

*Mythology of Our Current Condition of Life - Greece*

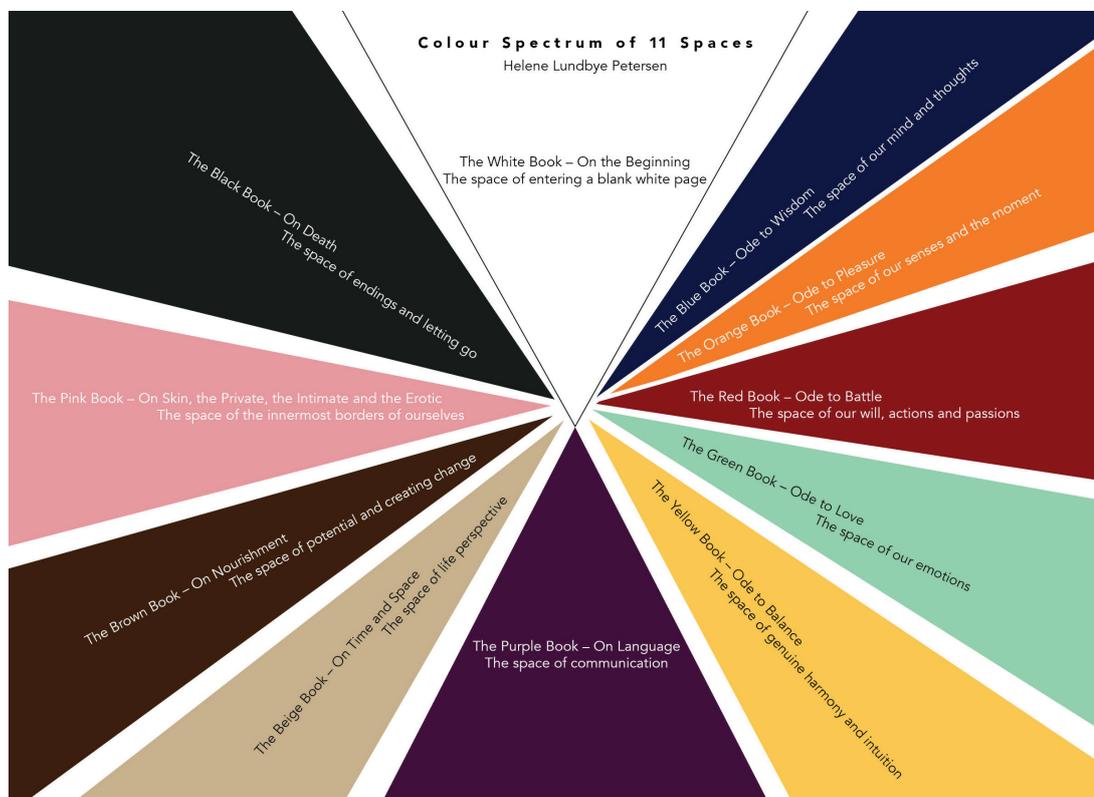
During the summer of 2018, I completed a two-month residency at The Danish Institute at Athens (DIA). This inspiring opportunity allowed me to immerse myself in the myriad histories of Greece, realise five new series of artworks, and present these works in a Performance Symposium on July 4th, 2018.

/ ABOUT MY ARTWORK

All my work as an Artist and Thinker stems from a wish to advance us as humankind. This ambition found its first expression in 11 handwritten books which I later titled *Colour Spectrum of 11 Spaces*.

Each book in the series is tied to a colour and dedicated to a fundamental aspect of existence. They are written poetically using myth and symbol to illuminate universal themes that I believe we all inherently know, even though we experience them differently. These themes remind us of all that unites us rather than fragmenting us, so that we may better navigate our relationships to ourselves, others, and our societies.

Together, these 11 books form a Colour Spectrum that offers a pragmatic way to become aware of the existential 'Spaces' that we all visit, need, or long for in our everyday lives. As such, I see these works as a new foundation for being human.



Helene Lundbye Petersen, *Colour Spectrum of 11 Spaces*, graphic overview.

## / MYTHOLOGY OF OUR CURRENT CONDITION OF LIFE - GREECE

Five books within *Colour Spectrum of 11 Spaces* stand apart as their own narrative which I refer to as *Mythology of Our Current Condition of Life*. *The Blue Book* follows A Goddess of Wisdom; *The Orange Book* follows A Goddess of Pleasure; *The Red Book* follows A Goddess of War; *The Green Book* follows A Goddess of Love; and *The Yellow Book* follows A Goddess of Balance. Each Goddess is confronted with the trials of globalisation and must come to understand that the world is changing, and that she must, too.

During my residency at The Danish Institute at Athens, I sought to bring this contemporary mythology into dialogue with iconic historic spaces and ancient narratives in order to further explore the Spaces that these five books represent. I expanded upon an artistic format in which I use the Colour Spectrum to analyse physical spaces that we navigate all the time. I choose one of my coloured books to draw awareness to existential facets that I seek to emphasize in a particular location. Through presence, I initiate a dialogue with the space as I perform the book in and for it. These 'Spatial Performances' are captured in a series of photographs that frame the space in a new light. I refer to these photographic works as 'Spatial Portraits'.

In Greece, I was inspired by both the iconic spaces of antiquity which are so engrained in our cultural heritage and, at the same time, pressing contemporary themes. I specifically focused on places in which classical mythological themes merged with physical locations. With the permission of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Hellenic Olympic Committee and the support of The Danish Institute at Athens, I performed the five books of *Mythology of Our Current Condition of Life* in the following five locations:

- *The Blue Book - Ode to Wisdom* was performed for the Temple of Hephaestus and Athena at the foot of the Acropolis.
- *The Orange Book - Ode to Pleasure* was performed for the Davelis Cave of Pan at Mount Penteli.
- *The Red Book - Ode to Battle* was performed for the Panathenaic Olympic Stadium in Athens.
- *The Green Book - Ode to Love* was performed for the coast below the Temple of Poseidon at Sounio.
- *The Yellow Book - Ode to Balance* was performed for the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.

My enactments of the Spaces of each book when encountering these important symbolic sites were captured in a series of Spatial Portraits taken by photographer Morten Eggert. It is part of a larger series of artworks in which I continue to mirror my books in the existing spaces of our world.



Photographs of the Performance Symposium. Photo Credit: Morten Eggert.

## / THE PERFORMANCE SYMPOSIUM

At the end of my residency, I presented these artworks in the Performance Symposium *Mythology of Our Current Condition of Life - Greece* in the Auditorium of The Danish Institute at Athens. I began by performing the same pages that I had performed in each of the ancient spaces, followed by a projection of the Spatial Portraits taken at that site.

In a tribute to the symposia of Greek antiquity, I invited acclaimed scholars to share their perspectives on the work in relation to archaeology, mythology, and classical art. These were Jenifer Niels, Ph.D., Director of the American School of Classical Studies; Nektarios Yioutsos, Ph.D., a Post-Doctoral Researcher at the University of Athens; and the Director of The Danish Institute at Athens Kristina Winther-Jacobsen, Ph.D. It offered a rich opportunity to expand on the concepts behind my artwork and further explore the notion of seeing familiar spaces in new ways.

## / OUR COLLABORATION

This residency in Greece played a crucial role in the development of my artistic process. I would like to thank The Danish Institute at Athens for their generous support of my work, and the entire staff for their kind and professional dedication. In particular, I would like to thank Kristina Winther-Jacobsen and Birgit Olsen for the extraordinary roles that they played in the realisation of *Mythology of Our Current Condition of Life - Greece*. It has truly been a pleasure to work with you.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Hellenic Olympic Committee for their collaboration and openness. Last but not least, I would like to thank the contributors to the Performance Symposium: Jenifer Niels and Nektarios Yioutsos for their insightful perspectives, as well the Embassy of Denmark, Greece for their generous support.

With gratitude for the space that Athens provided me,

Helene Lundbye Petersen  
Artist & Thinker



Helene Lundbye Petersen, *Space of Wisdom*  
*Temple of Hephaestus and Athena at the Foot of*  
*the Acropolis, 2018.* © Helene Lundbye Petersen /  
Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.



Helene Lundbye Petersen, *Space of Pleasure*  
*Davelis Cave of Pan at Mount Penteli, 2018.*  
© Helene Lundbye Petersen.



Helene Lundbye Petersen, *Space of Battle*  
*Panathenaic Olympic Stadium in Athens, 2018.*  
© Helene Lundbye Petersen / Hellenic  
Olympic Committee.



Helene Lundbye Petersen, *Space of Love* coast  
*below the Temple of Poseidon at Sounio, 2018.*  
© Helene Lundbye Petersen.



Helene Lundbye Petersen, *Space of Balance*  
*Temple of Apollo at Delphi, 2018.* © Helene  
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