

ART RUG PROJECTS by SOUTZOGLOU
x
NIKOMACHI KARAKOSTANOGLOU

From Ink To Silk

October 9 - January 10, 2025
Opening: October 9, 2025

Mentis-Antonopoulos Passementerie ('NEMA')

PRESS RELEASE

The creative encounter between visual artist Nikomachi Karakostanoglou and the Art Rug Projects initiative by Electra Soutzoglou brings together an artist and a historic carpet weaving company in a dialogue between matter and spirit, past and present, the gesture of art and the art of hand-weaving in an act of translation and transformation.

The story of the Soutzoglou family begins in Sparta of Asia Minor in 1900, where Nikolaos Soutzoglou founded one of the first Greek carpet workshops. Following the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922, he restarts the business all over again in Greece. In 1974, the second generation takes over with Kyriacos Soutzoglou, who expands the family activity by establishing the commercial profile of the company as it stands today. The third generation, represented by Electra Soutzoglou, now breathes new life into the art of weaving by linking the traditional art of carpet-making with contemporary art.

Looking towards the future, Electra launched Art Rug Projects, a platform where contemporary Greek and international artists are invited to transfer their visual works onto carpets — turning painting into weaving and artistic design into handcrafted objects of art.

In this bold project, visual artist Nikomachi Karakostanoglou—who also traces her roots to Asia Minor—steps in as a creative voice, bringing her own cultural heritage into the conversation. In her practice, she approaches material not simply as a vessel for form, but as a carrier of memory, energy, and sensation. Light and water are fundamental elements in her work—not merely as images, but as ways of perceiving the world: endless, fluid, intangible, and ever-present. This flow continues when her work is translated into a silk carpet. Her visual language becomes more tactile through weaving, yet retains its poetic nature. The surface of the carpet gains an atmospheric quality. The silk, with its natural luster and interaction with light, impressively conveys the transparencies, shifts, and subtle vibrations in her pieces. Brushstrokes become silk fibers, color transitions evoke water, and the design becomes a field of touch and light, shimmering and iridescent. Thus, the materiality of the woven carpet allows the viewer to see, feel, and touch an image which is under continuous transformation, depending on light and perspective.

The collaboration between these two women goes beyond a shared artistic project—it is a meaningful encounter between two worlds connected through history, heritage, weaving, and art. All of this unfolds within a space that carries its own profound memory: 'NEMA' the former Mentis-Antonopoulos Textile Factory, now operating under the auspices of the Benaki Museum. 'NEMA' serves not only as the backdrop for the exhibition but as an integral part of it a living vessel of Greek textile history that today hosts its continuation in a contemporary, creative form.

Nikomachi Karakostanoglou was born and raised in Athens. She studied Business Administration at the Athens University of Economics and Business, Public Art (BA) at Chelsea College of Arts, and Fine Art: Sculpture (BA Hons) at Wimbledon College of Arts. In 2011, she studied Chinese Calligraphy in Shanghai. Since 2017, she has been exclusively working on her drawings and sculptures, challenging herself through the scale of the works and the materials she has collected during her travels across Asia. In 2023, under commission by the Onassis Foundation's Stegi, she created two outdoor sculptures: "Drop of Knowledge" and "Flow." She has held solo and group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. Her works are part of private collections as well as the collections of MOMus, the Benaki Museum, and the Onassis Foundation.

www.nikomachikarakostanoglou.com

Art Rug Projects by Soutzoglou focuses on interactive collaborations with Greek and international contemporary artists, whose selected works are transformed into handmade rugs and tapestries — either as one-of-a-kind artworks or limited editions. Each collaboration offers artists an opportunity to explore a new medium, expanding their practice in novel ways by viewing the rug as their canvas. Weaving is rooted in the traditions of the past, while contemporary art expresses the present. By adapting age-old traditions into a modern context, Art Rug Projects "weaves" heritage, history, and craftsmanship together with contemporary art and creative expression.

www.soutzoglou.com

Mentis-Antonopoulos Passementerie ('NEMA'), part of the Benaki Museum, is one of the oldest companies in the field of thread processing and silk product manufacturing — and the only still-operating workshop in Greece that continues to produce ribbons, braids, tassels, fringes, and other silk-related products (passementerie) using traditional methods. The space also hosts educational and exhibition activities, serving as a living cell of intangible cultural heritage.

www.benaki.org/nema