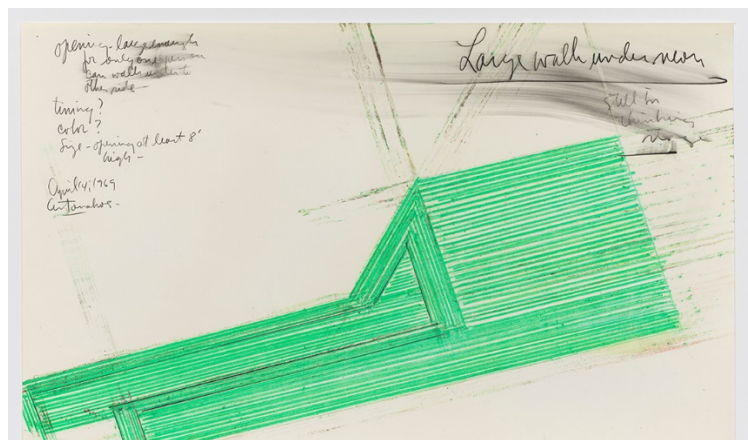


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephen Antonakos: Project Drawings, 1967-73

May 13 - June 25, 2021



Stephen Antonakos, *Large Walk Under Neon*, April 14, 1969, Graphite pencil, colored pencil and Krylon fixative on paper, 14 x 22 in. (BP#SA-8621)

Bookstein Projects is pleased to announce an exhibition of Stephen Antonakos's Project Drawings – the inventive series he made continuously from 1965 through 1973. This is the first show dedicated exclusively to this body of work, and it is the artist's fifth show with Bookstein Projects.

Speaking of drawings, Antonakos said, "The hand and the mind are one." The point, of course, is readiness. If he was awake, he had a pencil in his hand.

In the mid-1960s the artist was overflowing with ideas for neon work like the *Orange Vertical Floor Neon* (9' x 6' x 6'), the *Neon from Wall to Floor* (10' x 12' x 14'), and the *Red Neon from Wall to Wall* (2' x 2' x 30') – all exhibited in the Fischbach Gallery's largest white space.

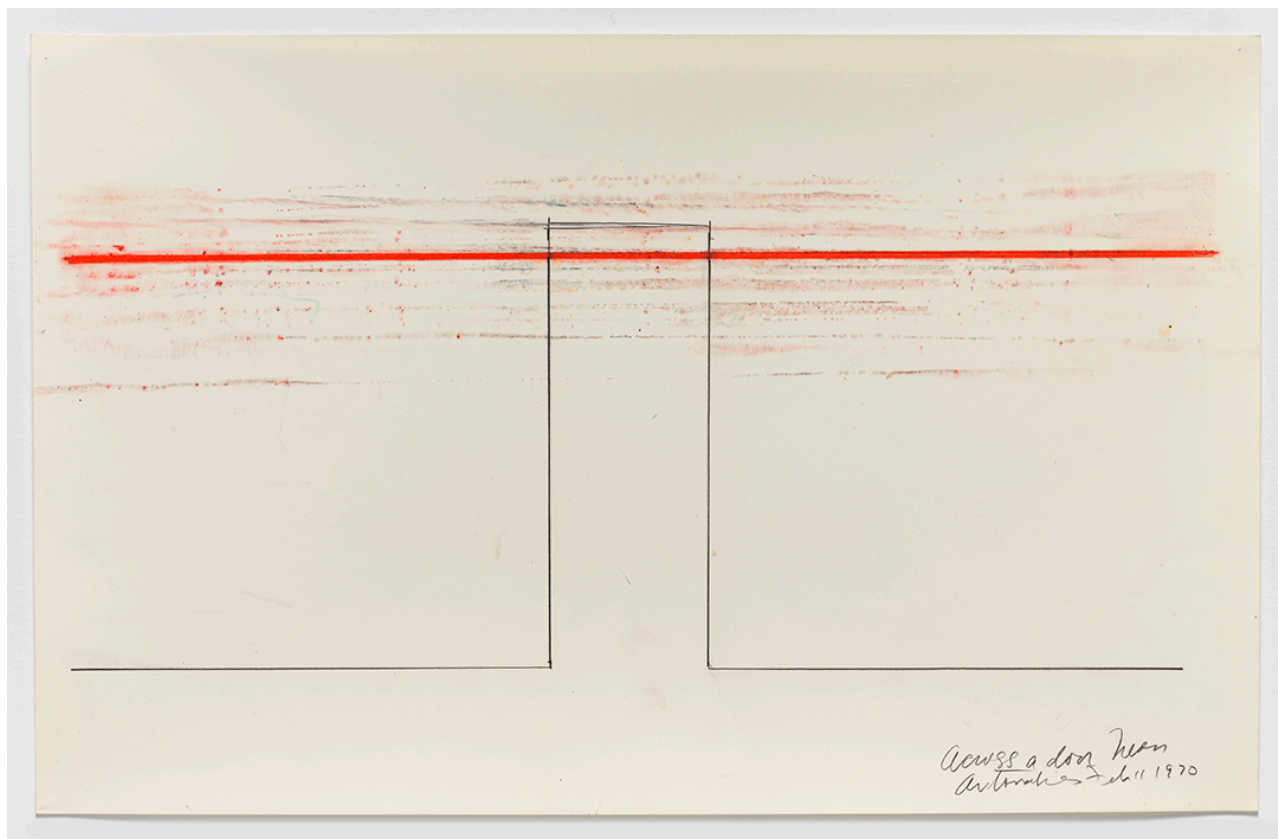
Since it was possible to realize only a few of his great rush of ideas in full-scale neon, Antonakos made exquisite intricate scale models – dozens of them. Even this was too slow a practice to capture the many urgent images flooding his mind. Only drawing rapidly in graphite and colored pencil would enable him to capture the great sequence of individual compositions that document the formal evolution of his neon work from 1965 to 1973.

At first, we see vivid images for neon geometries on bases, with impatient notes and questions written to the side of the image. These soon developed into proposals defined by their walls, inside and outside corners, and other architectural configurations. These become increasingly declarative, especially as to the importance of placement – the definitive relationship between the work and the site.

Sometimes many drawings were made in a single day or through a sequence of days. Often these motifs become increasingly spare, sheet after sheet. At other times, there was just a single manifestation of a formal idea. The series continued with the same energy and invention for 8 ½ years. As Antonakos said, "Only drawing can keep up with your mind."

Assembled in curated grids and sequences, and installed in specific relations to the gallery's architecture, these proposals speak articulately – both individually and within their visual contexts – of Antonakos's concept of neon geometries as "real things in real spaces."

The exhibition offers approximately 50 Project Drawings and one model for a red and yellow *Neon Wall* from c. 1967.



Stephen Antonakos, *Across a Door Neon*, February 11, 1970, Graphite pencil, colored pencil and Krylon fixative on paper, 14 x 22 in. (BP#SA-8646)

Stephen Antonakos was born in the small Greek village of Agios Nikolaos and moved to New York with his family in 1930. In the late 1940s, after returning from the US Army, he established his first studio in New York's garment district, and from the early 1960s he worked in studios in SoHo.

Since 1958, Antonakos's work has been seen in hundreds of solo and group shows in New York, around the USA, Europe, and Japan. For almost every exhibition, he created new work. *Stephen Antonakos: A Retrospective*, curated by Katerina Koskina and organized by the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation, was presented December 2007- March 2008 at the Benaki Museum, Athens. Its major catalogue has essays by five art historians. In slightly smaller form, this *Retrospective*, curated by Robert S. Mattison, was seen in 2008 at the Allentown Art Museum, Allentown PA. Irving Sandler's comprehensive monograph *Antonakos* was published in 1999. Large-scale neon installations were exhibited at documenta 6, 1977; the Sao Paulo Bienale, 1987; Artec '89, Nagoya, Japan, 1989; the XLVII Venice Biennale, 1997; the Aeschyleia Festival in Elefsina, 2011; documenta 14, 2017; several Whitney Biennials starting in 1966; and in such institutions as the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; the Loeb Student Center, NYU, NYC, 1967; the Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1968; the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974; the San Francisco Museum of Art, 1974; the Fort Worth Art Museum, 1974; the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 1974; the Lowe Art Museum, Miami, 1980; the Washington Project for the Arts, Wash. DC, 1981; Creative Time, NYC, 1981; the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1982; the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, 1983; the La Jolla MCA, 1984; the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis U., Waltham, MA, 1986 and 2000; Artec89, Nagoya, Japan; the National Gallery – Alexandros Soutzos Museum, Athens, 1992; Harvard's Carpenter Center, 1992-93; the Fortress of St. George, Rhodes, 1993; P.S.1 Center for Contemporary Art, 1999; the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA, 1999; the Neuberger Museum, SUNY, Purchase, NY, 2000 and 2018; the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2001; Lafayette College, Easton, PA, 2004; the Kydoniefs Foundation, Andros, Greece, 2004; the Chapel of St. George, Mystras, Greece, 2004; the

Alexander S. Onassis Foundation, Athens, 2011; the Grand Palais, Paris, 2013; Industry City, Brooklyn, 2013; and the Hainan Biennale, Hainan, China, 2021.

Major solo museum shows include *Collages and Assemblages*, Miami MoMa, Miami, FL, 1964; *Pillows*, Contemp. Art Mus., Houston, TX, 1971; *Neons*, Allen Priebe Art Gallery, Wisconsin State Univ., Oshkosh, WI, 1971; California Show, Fresno State College Art Gallery, Fresno, CA, 1972, *Ten Outdoor Neons*, Fort Worth Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, 1974; *Recent Drawings and Sculpture*, Albright Knox Art Gall., Buffalo, NY, 1974; *Three Neon Walls*, Lowe Art Museum, Miami, FL, 1980; *Neons for Nevers*, Maison de Culture de Nevers, Never, France, 1983; *The Room*, the Art Institute of Boston, Boston, MA, 1996; *Inner Light*, Smith College MoA, Northampton, MA, 1997; *Meditation Room*, Samuel P. Harn MoA, Gainesville, FL, 1997; *Public Work and Praise*, State MoCA, Thessaloniki, 2000; *Time Boxes 2000*, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis Univ., Waltham, MA, 2000; *Proscenium*, the Neuberger Museum, SUNY, Purchase, 2000 and 2018; *Journey*, Macedonian MoMA, Thessaloniki, 2003; *Silent Chapel*, Onassis Cultural Center, NYC, 2003–4; S.A.: *Three Spaces/Four Directions*, Lafayette College, Easton, PA, 2004; *Remembrance, Chapel of St. George*, Mystras, Greece, 2004; *Five Decades of Drawing*, Graduate Center, CUNY, NYC, 2005; *The Room Chapel*, Allentown MoA, Allentown, PA, 2018–2020; and *Light: S.A. and the Russian Avant-Garde*, MOMus Museum Alex Mylona, Athens, 2020.

The over fifty Public Works include *Red Neon Circle Fragments on a Blue Wall*, 1978, Dayton, OH; *Incomplete Circles and Squares, Red Neon*, Hampshire College, Amherst, Ma, 1978; *Incomplete Red Neon Square on Exterior Corner (for Chris D'Arcangelo)* Univ. of Mass., Amherst, MA, 1979; *Four Walls for the Hartsfield Int'l. Airport*, Atlanta, GA, 1980; *Neon for 42nd Street*, NYC, 1981; *Neon for the Bagley Wright Theater*, Seattle, WA, 1983; *Neons for the Tacoma Dome*, Tacoma, WA, 1984; *Neon for the La Jolla MCA*, La Jolla, CA, 1984; *Neon for the 14th District Police Station*, Chicago, IL, 1986; *Neons for Exchange Place*, Jersey City, NJ, 1989; *Neon for the 59th Street Marine Transfer Station*, NYC, 1990; *Neons for Pershing Square*, Los Angeles, CA, 1991; *Neons for the Stadtparkasse*, Cologne, 1993; *Neons for Tachikawa*, Japan, 1994; *Blue Room*, Public Library, San Antonio, TX, 1995; *Neon for Granpark*, Tokyo, Japan, 1996; *Neon Lintel*, Neuberger MoA, SUNY, Purchase, NY; *Neons for Reading Power Plant*, Tel Aviv, 1998–99; *Procession*, Ambelokipi Metro, Athens, 2000; *Tria*, Macedonian MCA, Thessaloniki, 2002; *Six Incomplete Circles*, Bari, Italy, 2004; *Two Entrances*, Athena Atrium, Odessa, 2004; *Orrizonte, Airport of Puglia*, Bari, 2005; *Welcome*, Univ of Dijon, France, 2006; and *Recurrence*, Hellenic American Union, Athens; 2007.

His work is in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Morgan Library and Museum; the New York University Art Collection; The National Gallery of Art; the Menil Collection Houston, TX; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Dallas Museum of Art; The Smith College Museum of Art; the Los Angeles County MoA; The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum, Hartford, CT; the Parrish MoA, Southampton, NY; the National MCA, Athens; the State MCA, Thessaloniki; the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens; The Alpha Bank Collection, Athens; the Alexander S. Onassis Collection, Athens; and the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris.

He received the Prize for Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2009) and Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY (2000), the National Academy Museum (2011) and the Greek America Foundation (2011).

Stephen Antonakos: Project Drawings, 1967-73 will be on view from May 13 - June 25, 2021. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. For additional information and/or visual materials, please contact the gallery at (212) 750-0949 or by email at info@booksteinprojects.com.