

# AARHUS 2017 & PAFOS2017-

The Presence of Absence -MoMu

**Daniella Pistenti Mouyiannou**

On behalf of the Cypriot participating artists, members of **ex Artis** Cultural Association

Your excellencies Madam Ambassador and Madam Honorary Commissioner of Cyprus in Aarhus, dear collaborators and friends,

It is my pleasure and honour to be today with you at the opening of the exhibition ***The presence of Absence***, an exhibition which refers to the memory of the dead, in Cyprus and Denmark and is a part of the cooperation between Aarhus 2017 and Pafos2017 European Capitals of Culture.

Our Participation is the result of a collaboration which started, in 2014 when the artist Ditte Lyngkaer Petersen, participated in the contemporary art exhibition titled ***'Trauma and Therapy'***, curated by Prof. Niki Loizidi which took place in Paphos Archaeological Museum. That exhibition was one of the first big events of European Capital of Culture, Paphos 2017 and was organised by the Paphos based, Cultural Association **ex Artis**.

After a long and successful cooperation, which turned into a friendship between the artists and collaborators from the two countries, we are happy today to be here in Moesgaard museum, participating in this moving exhibition, exchanging our traditions, private memories and feelings.

We Therefore want to express our deep appreciation and thank the curators of this exhibition, Ane Bonde Rolsted, Ditte Lyngkaer Pedersen and Catriona Hodge, for their professionalism and cooperation, especially Prof. Ton Otto and Moesgaard Museum, and also the cultural co-capitals Aarhus 2017 and Pafos2017.

It was also our great pleasure to meet, the honorary commissioner of Cyprus in Aarhus, Mrs Zoe Winding who was one of the initiators of this exhibition and we are sure that a new friendship and fruitful cultural exchange with Aarhus, has begun.

Finally I would like to invite you all, to have a small taste of the Cypriot traditions concerning the memorial service, at the exhibition, and try some *kollyva* the offerings at the orthodox churches in Cyprus, which we have prepared for you today.

*kollyva* is offered at the church with *prosfora*- special bread loaves and wine and offered at the end of the memorial service at the church to all the attendants. They consist of boiled wheat decorated with dry nuts and fruits: pomegranates, raisins, almonds. *Kollyva* and its ingredients have many symbolisms and are offered to the church, wishing for 'Eternal Memory and Peace' of the deceased.

In Cyprus today, ***Mnemosynon*** -the memorial service at church, is still a strong ceremonial tradition even for people who are not close to the church, as all families still give special attention of offering this service every year at church and remember their beloved ones, gathering the whole family together.

We hope you enjoy the exhibition!