



Vital Space

***NATURE | HUMANITY***  
THE VITAL SPACE CORE PROJECT



A project in progress since 2009  
by **Danae Stratou**

## AIMS & APPROACH

Through the **Vital Space** art platform we aim at raising public awareness on issues related to the environment and urbanisation by means of artistic interventions both outdoors and indoors. In a time of major confluence of economic and environmental crises, contemporary art, especially when it takes place in public spaces and is designed to reach and address a wider audience, can play a significant role in using the artist's perspective for dissolving the polarization which characterises the current dialogue on our relationship with nature and with one another. It can activate a deeper awareness about the most pressing issues of our time and help discern how art can be used to reach and influence a wider audience across the world.



Video stills from the footage of VS Humanity – Istanbul, 2010

## THE V.S. NATURE | HUMANITY PROJECT

**V.S. Nature | Humanity**, in its totality raises questions regarding humanity's current path and, in particular, the ways in which the great economic meltdown of our times combines with the looming environmental crisis to procure the future's challenges. *Nature | Humanity* is a video project to be realised in two parts.

**Part One** addresses Nature while **Part Two** concerns Humanity. Both consist of two juxtaposed projections thus forming two autonomous yet complementary video installations.



Vital Space Nature | Humanity, Installation Views, Renderings

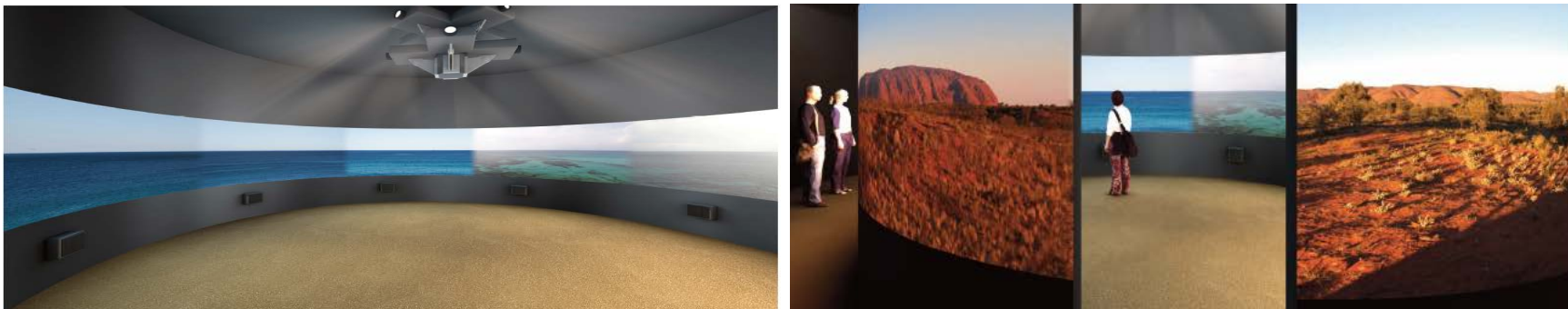
## V.S. NATURE | AUSTRALIA

**V.S. Nature** sets humanity's parameters; it projects images of land and sea depicting our natural limits as a species inhabiting a fragile planet; The filming for Vital Space - Nature will take place in **Australia**, the oldest and less populated Continent on the planet. A place synonymous with the notion of migration. In this film the presence of humanity is suggested by its absence.



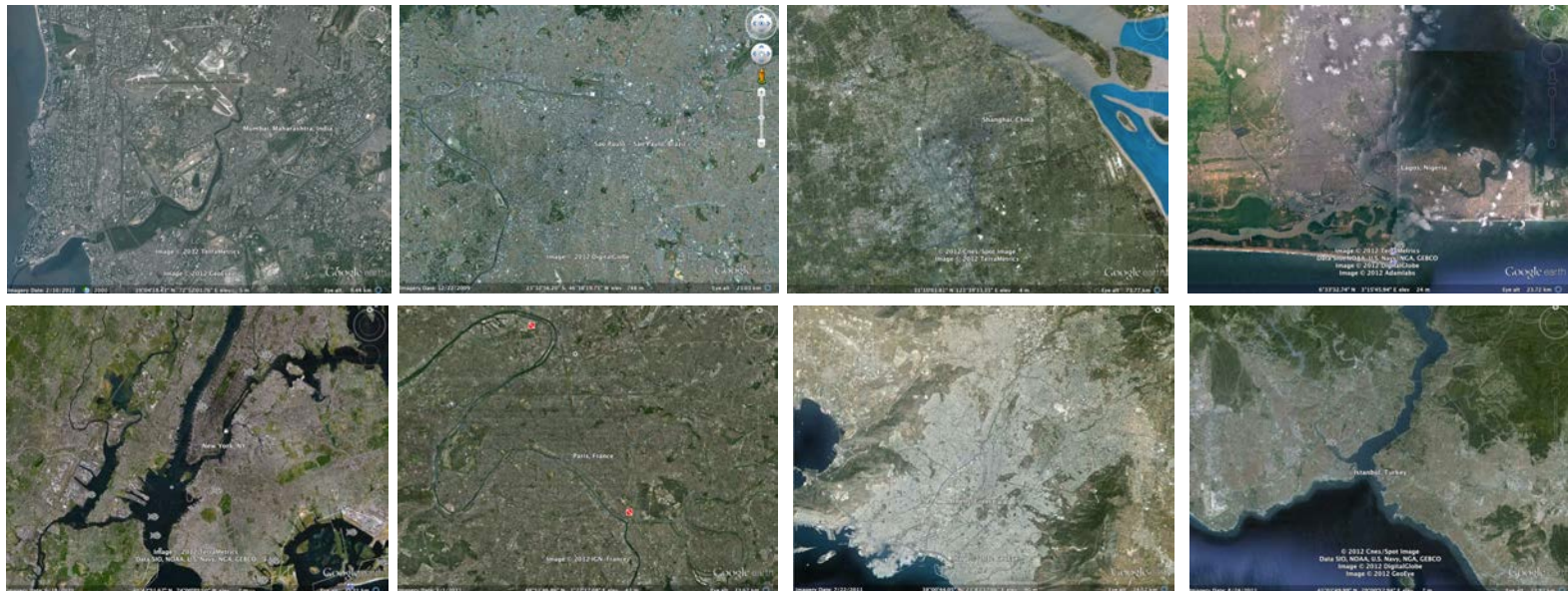
Bellow: V.S Nature, Installation details, Renderings

Above photos: Danae Stratou



## V.S. HUMANITY | MEGACITIES

**V.S. Humanity** turns to humanity itself and places in sharp focus the masses that flow into **Megacities** which cannot, and will not, embrace them. Yet it does all this without hiding the intense beauty of the human condition, even under the most trying of conditions thrown up by the modern urban jungles. The cities included in Vital Space – Humanity are cities such as: **Istanbul, Athens, Paris, Cairo, Seoul, Los Angeles, New York, Lagos, Mumbai, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Shanghai and others.**



Photos: Google Earth

The project is a response to the challenges posed by **Globalisation** and its discontents; by the plight of the environment; by the ebb and flow of massive migration movements.

The project focuses on the contrast between, on the one hand, vast, empty, fragile, uninhabited spaces and, on the other, overpopulated, highly contested, urban environments.

Photos/Video stills: Danae Stratou



Istanbul



Seoul



Athens

A momentous urban expansion is spawning the planet's largest cities, as wave upon wave of migrants abandon the countryside and the periphery. Meanwhile, the surrounding economic wastelands are emptied of people and left in a state of ecological fragility.

## **ISTANBUL**

*The 1<sup>st</sup> part of the  
V.S. Humanity Project*



Realised in the Context of:  
*ISTANBUL – Cultural Capital of Europe 2010*

In the context of the Vital Space organisation's goals, the project **V.S. Humanity** is presented gradually as it is being realised. A first version of the project was presented in **Istanbul** in 10 & 11 / 2010 at Tophane. This video installation has been Danae Stratou's participation in the project **Lives and Works in Istanbul**, part of the central program of the **Istanbul – Cultural Capital of Europe 2010** events. The artist was invited to participate by the Visual Arts Director, Beral Madra. Other artists who participated in the project are:

Victor Burgin, Sophie Calle, Antoni Muntadas, Peter Kögler and Remo Salvadori. The shooting in Istanbul took place in April & May 2010, during Danae Stratou's and her collaborators' stay in the city.

## CONCEPT

**Vital Space – Istanbul** is a video project comprising two films from the city of Istanbul. One film offers a **bird eye's view** of different paths connecting order and disorder, centre and suburb, privilege and dispossession, formal and informal.



Video stills from the footage of VS Humanity – Istanbul, 2010

The second film captures from **ground level** a sea of people coming toward the camera in sequences filmed in different city locations (e.g. bus station, ferry boat terminal, busy streets).



Video stills from the footage of VS Humanity – Istanbul, 2010

Part of the footage filmed for **V.S. Istanbul** will eventually become integrated within the **wider project V.S. Humanity**. Additional cities to be included in the broader project are Megacities such as: Athens, Paris, Shanghai, New York, Lagos, Mumbai and Sao Paulo.

## INSTALLATION

**V.S. Istanbul** was projected on a **large freestanding wall** (7.00mx4.00m). Both projections covered the entire surface of the wall on each side.



Video installation, V.S. Humanity. Tophane, Istanbul, 2010

On the one side of the wall the birds' eye view film was projected. On the other side, the ground level film was projected.



Video installation, V.S. Humanity. Tophane, Istanbul, 2010

The former offers the viewer a constant outward movement, as the camera attached to the front of the helicopter relates a constant flow of images taking the viewer seamlessly across the city from the centre outwards. In contrast the ground level film offers a different dynamic since the camera is static and the constant flow of humanity is coming toward the viewer.

## Organizations & Contributors

### VITAL SPACE

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**Vital Space** is a non-profit organization founded in 2010 by artist Danae Stratou and economist Yanis Varoufakis.

At a time of major confluence of economic and environmental crises, **Vital Space** aims at playing a significant role in using the artist's perspective for dissolving the polarisation typifying the current dialogue on our relationship with Nature and with one another.

**Vital Space** is dedicated to the initiation of art projects, research programs, conferences, publications and the formation of educational and media products designed to reach and influence a wide and diverse audience. It offers a platform for confronting our era's thorniest issues through the artistic language, which it presses into an urgent dialogue with scientific and historical research.

In short, **Vital Space** strives to demonstrate in the most practical manner that art has its finger on the planet's pulse and can mediate human deliberation on the course of our future.

**Vital Space** revolves around two main axes: (a) the creation and production of visual art works, and (b) the initiation of research programs, conferences, publications and the formation of educational and media products designed to reach and influence a wide and diverse audience.

## **Vital Space**

***Is under the Auspices of:***

The **Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Tourism**

The **Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The **State Museum of Contemporary Art - Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Tourism**

***Has produced projects with the financial support of:***

European Capital of Culture - Istanbul 2010 | **European Capital of Culture - Istanbul 2010**

Fondation d' Entreprise Hermes | **Fondation d' Entreprise Hermes**

***Has produced projects with the scientific research support of:***

Curtin University of Technology, Australia | **Curtin University of Technology**

Australian Marine Mammal Centre | **Australian Marine Mammal Centre**

***Is in ongoing collaboration with:***

The Vital Space | [Board of Advisors](#)

The Vital Space | [Vital Space Team](#)

Out of the Box Intermedia | [www.outoftheboxintermedia.org](http://www.outoftheboxintermedia.org)

Glocal Network Cooperation | <http://www.glocalcorp.net>

[DANAE STRATOU](#) (Short biographical note)

Installation Artist, born in Athens, Greece.

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STUDIES

BA (Hons) Fine Art - Sculpture, Central St. Martins College of Art and Design, London Institute. London, England. Graduated in 1988

ACADEMIC POSITION

Since 2007 she is an Adjunct Professor, at the Superior School of Fine Arts in Athens, Greece (Masters of Fine Arts Degree).

**Danae Stratou** represented Greece in the **48th Venice Biennale** (1999). She also participated in the main programs of: The *1st Valencia Biennale* (2001) in Spain, *BIDA 2005*, *Bienal Internacional del Deporte en el Arte* (2005) in Seville | Spain; the *5th*

*International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2006), Gyumri | Armênia, the 1st Thessaloniki Biennale (2007) in Greece, Istanbul - Culture Capital of Europe 2010 Visual Arts Program (2010), The Adelaide Festival, International Visual Arts Program, exhibition Restless (2012).*

The main body of her work consists of large-scale outdoor and indoor installations. In her work she uses elements of nature, which she incorporates with new technologies, such as video, photography and sound thus creating audiovisual environments | installations. Through her work she aims to invoke the senses and address the inner rhythm of life and being.

[Her latest exhibitions include:](#)

## **SOLO**

***IT'S TIME TO OPEN THE BLACK BOXES!*** presented at the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens, (2012)

***VS – ISTANBUL*** presented at the Sydney College of the Arts - SCA Gallery, Sydney, (2012).

***The River of Life*** presented at the Old Bath House of the Winds. Organised by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens, (2011).

***ICESONGS*** presented at La Verriere (Fondation D' Enterprise Hermes) in Brussels, Belgium (2010).

***Vital Space – Istanbul*** presented at Tophane in Istanbul, (2010). An invitation / commission by Istanbul Cultural Capital of Europe 2010, in the context of the international exhibition *Lives and Works in Istanbul*.

***See Through*** presented at the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens (2005).

**CUT - 7 dividing lines** presented at the Zoumboulakis Galleries in Athens (2007).

**Desert Breath** is a Land Art project covering 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>, located in the eastern Egyptian Sahara bordering the Red Sea. A collective work by D.A.ST Arteam, (Danae Stratou, Alexandra Stratou, Stella Constantinides). (Egypt, 1997)

## GROUP

**RESTLESS** Adelaide International 2012, with the video installation **The Globalising Wall**. Australia, (2012).

She participated in various international exhibitions organized by the **National Museum of Contemporary Art**, in Athens:

- In **Sonic Time** speech/sound/silence, with the video-sound installation **ICESONGS<sup>2</sup>**, (Athens 2012)
- In **Transcultures** (Athens 2004), with the video installation **The River of Life**, for which she followed the flow of 7 major rivers around the world.
- In **Transexperiences** (Beijing 2008), with **Cut – 7 dividing lines**, for which she travelled and photographed the divisions in Cyprus, Kosovo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Kashmir, Palestine, Belfast and along the US-Mexican border.

From 1999 to date she has regularly participated in various shows in Museums and Biennale exhibitions internationally. Her works belong to Museums and private collections in Greece, France, the US, the UK and Egypt.

[www.vitalspace.org](http://www.vitalspace.org) | <http://www.danaestratou.com>