

Arts

Remapping the 'hood

Contemporary art comes to downtown Athens and reshapes Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio

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WHEN mentioning the downtown neighbourhoods of Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio, a few things come to mind. For one, their diverse communities, where *Polski skleps, tavernas*, Arabic restaurants and even Chinese supermarkets exist side by side. Then there's the crumbling collection of neoclassical buildings that echo a more affluent time and are now occupied by the ladies of the Athenian night.

Moshekwa Langa
for the **Bernier-Ellades Gallery**

More often than not, these particular parts of Athens have been dismissed as ridden with all

things unsavoury.

Of course, when the ReMap contemporary art event was started in 2007, the area bore all the hallmarks of a potential breeding ground for artistic development and expression.

A biennial showcase held in parallel with the Athens Biennale, ReMap came to Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio with a clear mission: to offer a different conceptual and intellectual strand to the biennale by approaching the idea of creating an art fair that would engage with a particular area in the city. Shortly after ReMap KM1, Metaxourgeio experienced the opening of the Breeder Gallery, AMP Gallery, Rebecca Camhi Gallery and Loraini Alimantiri Gazonrouge Gallery.

Debatable

ReMap's presence and the increasing number of art galleries has played a key role in developing the two neighbourhoods, though whether this is a good thing for local residents is debatable.

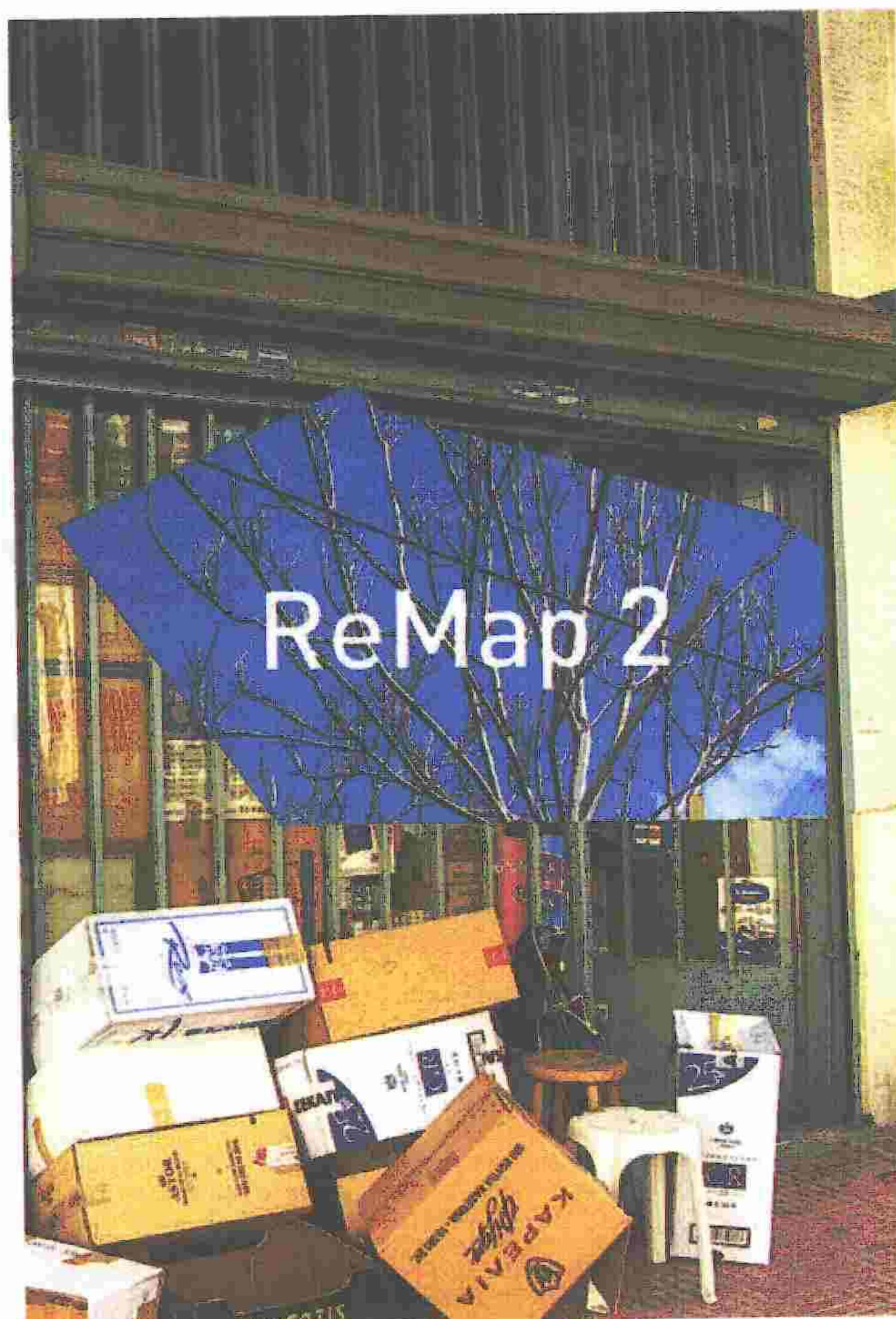
Indeed, to really witness the parallel worlds that exist here today, one only needs to visit galleries such as the AMP or Breeder Gallery and their surroundings to observe how art and the reality of life in the inner city come face to face.

Nevertheless, it is easy to see why the event chose to base itself here, with organisers describing Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio as one of the most central, historic, diverse, arresting, and yet unexplored parts of Athens.

Once referred to as a city within a city, ReMap aims to nurture the development of the area as an artistic hub, in part a reaction to the abandonment and downgrading of the historic part of Athens below Omonoia Square and along Pireos Street from the '60s onwards, making this an event unlike any other.

Where other art fairs take over stadiums, ReMap commandeers two neighbourhoods, combining the discovery of contemporary art with the exploration of - for many Athenians - uncharted territory.

This year, over 200 artists, independent curators, artist groups, architects and residents of the area, alongside almost 20 galleries from Greece and abroad, will be participating in some 40 exhibitions, projects and events that will attempt to "re-map" Metaxourgeio and



ReMap KM2: redefining public space and the city

Kerameikos.

Running concurrently with the second Athens Biennale, ReMap KM2 will also present the Open-Air Screening Room, a plot turned into a screening area to showcase contemporary video art, the Documentation Project by

Katerina Kana and the Guerrilla Playground Project, and also host the International Architectural Symposium, SiteSpecificStrategies.

✓ ReMap KM2 will run from June 16 to October 4. For more information, see www.remapkm.com

