

Ermina Apostolaki (Set Designer, Costume Designer)

Short CV

She studied at the University of Piraeus, in the department of Organization and Business Management (BA), while at the same time she joined the workshop of set design and set decoration of the Vakalo College. She concluded her master studies in Set Design and Set Decoration (MA) in the Technical University of Berlin and in the Research of Architecture: Designing – Space – Culture (MRes) in the National Technical University of Athens. She has been part of Set and Costume design seminars both in Greece and abroad.

She works in theatre and cinema. She has worked with Schaubühne, the Neos Kosmos Theatre, the National Theatre, the Public Theatre of Piraeus, the National Opera of Greece and others.

Movies she has been part of have been awarded at the Drama Film Festival, the South European Film Festival and the New York Film Awards. In 2014 she received a scholarship from the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute of Warsaw to take part at the Shared Space: Weather program, which was co hosted with the Prague Quadrennial 2015.

Her work for the theatre plays “Madafakas and the hat” and “Don’t forget to go home” was presented in the World Stage Design Exhibition 2017, in the category of Emerging Designers. The same year she received a scholarship from the Goethe Institute in order to participate in the International Forum 2017, within the Theatertreffen 2017.

In 2018 she was a scholarship recipient of the Art Department Masterclass. In 2019 she presented her first personal installation (The resonance of the bazaar) within the group exhibition ‘Post – Nostalgia: Design meets Utopia’. Also within the PQ Talks of Prague Quadrennial 2019 she presented her research “Performing for the Precariat”.

How did you decide to start working in cinema and more specifically in the department of set and costume design?

I was one of those children that did not know exactly what they wanted to do after school, and that led me to join a university department I was not interested in. So as a young university student I started paying closer attention to my extracurricular activities, trying to imagine what I could do as a job for the rest of my life. My research led me to my first theater costume seminar and then to the workshop of set and costume of the Vakalo College. As such my education has its roots in the theater. My involvement with cinema came some years later, when friends who then studied film directing started producing their first short films. When I started working in the film industry as well, it was a relief to see that my artistic expression and my work could be disseminated through different mediums.

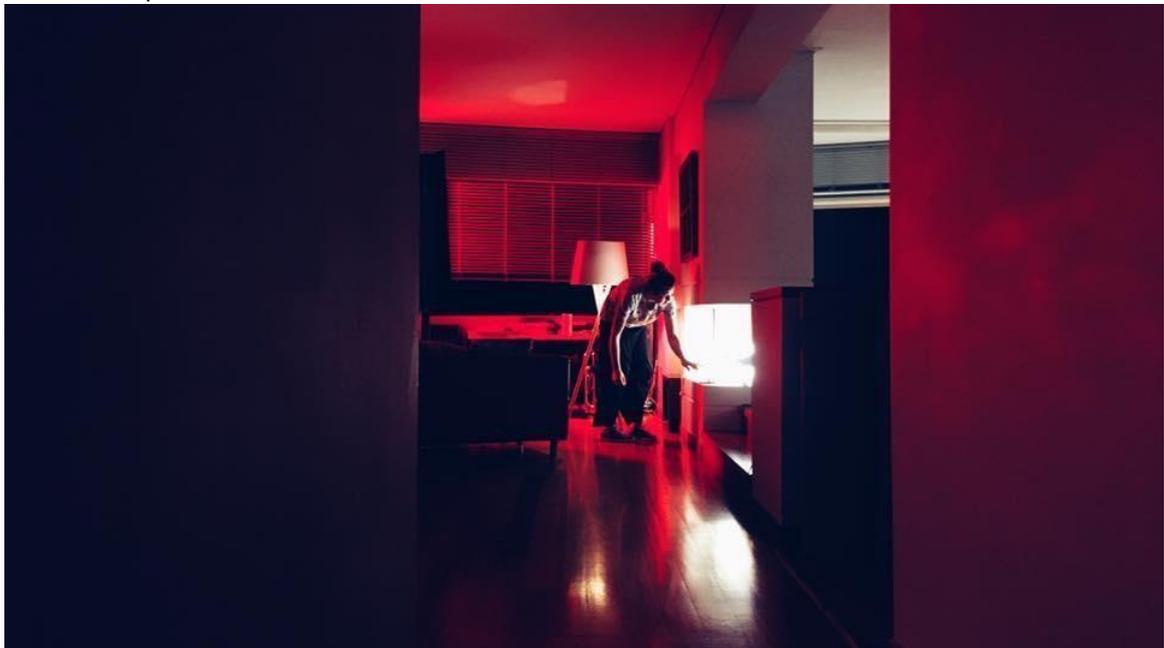
Can you tell us about when you first came in contact with this job and how easy or difficult it was to find employment?

If by “my first contact with the job” you mean the first movie I made, I will tell you my experience was wonderful and very entertaining since, if I remember correctly, more or less it was the first movie for the whole crew and the collaborators. Now in terms of how easy or difficult it was to find employment in this specific department I will tell you that in 2015 I returned to Athens from Berlin, where I had been living since 2011. It took me almost a year to be able to say that I could survive financially from my job (of course not only working in film) and still there is a certain uncertainty from year to year about how things will go professionally.

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Although the percentages of women which work in other departments of film and TV crews (operators, sound designers, directors of photography etc) are low it seems in your department it is the other way around, is this assumption correct? If yes, how do you explain this?

Indeed, there are more women in my department compared to others in the film industry, which if I am not mistaken happens to other countries as well. I could speculate as to why this happens, however for me it is more important to point out that even in my line of work where there are more women, in terms of recognition and professional opportunities it is again our male colleagues that get them. This again does not happen only in Greece. So what I am really asking today is: "Why even in a profession that are more women, they still don't get as many chances or room for expression."



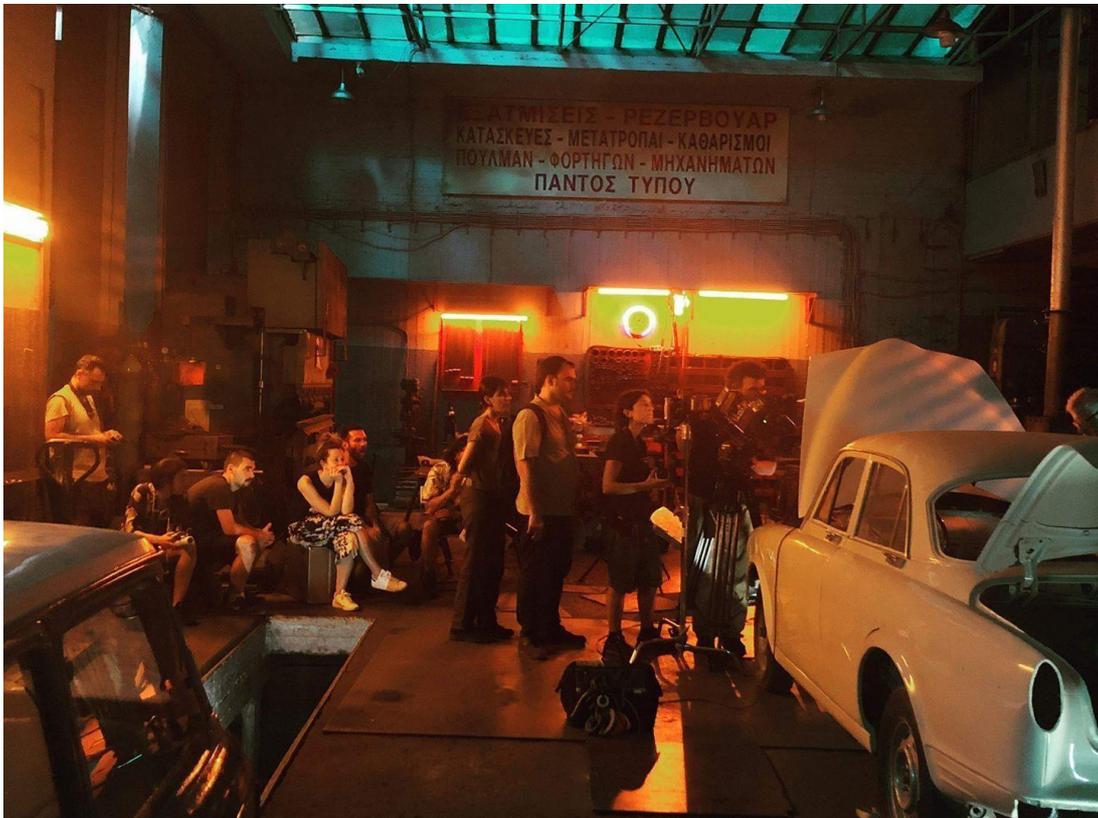
Been Here Before (2018) dir: Nikolaos Dimitropoulos

In what degree and how, in your opinion and experience, gender discrimination is expressed in your line of work? Is there something you experienced/noticed that you could share with us?

The degree and the ways discrimination is expressed in this line of work are quit wide. Other than the extreme examples of gender discrimination, in this specific job (as in many others) there are cases of this kind of discrimination deeply rooted and expressed in many different small moments on an everyday work basis. I have many stories to tell but I think I will talk about how common it is to get a phone call from producers concerning a job, and the conversation starts with the fact that the male colleague, who was their first choice, is unavailable for the project.

Many countries the last few years try to apply the measure of 50/50 in the case of women participating in film production and in the programming of international festivals etc. In Greece for the time being there has been no initiative concerning such a measure. Is it something that you would want, that you maybe have discussed with other people in the film industry or you believe the conversation hasn't started yet?

I don't really know if that conversation has started in Greece in a wide range. Of course it would be something I would want, however it is sad that in 2020 we still need measures to make sure of something that should have been a given.



The mechanic (2019) dir: Dimitris Kotselis

**For you what are the necessary characteristics for a good collaboration with a director?
Can you give us some examples of such a collaboration?**

The question is quite hard to answer because every collaboration is unique and can be influenced by many factors. In general, I would say, that the necessary characteristic in any collaboration between me and a director is the respect of each others' creative work. A characteristic that in my opinion is necessary in any relationship with a colleague/contributor. I don't have a specific example to give because with the directors I ended up working with we have a good working relationship.

What advice would you give to a young woman wanting to enter the film and TV industry and especially work in the department of costume and set design?

To get as many academic skills as she can in her profession she has chosen, to never believe she is obligated to limit her artistic expression in only one area and unfortunately maybe the most important is to never keep her mouth shut.

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SEDIKE dir: KIMINO

Can you give us the names of some film makers (costume/set designers, directors etc) that you admire?

The examples are many and mentioning only some of them is not of importance. I believe Greek women film makers do a great job and, not considering my personal taste, are all worthy of congratulations.

Finally, can you tell us what you have been working on?

At this moment I am getting ready to take part at the Chania dance festival (Dance Days Chania) with my second personal work, a performative sound installation which is called "Urban Songs" and for the filming of a short film, a Greek-German production, in the beginning of August, in Berlin.