

# Nikos Podias

## Traces

12 June – 30 September, 2026

### Archaeological Museum of Poros

The Archaeological Museum of Poros, in collaboration with CITRONNE Gallery, presents the solo exhibition 'Traces' by Nikos Podias. The exhibition unfolds within the Museum's permanent collection, establishing a dialogue between contemporary art and archaeological artifacts, between the fragile trace and the preserved relic.

'Traces' is part of the ongoing collaboration between CITRONNE Gallery and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Piraeus and Islands, initiated in 2013, which seeks to integrate contemporary art into archaeological and historical sites. Through this synergy, contemporary artistic practice is not merely placed alongside Antiquity, but rather suggests new ways of observing, reading, and interpreting cultural heritage.

Nikos Podias works with everyday materials such as paper, tea bags, and cigarette foil, which he collects and processes. Familiar, ordinary matter is transformed into garments, imprints, and surfaces of memory. The resulting works appear to emerge from a personal ritual, in which material is charged with prior use, traces of touch, and the passage of time.

"Nikos Podias collects and reshapes humble materials, transforming them into precious, almost devotional objects", notes Tatiana Spinari-Pollali, art historian and director of CITRONNE Gallery. This observation encapsulates the core of the artist's visual language: an

act of transformation from the everyday to the ritual, from the fragile to the precious, from the ephemeral to a bearer of memory.

At the Archaeological Museum of Poros, Podias's light compositions are set against the longevity of marble, the hardness of metal, and the earthy density of clay. The archaeological exhibits carry the weight of History, while Podias' works, though belonging to the present, seem to contain an invisible past. Overall, the exhibition proposes a reciprocal journey: for the ancient artifacts, antiquity emerges as something new, as present; for the contemporary works, the new arises through secret codes, like an intangible experience, like a distant time.

The title 'Traces' serves as a key to reading the exhibition. The works do not narrate in a linear or explanatory manner; rather, they suggest significations. They allude to scripts, weavings, folds, imprints, remnants, and enigmatic codes. They resemble fragments of an "other" archaeology, like an excavation within the vulnerable present. A special place in the exhibition is given to forms that evoke elements of attire and protection: armor, breastplates, woven surfaces, and objects made of gold cigarette foil. These works are juxtaposed with archaeological exhibits associated with heroic and mythical tradition—namely, the weapons and gold objects from the Mycenaean tholos tombs of Magoula in Galatas.

According to Maria Giannopoulou, archaeologist and head of the Archaeological Museum of Poros, "in contrast to the powerful heroic world of antiquity, Podias's works render fragmentary, permeable, vulnerable forms and materials that reflect the contemporary condition of uncertainty". This remark highlights the exhibition's central dialogue: on one side, the heroic, mythical, and funerary world of Antiquity; on the other, the vulnerable, unstable, and fragmented experience of contemporary humanity. Unlike the strength, stability, and authority often attributed to ancient heroes, Podias's contemporary "armors" do not promise literal protection. They are thin, fragile, almost transparent. They function more as symbolic amulets, as apotropaic gestures, as attempts at defense against an unstable and uncertain world. They offer not the certainty of protection, but a vulnerable illusion of it.

In this way, the exhibition shifts the dialogue with Antiquity beyond references to beauty, order, or monumentality. Archaeology is approached as an open field of interpretation rather than an

immutable rule. Ancient objects function as evidence of a past civilization, but also as an active presence that raises questions about identity, heritage, memory, and historical narrative. Podias listens closely to Antiquity and enters into dialogue with ancient finds. He reflects on how they survive through time, how they are preserved, how they are interpreted, and how they are activated. His works are objects that have already undergone a process of wear and preservation, like archaeological artifacts, yet they originate from a personal, internal museum.

Light plays a decisive role in this process. It penetrates the thin surfaces, activates textures, and creates reflections and shadows. The works change depending on the time of day and the viewer's position. Transparency and lightness harmonize with the display cases, fragments, and ancient objects, creating subtle connections between the visible and the latent.

'Traces' exhibition raises a broader question about our relationship with History. The past is not presented as complete and static, but as a fragmentary, silent return. Just as archaeological finds require reconstruction to acquire meaning, Podias's works are composed of fragments of matter and experience. In both cases, meaning is not given; it emerges through observation, association, and memory.

Within the Archaeological Museum of Poros, Nikos Podias's works function in a subdued and contemplative manner. They create small tensions and delicate bridges between different temporalities and ultimately invite viewers to recognize the value of the trace—the human need to leave a mark.

Nikos Podias is represented by CITRONNE Gallery. 'Traces' is his second solo exhibition in collaboration with the gallery. In November 2025, he presented the exhibition 'Safe Area' at CITRONNE Gallery – Athens.