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Cammie Staros

An Unearthing

November 19, 2026 – January 16, 2027
Opening Reception: Thursday, November 19, 7–9 PM
Dio Horia, Athens

Dio Horia is pleased to present *An Unearthing*, the first solo exhibition in Greece by Greek-American artist Cammie Staros. Developed during the artist's two-month stay in Athens as part of the Dio Horia Residency Program, the exhibition brings together ceramic vessels and hanging works composed of ceramic coins. Drawing upon the visual language of Greco-Roman antiquity, Starosexplores how ancient objects are discovered, displayed, and interpreted, and how the contexts in which we encounter them shape our understanding of history.

The exhibition takes its starting point from the particular archaeological landscape of Athens and the gallery itself. Situated on the site of the 4th-century AD Villa Urbana, directly beside the Acropolis Museum, Dio Horia incorporates archaeological remains visible beneath its glass floor. Here, contemporary artworks are presented in an ongoing dialogue with the artifacts of antiquity discovered on site. The gallery itself becomes part of the exhibition's conceptual framework, extending Staros's investigation beyond the individual artworks to encompass the architecture, archaeological history, and surrounding city.

Central to Staros's practice is an interest in archaeology and the museum as two contemporary contexts through which ancient objects are encountered, interpreted, and understood. Their relationship, though overlapping, is often fraught: while archaeology emphasizes the importance of an object's original context, museums relocate excavated artifacts into new institutional and cultural frameworks, shaping how they are presented and the narratives constructed around them. Staros approaches this tension with both fascination and skepticism, examining how systems of display, collecting practices, and histories of displacement influence our understanding of antiquity.

During her residency in Athens, Staros studied ancient Greek vessels and amphorae in the collections of the National Archaeological Museum, the Cycladic Museum, and the Acropolis Museum. Drawing upon their forms and pictorial traditions, she developed a new group of undulating ceramic sculptures that reinterpret the visual vocabulary of ancient Greek pottery. Rather than reproducing historical artifacts or illustrating specific mythological narratives, her hand-built vessels transform classical references into contemporary sculptural

forms, existing somewhere between familiar archaeological objects and imagined artifacts from another time.

The structures supporting these vessels are equally significant. Conceived as integral components of the sculptures, they function as hybrids of pedestal, vitrine, and archaeological excavation. Incorporating soil and rocks, they evoke the conditions in which ancient objects are unearthed while simultaneously recalling the museum structures through which they are subsequently preserved and displayed. In *An Unearthing*, these sculptural supports establish a direct dialogue with the archaeological remains beneath the gallery floor, blurring the boundaries between object, display, and site.

Alongside the vessels, five hanging works composed of ceramic coins extend Staros's investigation into the relationship between material culture, and historical memory. Cast from numismatic molds and connected through jewelry hardware and spiderwebs of delicate chain, the coins form intricate compositions that recall both fragile remnants of vanished civilizations and their reinterpretation. Once symbols of exchange, wealth, and political authority, these weathered forms become sculptural objects, reflecting the eventual decay of even the most established economic and social systems.

Underlying Staros's work is a broader consideration of the fragility of civilization and the passage of time. Seemingly melted, warped, oxidized, or inhabited, her sculptures imagine how objects might survive their makers, implicitly questioning what the future of today's objects may hold. In doing so, they draw connections between the legacy of ancient empires and the political and environmental uncertainties of the present.

With *An Unearthing*, Staros brings these investigations into direct conversation with Athens, a city in which antiquity is continually excavated, preserved, displayed, and lived alongside. The exhibition extends beyond the individual artworks to encompass the architecture of the gallery, the archaeological remains beneath it, and the surrounding city, inviting viewers to reconsider not only what survives from the past, but also the circumstances through which history is revealed and understood.

About the Artist

Cammie Staros (b. 1983, Nashville, Tennessee) draws upon Greco-Roman antiquity to investigate historical narratives, systems of display, and the cultural significance of objects. Working primarily in ceramics, alongside stone and industrial materials,

she combines classical forms and iconography with contemporary sculptural interventions.

Staros received her BA in Art and Semiotics from Brown University and her MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Her work has been presented in solo exhibitions at the SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah; the Institute of Contemporary Art, San Diego; François Ghebaly, Los Angeles; Galerie Lefebvre & Fils, Paris; and Nazarian / Curcio, Los Angeles, among others.

She is the recipient of several awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship (2020) and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2023).

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