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PRESS RELEASE

Museum Europäischer Kulturen

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European Cultural Days: Thessaloniki. Facets of a City

9 August – 9 September 2018

with an exhibition by the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography

Thessaloniki: Looking at time through moments | Photographs 1900–2017

The city of Thessaloniki is synonymous with the connection between the Orient and the Occident in Europe's cultural history. The metropolis in northern Greece has always been a site of arrival and of departure for migrants, and is characterized by its multiculturalism and the vibrancy of its social fabric. For four weeks, Thessaloniki will be the focus of the 15th European Cultural Days at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen (MEK). The photo exhibition *Thessaloniki: Looking at time through moments | Photographs 1900–2017* and the diverse event programme will provide audiences with a taste of the rich complexity of this city, with the works illustrating the themes of the exhibition.

Exhibition

The photographs in the exhibition by the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography afford glimpses into the life of Thessaloniki from 1900 until the present day. Historical photographs depict events that were significant for the city and its inhabitants. They provide reflections of everyday life in the city, as do the images by contemporary photographers.

All the works are loans from museums in the city or from private collectors, gathered together and curated by Hercules Papaioannou, Director of the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography.

Event Programme

The events amplify the effect of the images. Thematic focuses shine a spotlight on the events of the Second World War – both from the Greek and the German side – and on the issue of migration, which remains so relevant today. A wide range of perspectives and different artistic media and techniques provide a more comprehensive picture of the city and its inhabitants.

Through a range of formats that have been developed with the wealth of ethnic communities living here in Berlin – including talks, panel discussions, readings, concerts, performances, conversations and film screenings – visitors can acquaint themselves with the past and present of this cosmopolitan city. Hellas Filmbox will also be involved, organizing weekly screenings of feature and documentary films.

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The event programme will focus mainly on current issues, such as how Thessaloniki has dealt with the crisis, and will look at some of the creative methods people have found for getting around it.

Representatives from the cultural sector and politics will also present activities and initiatives. On 25 August, there will be a presentation and panel discussion with Stavroula Poulimeni (journalist, Thessaloniki) and Elias Anagnostopou-los (Refugee Day Centre Alkyoni, Thessaloniki) on the topic: Thessaloniki's Solidarity in Times of Crisis.

A spotlight will also be shone on events from the rich history and culture of the city. On 1 September, for example, Kyriakos Chatzikyriakidis (Thessaloniki University) will give a talk on the topic of Thessaloniki as a City of Refugees.

Other talks and discussions will address issues such as the significance of Jewish culture in the city, and the role it played in shaping the city from the 15th century onwards. A significant focus is placed not only on the brutal end of this culture in the Second World War, but also on mechanisms of reflection, repression and remembrance. An example being the panel discussion Salonica – The Disappeared and Forgotten “Jerusalem of the Balkans” on 23 August, which will look at how the Nazis exterminated the Jewish community of Thessaloniki during the Second World War.

Rounding it all off, musical and culinary delights will make these four weeks in summer into a truly special experience. It kicks off with the opening on 9 August, which has a few highlights of its own in store. Audiences can look forward to the Greek rhythms of Rembetiko, Laiko, Entechno and Paradosiako.

Every Tuesday there is a film screening. Two feature films and two documentaries will be shown, with each accompanied by an introduction and followed by a discussion.

Thursdays and the weekends boast an array of talks, presentations and discussions. The project wraps up with a finissage on 9 September, where the city itself will put its best foot forward, showing off its diverse cultural activities. Music, dancing, wine and culinary delights round off the programme.

The European Cultural Days 2018: Thessaloniki | Facets of a City is a project of the MEK in collaboration with the Greek Embassy in Germany, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung in Thessaloniki, the Center for Modern Greece at the Freie Universität Berlin, Hellas Filmbox, the association Respekt für Griechenland e.V. and Berlin's Greek communities, along with the association Freunde des MEK and the restaurant eßkultur.

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