Biennale of Contemporary Keramics Rhodes 2026

Where the Day Starts

Duration: 6 June - 31 October 2026

Location: Medieval City of Rhodes, Greece



Where the Day Starts, Biennale of Contemporary Keramics 2026. Installation view of Etel Adnan, Our Lady of the Castle. © Constantinos Caravatellis

Biennale of Contemporary Keramics 2026 opens in Rhodes

The Medieval City becomes an international platform for contemporary ceramic art, bringing together 42 artists from 18 countries through October 31, 2026.

RHODES / GREECE, June 2026 – The **Biennale of Contemporary Keramics (BCK) 2026** officially opened on Friday, June 5, in the Medieval City of Rhodes, welcoming visitors, artists, curators, and distinguished guests from Greece and abroad. Held at the Archaeological Museum of Rhodes, the opening ceremony marked the launch of ***Where the Day Starts***, a four-month celebration of contemporary ceramic art that transforms the UNESCO World Heritage site into an international platform for artistic dialogue and exchange.

Running from **June 6 to October 31, 2026**, the second edition of the **Biennale of Contemporary Keramics (BCK)** invites visitors on a unique journey through contemporary ceramic art and history within the Medieval City of Rhodes. Curated by **Stamatia Dimitrakopoulos (GR), Loukia Thomopoulou (GR), and Anissa Touati (FR)**, the Central Exhibition spans five landmark venues, transforming the historic city into a cohesive and immersive exhibition landscape. The exhibition unfolds across the **Archaeological Museum of Rhodes**, the **Armoury de Milly**, the **Decorative Arts Collection of Rhodes**, **Our Lady of the Castle,** and **Kleovoulou Square** at the **Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes,** creating a dynamic dialogue between contemporary ceramic practices and the city's layered cultural heritage.



Where the Day Starts, Biennale of Contemporary Keramics 2026. Installation view © Constantinos Caravatellis.

BCK 2026 brings together **42 emerging and established artists from 18 countries**, presenting a rich constellation of works and artistic perspectives that explore themes of memory, identity, migration, and transformation through the medium of ceramics. Taking Rhodes as its point of departure — situated at the easternmost edge of Greece, where, according to ancient Greek mythology, “the day begins”— the exhibition draws inspiration from the island’s light, geography, and layered histories. The Sun serves as the conceptual anchor of this year’s edition, illuminating the diverse expressions of contemporary ceramic practice while positioning Rhodes as a site where history, tradition, and contemporary creativity converge.

The second **Biennale of Contemporary Keramics** is organized by **Big Blue Dot Biennale of Contemporary Keramics NPO**, co-organized by **Region of South Aegean** and the **Municipality of Rhodes**, with the support of the **Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese**, and under the auspices of the **Ministry of Culture**, the **Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports**, the **Greek National Tourism Organization**, the **Embassy of France in Greece**, the **Embassy of Italy in Greece**, and the **University of the Aegean**.



Where the Day Starts, Biennale of Contemporary Keramics 2026. Installation view © Constantinos Caravatellis.

The official opening ceremony, held on **Friday, June 5**, brought together representatives of the Greek Government and local authorities, cultural institutions, members of the artistic community, collectors, sponsors, and partner organizations, alongside residents, visitors, and members of the Greek and international press. Their presence underscored the growing significance and international reach of the Biennale.



Στιγμιότυπο από τους καλεσμένους στην τελετή εγκαινίων της Biennale of Contemporary Keramics στο Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο Ρόδου.

Official remarks were delivered by Iason Fotilas, Deputy Minister of Culture and Representative of the Greek Government; Christos Michalakis, Deputy Regional Governor for Culture of the South Aegean Region; Efstathios Manousakis, Deputy Mayor for Culture of Municipality of Rhodes; Eleni Farmakidou**,** Acting Head of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese; and Loukia Thomopoulou, Artistic Director and Curator of BCK. Messages from Sofia Zacharaki, Minister of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, and Andreas Fiorentinos, Secretary General of the Greek National Tourism Organization, were also read during the ceremony.

Statements from the Opening Ceremony

Deputy Minister of Culture Iason Fotilas, representing Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Minister of Culture Lina Mendoni, referred to humanity's enduring relationship with clay, noting that "ceramics was not merely a technique of survival. It became the first language of creation." He described BCK as "an event of substance and vision," emphasizing that it is not simply an exhibition, but a living dialogue among the cultures of the Mediterranean.

In her remarks, **Minister of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, Sofia Zacharaki** highlighted that the participation of 42 artists from 18 countries confirms the Biennale's international character and its contribution to strengthening intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean. She also emphasized the educational dimension of BCK 2026, developed in collaboration with the University of the Aegean and including educational programs, academic talks, and lectures.

Secretary General of the Greek National Tourism Organization, Andreas Fiorentinos underlined that initiatives such as the Biennale of Contemporary Keramics contribute significantly to promoting Greece internationally as a contemporary cultural destination that respects its heritage while embracing contemporary artistic creation.

Deputy Regional Governor for Culture of the South Aegean Region, Christos Michalakis, representing Regional Governor George Hatzimarkos, welcomed the Biennale to Rhodes, conveying the Region's support for an institution that strengthens the extroversion of the South Aegean islands and highlights culture as a field of creativity, collaboration, and international visibility.

Deputy Mayor for Culture Efstathios Manousakis, representing the Municipality of Rhodes and Mayor Alexandros Koliadis, noted that for the people of Rhodes, ceramics is a living art deeply rooted in the island's history and identity. He described the Biennale as a space for dialogue, exchange of ideas, and cultural coexistence, bringing together creators and audiences through the language of art.

Acting Head of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese, Eleni Farmakidou, emphasized the significance of hosting BCK within the Medieval City of Rhodes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, noting that the Biennale fosters a productive dialogue between the region's monuments and collections and contemporary artistic perspectives. She added that the coexistence of contemporary ceramics with archaeological heritage demonstrates a meaningful bridge between past and present.

Artistic Director and Curator of the Biennale of Contemporary Keramics, Loukia Thomopoulou thanked the artists, institutional partners, collaborators, sponsors, and the organizing team, referring to Rhodes as a place that welcomed the Biennale with generosity, trust, and affection. She noted that "Rhodes is a place where past and present coexist naturally, and expressed the desire for the Biennale to return that generosity through its presence and work".

The second part of the ceremony featured the presentation of the **BCK 2026 Awards**, selected by the international jury. Curators **Stamatia Dimitrakopoulos** and **Anissa Touati** presented the Biennale's First Prize, accompanied by a €5,000 award, to artist **Tülay Kulbay**. Two Honorary Mentions, each accompanied by a €1,000 prize, were awarded to artists **Elysia Athanatos** and **Lynn Kodeih**. In addition, two honorary awards recognizing lifetime contribution to ceramic art were presented to **Kostas Neofytou** of Rhodes and **Menandros Papadopoulos** of Athens.



Οι επιμελήτριες Σταματία Δημητακοπούλου, Λουκία Θωμοπούλου, Anissa Touati με τις νικήτριες της απονομής των βραβείων της ΒΚΚ 2026, Tülay Kulbay, Ελύσια Αθάνατου και Lynn Kodeih.

Kostas Neofytou was honored as one of the most significant figures in Rhodian ceramics for his longstanding contribution to the art form, his role in preserving the cultural identity of Rhodes, and the example he sets for younger generations of creators. Menandros Papadopoulos was recognized for his profound knowledge of ceramics, his distinguished artistic and teaching career, and his generous contribution to shaping generations of ceramic artists in Greece.

Opening Weekend Parallel Events

As part of the opening weekend program, two special performances took place: ***The Falling Sky among the Linden Trees*** by Mohamet Amer Meziane at Lady of the Castle, and ***Requiem to Throwing Water & Bead Rolling*** by Zoë Paul at the Auberge de France. Visitors also had the opportunity to participate in curator-led tours of all five exhibition venues and a guided walk through the Medieval City of Rhodes, organized in collaboration with the Association of Licensed Tourist Guides of Rhodes.

At the Auberge de France, two scholarly talks explored different aspects of the Mediterranean's ceramic heritage. The first, titled **"Rhodian Ceramics: Creators, Collectors and Narratives,"** was presented by **Mina Moraitou**, Curator of the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art, and **Dr George Manginis**, Academic Director of the Benaki Museum. The second, **"A Sea of Ceramics: Production, Distribution and Use of Ceramics in the Aegean in Modern Times,"** was delivered by **Nikos Liaros**, archaeologist, ceramic artist, and Vice President of the Board of the Center for the Study of Modern Pottery.



Ξενάγηση από τον καλλιτέχνη Robert Brambora – BCK 2026.

The **Biennale of Contemporary Keramics 2026** will remain on view through **October 31, 2026**. Alongside the Central Exhibition, the Biennale features an extensive public program including artist residencies, performances, academic lectures and presentations, screenings, workshops, educational programs for students and educators, guided tours, and participatory activities for the general public, all with free admission.

Participating Artists

Etel Adnan (LB), Myrsini Alexandridi (GR), Darien Arikoski-Johnson (US), Elysia Athanatos (CY), Leonardo Bartolini (IT), Elina Belou (FR), Emmanouil Bonis (GR), Robert Brambora (DE), Jorge Cabieses-Valdes (CL), Meriem Chabani - Gorbon Ceramics (DZ), Chous Ceramics (GR), Katya Desnenko (UA), Mauro Fariñas (ES), Malek Gnaoui (TN), Kyriaki Goni (GR), Luke Edward Hall (GB), Dionysis Kavallieratos (GR), Lynn Kodeih (LB), Tülay Kulbay (SE), Vasiliki Kyriaki (GR), Anne Kwasner (AU), Lucile Littot (FR), Lilian Lykiardopoulou (GR), Atalanti Martinou (GR), Fatima Mohisen (PS), Asunción Molinos Gordo (ES), Kostas Neofytou (GR), Ben Wolf Noam (US), Menandros Papadopoulos (GR), Zoë Paul (GB), GianMarco Porru (IT), Myrsini Roumelioti (GR), David Scanavino (US), Terpsichori Savvala (GR), Ayla Tavares (BR), Natalia Triantafylli (GR), Alban Turquois (FR), Lucille Uhlrich (FR), Elif Uras (TR), Giorgos Vavatsis (GR), Vuslat (TR) and Zoe Williams (FR).



Οι καλλιτέχνες και οι επιμελήτριες της Biennale of Contemporary Keramics 2026, *Where The Day Starts*, στο Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο Ρόδου.

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