The Way We Live Now

co-curated by
Hilton Als and Ann Philbin

20 June 2026 –
March 2027

THE
GEORGE
ECONOMOU
COLLECTION

PRESS KIT

Index

1. Introduction P. 3
2. Press Images P. 7
3. Curators Biographies P. 16
4. The George Economou Collection P. 35

1. Introduction

The Way We Live Now

The George Economou Collection is pleased to announce *The Way We Live Now,* its first contemporary group exhibition, with works culled solely from its holdings and the first of its kind within the exhibition program.

In 1875, the English novelist Anthony Trollope published *The Way We Live Now,* his devastating look at the transfiguring effect of power during the industrial age. A little over one hundred and fifty years later, artists, curators, and writers continue to mine the real world in all its complexity, including the effects finance, industry, and desire have not only on artistic consciousness, but the viewer's understanding of what is being represented, and why.

In this group exhibition, the artists invite us, with their unique sensibilities, to observe how they have been informed, if not shaped, by "the way we live now"—as political creatures, as humans longing for intimacy, as observers in and of the world that has made us.

Divided into three loose sections — **Intimacy**, **Politics**, and **Being** — *The Way We Live Now* is a kind of travelogue. It begins with the ways artists convey the soulful and impressionistic, exploring how love and the romantic impulse contribute to the artist's understanding of Intimacy. What are we talking about when we talk about love?

We also look at the vulnerable body as it moves in and through a world framed by **Politics**. Who are we as individuals, as members of society? And what does it mean to be led, or have freedom of choice? Does a questioning spirit make one free? And how does the artist define freedom in today's divided world?

Finally, we consider **Being** — our collective and individual existence — with a critical, mordant, and lyrical eye. The artists included in that grouping explore energy as it affects or is generated by the female form or the naked body, while they create sculptural figures that look deeply into the joys as well as struggles of being together or existing in poignant isolation. So doing, we are also looking at the intimacy the artist demands and imparts to their subject.

The Way We Live Now is co-curated by **Hilton Als**, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, educator, and contributing writer at *The New Yorker*; **Ann Philbin**, director emeritus of the Hammer Museum and 2025 Getty Prize Winner; in close collaboration with **Skarlet Smatana**, the director of the George Economou Collection.

A publication with contributions by Hilton Als, Lisa Brice, Heather Ive, Ben Okri and Charles Ray will accompany the exhibition.

For further information or images, please contact Katerina Tsakiri at +30 210 8090160 or katerina@artesia.gr

On View:
20 June 2026 – March 2027

Opening Hours:
Monday – Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Wednesdays until 8 p.m.

Opening reception:
Saturday, 20 June, 12 to 8 p.m.

Guided tour with curators Hilton Als, Ann Philbin, and
The George Economou Collection's director, Skarlet Smatana,
on Saturday, 20 June at 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

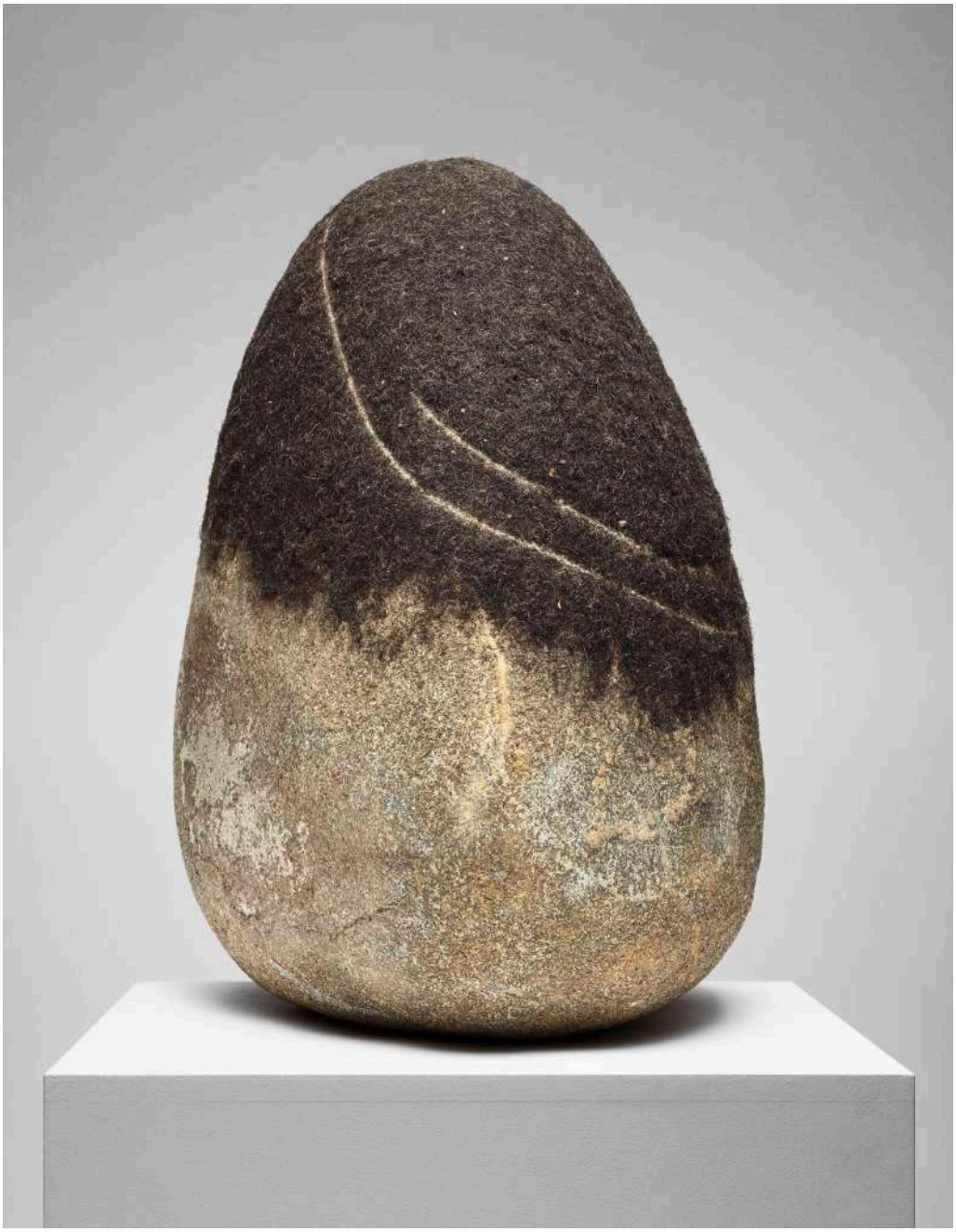
Kindly RSVP to:
info@economoucollection.com

With
works by

Njideka Akunyili Crosby
Lucas Arruda
Louise Bourgeois
Lisa Brice
Xinyi Cheng
Ellen Gallagher
David Hammons
David Hockney
Katharina Fritsch
Allison Katz
Florian Krewer
Victor Man
Charles Ray
Andy Robert
Jenny Saville
Mohammed Sami
Lorna Simpson
Henry Taylor

2. Press Images

Katharina Fritsch, *Zwei Manner/Two Men*, 2020.
Plaster, acrylic paint, 1 7/8 × 4 5/8 × 6 7/8 in. (4.8 × 11.8 × 17.5 cm).
© Katharina Fritsch, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn / OSDEETE, Athens 2026.
Courtesy of the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery.



David Hammons, *Rock Head*, 1998.
Rock, human hair, 12 1/2 × 13 × 9 1/2 in. (31.8 × 33 × 24.1 cm).
© David Hammons. Courtesy of the artist.

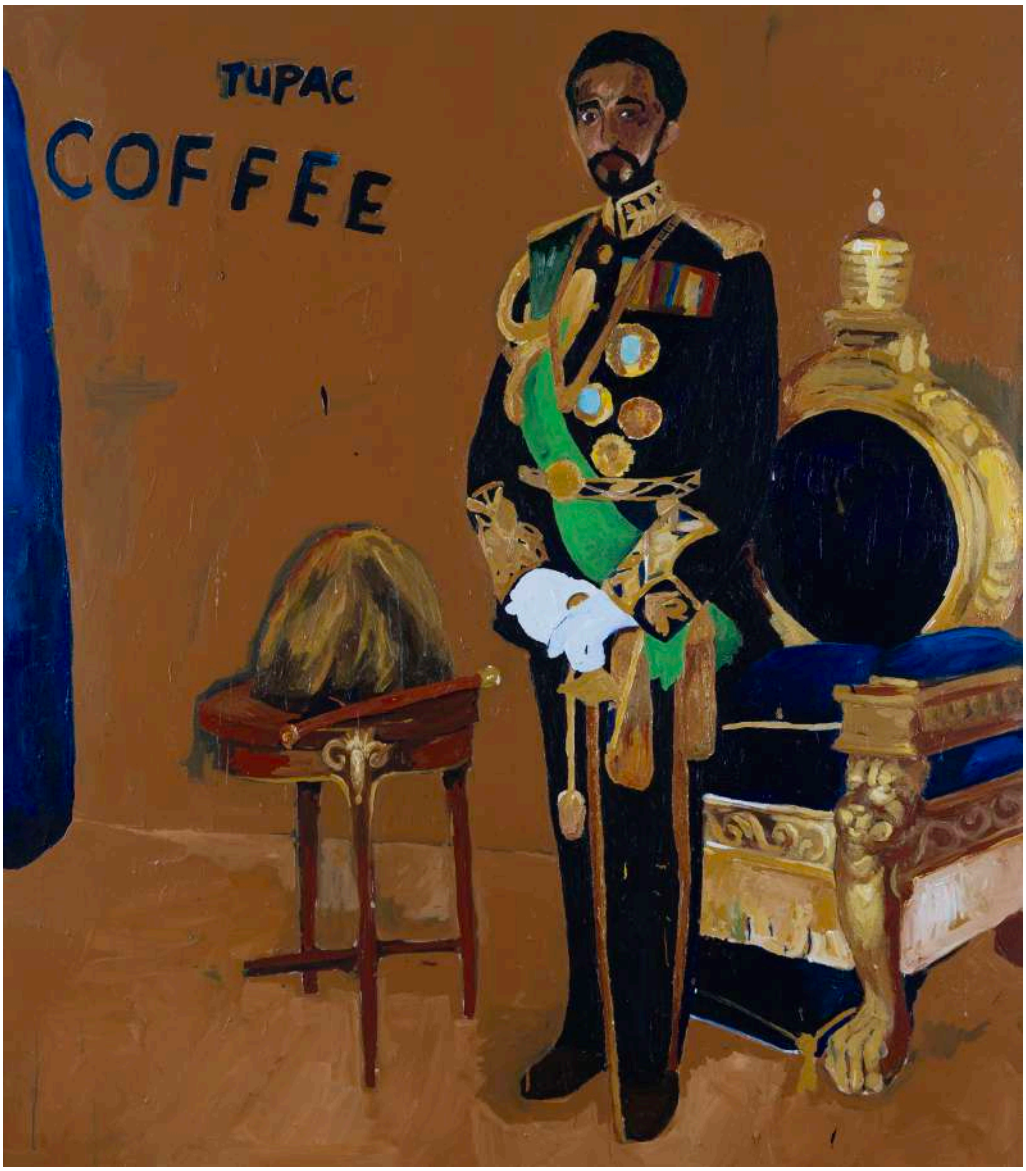
David Hockney, *Sur la Terrasse*, 1971.
Acrylic on canvas, 108 1/16 × 84 1/16 in. (274.5 × 213.5 cm).
© David Hockney.

Florian Krewer, *wild side*, 2023.
Oil on linen, 110 × 118 in. (279.5 × 299.5 cm).
© Florian Krewer. Courtesy Veneklasen.

Charles Ray, *Shoe Tie*, 2012.
Solid stainless steel, 28 3/4 × 29 1/8 × 23 5/8 in. (73 × 74 × 60 cm).
© Charles Ray. Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

Jenny Saville, Intertwine, 2011–2014.
Oil on canvas, 86 3/8 × 114 1/8 × 2 1/2 in. (219.5 × 290 × 6.5 cm).
© Jenny Saville. All rights reserved, DACS, London / OSDEETE, Athens 2026. Courtesy Gagosian. Photo: Mike Bruce.

Lorna Simpson, *Detroit (Ode to G.)*, 2016.
India ink, acrylic, and screenprint on Claybord, 108 × 96 in. (274.3 × 243.8 cm).
© Lorna Simpson. Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94.



Henry Taylor, *It's H.I.M*, 2012.
Acrylic on canvas, 84 × 72 in. (213.4 × 182.9 cm).
© Henry Taylor. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

3. Curators Biographies

Hilton Als

Hilton Als became a staff writer at The New Yorker in 1994 and a theatre critic in 2002. He began contributing to the magazine in 1989, writing pieces for The Talk of the Town. He won the Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 2017 for his New Yorker work.

Before coming to The New Yorker, Als was a staff writer for the Village Voice and an editor-at-large at Vibe. Als edited the catalogue for the 1994-95 Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition “Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art.” His first book, “The Women,” was published in 1996. His book “White Girls,” a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the winner of the Lambda Literary Award in 2014, discusses various narratives of race and gender.

In 1997, the New York Association of Black Journalists awarded Als first prize in both Magazine Critique/Review and Magazine Arts and Entertainment. He was awarded a Guggenheim for creative writing in 2000 and the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism for 2002-03. In 2016, he received Lambda Literary’s Trustee Award for Excellence in Literature. In 2018, Als received the City College of New York’s Langston Hughes Medal.

In 2009, Als worked with the performer Justin Bond on “Cold Water,” an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and videos by performers, at La MaMa Gallery. In 2010, he co-curated “Self-Consciousness,” at the VeneKlasen/Werner gallery, in Berlin, and published “Justin Bond/Jackie Curtis.” In 2015, he collaborated with the artist Celia Paul to create “Desdemona for Celia by Hilton,” an exhibition for the Metropolitan Opera’s Gallery Met. “Alice Neel, Uptown,” which Als curated in 2017, was selected by three of Artforum’s critics as one of the ten best shows of the year. His accompanying book on the artist was also widely praised.

Als published “My Pinup” in 2022 and edited the 2024 collection “God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin.” He is a teaching professor at the University of California, Berkeley, an associate professor of writing at Columbia University’s School of the Arts, and has taught at Yale University, Columbia University, Wesleyan University, and Smith College. He lives in New York City.

Ann Philbin

Ann Philbin is the Director Emeritus of the Hammer Museum UCLA, Los Angeles, a position she held from 1999 to 2026. Over more than two decades, she transformed the Hammer into one of the United States' leading contemporary art institutions, celebrated for its ambitious, artist centred programme and commitment to presenting innovative and socially engaged work. Under her leadership, the museum gained an international reputation for its exhibitions, public programmes, and support of emerging and underrepresented artists, most notably through the creation of the Made in L.A. biennial, a landmark platform for artists working in the greater Los Angeles area.

Prior to the Hammer, Philbin was Director and Chief Curator of the Drawing Center in New York City from 1990 to 1999 transforming that institution as well into a major hub for emerging international artists.

Philbin's contributions have been widely recognised: in 2018, she was named Officier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Consulate of Los Angeles for her support of French artists; in 2020, she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and in 2025, she received the Getty Prize for her exceptional achievements in advancing public appreciation of the arts.

4. The George Economou Collection

The **George Economou Collection** is a private collection located in Athens, Greece. Rooted in history, social awareness and aesthetics, the collecting activity began evolving in the 1990s with a focus on early twentieth-century European art and has expanded to include an important holding of postwar and contemporary art.

The Collection represents key movements of the early twentieth century, such as German Expressionism and New Objectivity, with works by Otto Dix and Otto Mueller. Artists including Georg Baselitz, Isa Genzken, Andreas Gursky, Günther Förg, Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, Sigmar Polke, Neo Rauch, and Günther Uecker continue the German dialogue into the contemporary sphere alongside works by noted international artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Mark Bradford, Alberto Burri, Peter Doig, Dan Flavin, Marlene Dumas, Lucio Fontana, Katharina Fritsch, Robert Gober, David Hammons, Charline von Heyl, Rashid Johnson, Donald Judd, Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin, Paul McCarthy, Charles Ray, Gerhard Richter, Andy Robert, Jenny Saville, Kazuo Shiraga, Dana Schutz, Frank Stella, and Jeff Wall, among others.

The Collection has developed a rich exhibition program in the space in Athens, with free admission to the public. These survey exhibitions present works by artists from the Collection, enriched by loans from museums as well as international private collections. Each exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive publication featuring contributions by internationally renowned art theorists, curators and artists.

The George Economou Collection organizes a public program of curated conversations, providing historical and cultural context to the exhibitions and fostering critical discourse on art and culture.

The Collection supports artist-driven projects, cultural institutions, and programs of the highest standard, encouraging and promoting ingenuity, creativity, and the pursuit of artistic excellence. Through a consistent and rigorous loan policy, the Collection actively supports international institutions and museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tate Modern, Whitney Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Centre Pompidou, Guggenheim New York, Dia Art Foundation, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Pinault Collection, Fondation Beyeler, and Stedelijk Museum, among others.

George Economou
Chairman and Founder

George Economou was born in Athens and is a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He began his career in shipping, expanded into offshore drilling and real estate, and has had a passion for art throughout his career. His collecting activity began in the 1990s with a focus on early twentieth-century European art and has grown to include an important holding of postwar and contemporary art. In 2012 he opened a public exhibition space for the collection in the suburbs of Athens, which holds several exhibitions per year, often in collaboration with international institutions and curators. Mr. Economou is on the board of trustees of the Tate Foundation, on the board of trustees of the Dia Art Foundation, and a benefactor to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Alexandra Economou
President

Alexandra Economou is a collector. With her father George Economou, she advises and curates the George Economou Collection. She supports emerging international artists by collecting their work in depth and often supporting the production of new work, or contributing to projects that contextualize their practice. She is on the Board of Trustees of the Swiss Institute in New York, co-chair of the Guggenheim's Young Collectors Council in New York, on the International Board of the Friends of the Palais de Tokyo, lead supporter of the Camden Arts Centre Emerging Artist Prize in London and a founding member of the Museum of Cycladic Art Young Patrons Committee in Athens, where she currently resides. Economou holds an MA in Visual Arts Administration from NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

Skarlet Smatana
Director

Skarlet Smatana is director of the George Economou Collection. Since taking this position in 2012, she has honed the objectives of the collection and spearheaded its exhibition program, contextualizing it within twentieth-century art-historical and contemporary discourse. She often partners and collaborates with major public institutions and private foundations worldwide to promote publicly exhibited collections as well as philanthropic and lending initiatives to support contemporary artists. At the George Economou Collection in Athens, Smatana has co-organized solo exhibitions of artists including Charline von Heyl, Dana Schutz, Steven Shearer, Katharina Fritsch, Jeff Wall, Jenny Saville, Charles Ray, David Hammons, and Rashid Johnson, as well as a two-person show of Georg Baselitz and Paul McCarthy. Each of these exhibitions has been accompanied by a monograph featuring scholarly essays by acclaimed writers and curators. Before joining the George Economou Collection, Smatana worked at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice as well as at leading contemporary art galleries, among them Pace Gallery, New York; Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago; and, as director, at L&M Arts, New York. Throughout her career in galleries and independently, she has built some of the most important collections worldwide and advised prominent institutions in the United States. Smatana has an MA in art history, theory, and criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, focusing on postwar and contemporary art and is a member of the Board of Association of Professional Art Advisors.

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