

ARRRGH!



Paul Graves

# PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION

# ARRRGH!

## MONSTERS IN FASHION

May 15th - July 31st, 2011 | Benaki Museum, Pireos 138, Athens, Greece

Curated by Vassilis Zidianakis

**ATOPOS Contemporary Visual Culture (ATOPOS cvc)** presents **ARRRGH! Monsters in Fashion at the Benaki Museum, Athens** - the first exhibition about Character design in fashion, curated by **Vassilis Zidianakis**. The exhibition is participating in the **Athens Festival 2011**.

Characters are abstract and reduced figures with a strong anthropomorphic appeal and bold graphical silhouette. Over the last decade, they have humorously sampled and remixed their way through visual codes and media, confronting the viewer head-on, regardless of cultural background. This aesthetic approach has a strong influence on contemporary fashion and costume design. International artists create playful dresses, avant-garde costumes and hairstyles, re-inventing the human body and sending their monstrous, enigmatic, radical and grotesque new Characters onto the catwalk and beyond. They redefine the relation between body and costume by mixing visual communication codes and questioning the established aesthetic norms.

The exhibition **ARRRGH! Monsters in Fashion** has been realised with the contribution of the following fashion designers and artists, **Maison Martin Margiela, Walter Van Beirendonck, Bart Hess, Jean-Charles De Castelbajac, Mareunrol's, Bas Kosters, Issey Miyake and Dai Fujiwara, Henrik Vibskov, Dr NOKI's NHS, Charlie Le Mindu, Hideki Seo, Alexis Themistocleous, Boris Hoppek, Craig Green, Bernhard Willhelm, Marcus Tomlinson, Bronwen Marshall, Rejina Pyo, Cassette Playa and Gary Card, Andrea Ayala Closa, George Turlas, Digitaria, Niek Pulles aka HEYNIEK, Piers Atkinson and Pyuupiru** amongst others. With official loans from the following museums and institutions, **ATOPOS cvc (Athens), The Miyake Issey Foundation (Tokyo), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam), Benaki Museum (Athens), Museum of the History of the Greek Costume (Lyceum Club of Greek Women, Athens), MoMu, ModeMuseum Province of Antwerp** and the **Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation 'V. Papantoniou' (Nafplion)**.

Together with the exhibition, **ATOPOS cvc** presents the fully illustrated publication **NOT A TOY. Fashioning Radical Characters**, edited by **Vassilis Zidianakis**, ATOPOS CVC, published by **Pictoplasma Publishing**, Berlin, 2011.

This extensive, colourful compilation about the growing influence of Character design in fashion and art highlights an international scene of established and upcoming designers and artists, some of them represented in the exhibition. It features original essays by leading scholars in the field: **Ginger Gregg Duggan & Judith Hoos Fox** founders of the international curatorial partnership **C<sup>2</sup>**, **Jose Teunissen**, professor at the ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, Arnhem, **Francesca Granata** curator and editor of *Fashion Projects: A Journal on Art, Fashion and Visual Culture*, **Valerie Steele**, chief curator of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York and **Ted Polhemus** anthropologist, curator and writer of the renowned book *Streetstyle: From Sidewalk to Catwalk*.

**ATOPOS cvc** is a non-profit Cultural Organisation, founded in 2003 in Athens by **Stamos Fafalios** and **Vassilis Zidianakis**. Its aim is to implement innovative projects of contemporary visual culture, with particular emphasis on the human figure and costume. It operates by researching projects of international interest, collaborating with designers and artists and realising new ideas in the form of exhibitions, publications, performances and events.

**ATOPOS cvc** has participated in various exhibitions and projects such as **Ptychoseis= Folds + Pleats. Drapery from Ancient Greek Dress to 21st Century Fashion, Benaki Museum, Athens**, during the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, **Bulls Eye SPECIAL 2008, 21\_21 DESIGN SIGHT, Tokyo** and **Atopic Bodies [THREE]: The Leiotrichous Tribe, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris**, in 2011. **ATOPOS CVC** became internationally acclaimed through the exhibition **RRRIPPI! Paper Fashion** which was first presented at the **Benaki Museum, Athens** in 2007 and has since traveled to the **Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxemburg, ModeMuseum, Antwerp** and **Museum Bellerive, Zurich**. Since 2010, **Barbican International Enterprises Ltd** has undertaken the promotion and tour of the exhibition **RRRIPPI! Paper Fashion**.

**ATOPOS**, a name inspired by the ancient Greek word *άτοπος* denoting the strange, the unwanted, the eccentric and the unclassifiable, is a meeting point for different visual disciplines.

Stamos SMS

ARRRGH! :@

Who has made you  
so angry?? :-) :-)

SMS Vassilis

Stamos SMS

You know who!!!

I am really sorry, but  
you know what? I think  
you have just came  
up with the title of the  
exhibition

SMS Vassilis

Stamos SMS

What?? ARRRGH!  
Ha! Ha! Ha!!

Yes!!!! ARRRGH!!!!!!  
ARRRGH!  
Monsters in Fashion!

:-) :-) ;:-)

SMS Vassilis

Stamos SMS

:-) :-) ;:-)

**What is a Monster?** For the ancient Greeks, except for the obvious meanings still in use today, the word 'monster' described everything strange that had to be given an explanation. Monsters were not just the repulsive, supernatural and frightening beasts, but also the astonishing, heavenly phenomena of the world and universe that surrounded them. Anything that could not be explained was a monster.

The expression *Σημεία και Τέρατα*, '**Something out of the Ordinary**', is still used today in modern Greek to explain the meaning of anything that provokes astonishment. It is also the meaning used for the title of the exhibition **ARRRGH!** that is the result of a lengthy study carried out by ATOPOS Contemporary Visual Culture (ATOPOS cvc), the first international research on the phenomenon of the bizarre, radical and monstrous Characters in fashion and costume. Upcoming and established fashion designers and artists, redefine the relationship between body and clothing, and the potential of the human figure by questioning our perception of beauty and ugliness, while mixing new visual and sartorial communication codes.

The cry of **ARRRGH!** continues ATOPOS' 'tradition' of using sounds for titles as we did for RRRIPPI!, our previous exhibition in 2007, about the use of paper in fashion.

**ARRRGH!** The cry of surprise, fear and worry and also of bottled up, inner concern, that urges to escape and express itself, but fails to do so. It is the anger we keep within ourselves for our own lives, for ourselves, for the Other. The 'Other' who is opposite us and with whom we rightly want to communicate, however strange, however different, however inexplicable, however much of a Monster they may seem to our own eyes.

Stamos Fafalios and Vassilis Zidianakis

∇TOPOS Contemporary Visual Culture

# ARRRGH! MONSTERS IN FASHION

## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS

JOSEFIN ARNELL | PIERS ATKINSON | ANDREA AYA-  
LA CLOSA | WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK | ANDREA  
CAMMAROSANO | CASSETTE PLAYA AND GARY  
CARD | CHRISTOPHE COPPENS | DIGITARIA | DR  
NOKI'S NHS | FREEKA TET | ELISE GETTLIFFE | PAUL  
GRAVES | CRAIG GREEN | BART HESS | BORIS HOPPEK  
| ARA JO | BAS KOSTERS | JEAN-PAUL LESPAGNARD  
| LUIS LOPEZ-SMITH | MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA  
| MAREUNROL'S | BRONWEN MARSHALL | ISABEL  
MASTACHE MARTINEZ | ALEX MATTSSON | CHAR-  
LIE LE MINDU | ISSEY MIYAKE AND DAI FUJIWARA |  
SHIN MURAYAMA | NÉ-NET/KAZUAKI TAKASHIMA |  
PICTOPLASMA | HELEN PRICE | REJINA PYO | NIEK  
PULLES AKA HEYNIK | PYUUPIRU | FRIDA RING-  
STRÖM | ROZALB DE MURA | AGATHA RUIZ DE LA  
PRADA | SHOBOSHOBBO | HIDEKI SEO | ALITHIA SPU-  
RI-ZAMPETTI | ALEXIS THEMISTOCLEOUS | MARCUS  
TOMLINSON | GEORGE TOURLAS | URBAN CAM-  
OUFLAGE | PIERRE-ANTOINE VETTORELLO | HEN-  
RIK VIBSKOV | BERNHARD WILLHELM | YOSHIKAZU  
YAMAGATA | VASSILIS ZIDIANAKIS



George Turlas

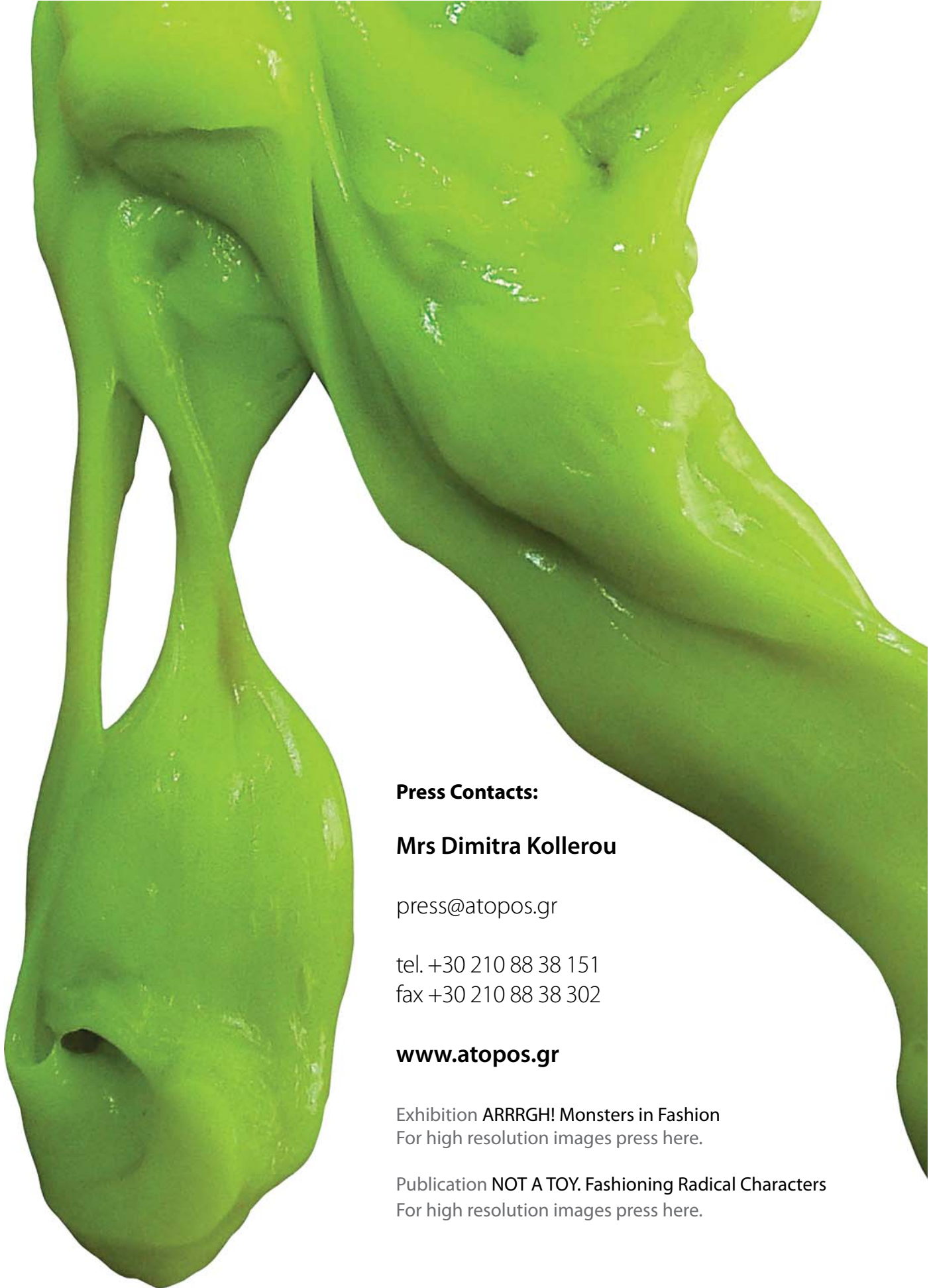
# PUBLICATION | **NOT A TOY. Fashioning Radical Characters**

## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS

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Exhibition **ARRRGH! Monsters in Fashion**  
For high resolution images press here.

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