



Libro d'**ORO**



*"As a multicultural artist, I am driven by my desire to locate myself. I attempt to trace the boundaries - physical, cultural, spiritual - of my persona in order to determine where I begin, where I end and where I belong.*

*Born in Greece, raised in France and now living in Egypt, my identity is in constant dialogue between the North and the South, the East and the West. My role as an artist is to build connections - between here and there, now and then, one and another - in the search for the smallest common denominators that unify us thru time and space within the human experience."*

**Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos**

# LIBRO D'ORO

The Italian term «Libro d'Oro» (Golden Book) is interpreted literally in this installation, envisioning an oversized Guest Book within the historic Italian jail that houses Luciano Benetton's foundation, Gallerie delle Prigioni.

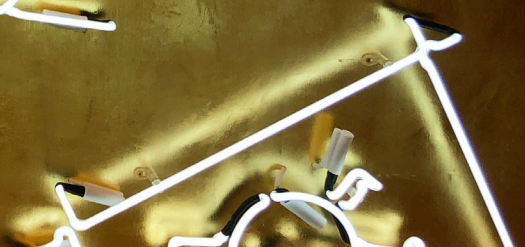
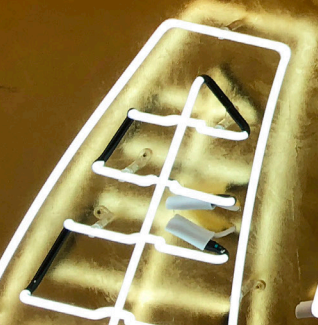
The artist drew inspiration from actual messages and symbols engraved on the jail cell walls by prisoners over more than two centuries. She covered one of these cells entirely with gold leaf and placed white neon signs throughout the space in the shape of these graffiti. This environment, reminiscent of religious Byzantine icons or Italian Renaissance palazzos, celebrates and elevates the prisoners' marks instead of concealing them.

Beyond its opulent and mystical dimensions, «Libro d'oro» encourages viewers to reflect on the role of prisons and the status of prisoners. The beauty of the messages starkly contrasts with perceptions of their creators, inviting contemplation on human identity loss. These themes resonate with Jannis Kounellis' seminal work «Tragedia civile» (1975), enriching the installation's exploration of societal constructs and personal expression in carceral settings.



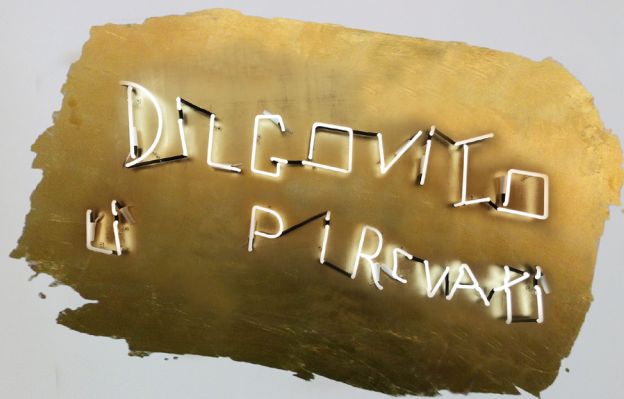
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# ABOUT THE ARTIST

## Esmeralda Kosmatopoulos (Greece 1981)

Her work was exhibited in galleries and institutions internationally including Salzburg Contemporain (Austria), Künstlerhaus Wien (Austria), Kunsthal Aarhus (Aarhus, Denmark), Times Art Museum (China), Sainsbury Centre (UK), Somerset House (UK), Palazzo delle Arti Napoli (Italy), Gallerie delle Prigioni (Italy), Musée Zadkine (France), AMA | Art Museum of the Americas (DC, USA), French Institute of Athens (Greece), CICA Museum (Korea) among others.

She had numerous prizes and bourses among whom since 2016 : residencies at Townhouse (Cairo, Egypt), Le18 (Marrakech, Morocco), KAAF Institute (Teheran, Iran), BAR (Beirut, Lebanon),

MASS MOCA (North Adams, USA), Chinatown Soup (New York, USA); bourses from the European Cultural Foundation, the Contemporary art foundation (New York, USA), Harvestworks (New York, USA), the Jerome foundation (New York, USA).

Kosmatopoulos also worked alongside socially charged entities such as the Organization of American States (Washington DC, USA), the Kayani foundation (Beirut, Lebanon), UNICEF Blue Dot (Athens, Greece), One Happy Family (Lesbos, Greece) and the Museum Louis Braille (France) to create large-scale installations that raise awareness on social issues.



**THANK YOU**