collaborative initiatives, self-organized groups and independent platforms, as well as a range of artistic, theoretical references around games, sports, and modern gaming, including the positions of the Situationist International on anti-war games (Guy Debord’s *Kriegspiel*) and applied “triolectics” (Asger Jorn, 1962). Even if a new “three-sided football league” is not launched on the occasion of the 9th Biennale in Thessaloniki, it will be interesting to experience the adventure/effort of its formation in the tradition of similar initiatives of the 1990s, as well as the emergence of a game that combines football, chess and poker techniques while breaking the binary nature of competing.

**19:30–22:00 seed bombing laboratory**

in collaboration with the Mamagea Environmental Organisation

This collaboration also includes the following events:  
- 31/10 @ 10:00-14:00 seed bombing laboratory for schools  
- 1/11 @ 17:00-19:00 opening of the exhibition “WONDER CITY: Planting our urban present together” at MOMus–Museum of Contemporary Art; duration of exhibition: Nov. 1–7.  
- 1/11 @ 19:00-21:00 “Tablemates” meal-cum-discussion at MOMus–Museum of Contemporary Art (by invitation only)

This first event of the creative collaboration of Biennale 9 with Mamagea Environmental Organisation traces the points where art, activism and pedagogical care meet in order to change the relationship between children and adults with collective assertions, experiential knowledge and aesthetic pleasure: from the great call for the creation and throwing of thousands of seed bombs, which then bloom and dominate the urban landscape, to the Wonder City exhibition that brings the expression of the children’s experience to the museum space and in the context of the Biennale, to the “Network of School Vegetable Gardens of Thessaloniki” and, finally, to the reflective activity “Tablemates” that aspires to bring to the table of those who plan and decide the discussion for more equitable and sustainable nutritional futures. The communities of Mamagea meet those of the Biennale of Contemporary Art, and this is a beginning that can only lead to where everything can change.

**19:30–22:00 screen-printing workshop** **MOMus sacculos in MOMo non imprimet**

True to the spirit of degrowth, and utilizing the practice of playful reuse in order to change the usual approach to “merch,” the 9th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art invites the public to a participatory and provocatory screen-printing workshop. Using the logo of this year’s event, “everything must change. RNS9,” we are tagging our canvas bags of previous exhibitions and events, merging together and teasingly confusing different cultural experiences, memories and identities. The process will take place under the guidance of Mephisto Me Studio, which exacerbates the confusion and subversively enlists the humor of the other, the incomprehensible language, to note:

*Momus sacculos suos in MOMo non fingit.*

*Si Momus sacculos suos in MOMo imprimeret, animos commoveret.*

*Sacculi Momī in MOMo velut vestigia artis exprimerentur.*

*Momus sacculos suos in MOMo signis suis non notat.*

*Momus per sacculos suos in MOMo fulgere posset.*

*Momus sacculos suos in MOMo tanquam artem vivam non insculpit.*

*Pro MOMo arte Momī mortua est.*

*Sed etiam Momō MOMus mausoleum est.*

**22:00–23:00 dance otherwise DETH arthó**

The Aerites dance company studies the condition of change, its bases and its upbeats, and intervenes by luring and observing:

**DETH  
DETH** arthó  
**DE** ΤΗa katargithó  
**DE** ΤΗélo

\* The largely untranslatable, polysemous and assonant play on words of the title consists roughly of the following words and pun elements: ***DETH*:** transliteration of ΔΕΘ, the Greek acronym for Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF); ***Arthó*:** passive voice form of the verb αἴρω = to carry, lift, and, metaphorically, to cancel, annul. ***De***: transliteration of the negative function word δε, Greek equivalent of “not”. The combination *DETH arthó* may read *De th’ arthó*, synonymous with *De tha katargithó* (I shall not be cancelled/annulled), or *De tha ’rthó* (I will not come). *De thélo* means I don’t want to.

In the prelude of “everything must change. RIS9”, *DETH arthó* proclaims the public demonstration of TIF premises (pavilions 2+3) free from content, celebrations and productive ideas that promise to make our future certain.

Via a series of immaterial interventions and outrageous confessions of kinetic destabilization, *DETH arthó* takes us on a guided tour of the basis of the upcoming 9th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, of its foundations, its bricks and mortar. It timidly foretells the first steps towards the non-annulment of existence; it trusts and announces the glitch, proposing new tropes of unquelled dance poetics.

Choreographer: Patricia Apergi  
Performers: Eleanna Zoi, Caterina Politi, Ilias Hatzigeorgiou   
Production: Aerites Dance Company

*In a biennial of unspeakable ingenuity, the Aerites enjoy the solitude of the decision to trance into change.*

**19:30–22:00 live VELVET BUS goes Salonica Biennale part 1**

* DJ performance of the duet Toumpa-Charilaou (Marina Velisioti, Xenia Kalpaktsoglou). Where playlists collide like broadcasts from a planet in free fall, revealing the cost of being a girl (visuals: Marina Velisioti).
* Vassilina live performance
* Bipolia live performance

VELVET BUS is a moving, multi-faceted, participatory festival, created in 2008. It was conceived by The Callas / Aris and Lakis Ionas, members of the Velvet Room team, a large collective consisting of associates and friends, which has been presenting for 20 years, throughout Greece, the contemporary independent artistic creation through exhibitions, publications, films, concerts, festivals, and events.

**23:00–24:00 live VELVET BUS goes Salonica Biennale part 2**The Callas with the Callasettes live

Direction, costumes, artworks: The Callas | Choreography: Angeliki Hatzi | Dancers: Angeliki Hatzi, Elpiniki Saripanidou | Performers: Eirini Zografou, Melia Papadopoulou

In the context of the “VELVET BUS goes Salonica Biennale Part 2” live, The Callas / Lakis & Aris Ionas will present, for the first time, their new song, “Everything Must Change,” which they created specifically for the 9th Biennale of Contemporary Art of Thessaloniki (Lyrics, music, orchestration: Lakis & Aris Ionas / The Callas | Production, mixing: Marilena Orfanou | Lead singer: Aris Ionas | Vocals: Filippa Dimitriadi, Eirini Zografou, Ioanna Iona, Dafni Kyriakidou, Kyveli Marsellou).

**24:00–01:30 DJ set Yavash**

The set of the well-known Thessaloniki DJ concludes the welcoming party of Biennale 9.

free entrance, all are welcome

[www.thessalonikibiennale.com](http://www.thessalonikibiennale.com)

