



"I wanted to predict and measure the infinity of the unlimited universe with dots. Dots. How deep is the mystery? Is there unlimited infinity beyond our own universe? By exploring these questions, I wanted to delve into this unique dot that is my own life. One dot. A unique particle between billions." **Yayoi Kusama on Yayoi Kusama**

Going dotty over Yayoi Kusama

Many consider that her colour-popping and dizzying creations influenced Andy Warhol and there's little doubt that the flamboyant Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama was a forebearer of the Pop Art movement. The still-sprightly 89-year-old with the signature flaming wig has exhibited hallucinatory works like *Infinity Nets* and her *Dots Obsessions* series (Kusama fetishized dots long before Damien Hirst populated the planet with his own versions). She has staged provocative art events in New York and elsewhere across the world (at the 1966 Venice Biennale she controversially hawked mirrored balls from her *Narcissus Garden* installation to passersby).

Now, Athens appreciators have the chance to immerse themselves in the magically eccentric world of Yayoi Kusama at a new installation staged by the Zoumboulakis Gallery to coincide with the publication of the Museum of Modern Art's recent publication: *Yayoi Kusama: From Here to Infinity*.

The book, written by Sara Suzuki (MoMA Curator) and illustrated by Ellen Weinstein, is a biographical title that depicts Yayoi Kusama's vivid body of avant-garde work, her turbulent life, her obsessions, her illusions, her schizophrenic tendencies, her visions and, above all, the genius manifested by her tremendous talent.

Zoumboulakis has selected 7 of Kusama's imaginative works to comprise their tribute.

See *Yayoi Kusama: From Here to Infinity* from February 15 at the Zoumboulakis Gallery, Kriezotou 6, www.zoumboulakis.gr

Athens Book Festival: A new page for the city

Books are back. Literature-lined libraries are the new heroes of Instagram. And this year, the written word will take centre-stage in Athens. Our city is the *Book Capital of the World* for one year, from April 23, 2018 and will host a richly stimulating calendar of over 250 events, that will address a projected pool of one million visitors, aimed at making books accessible to all.

In tandem, Athens Insider is organising two high-profile literary events this year about books: one in June, themed around literature and food of displacement, to coincide with the hugely-popular Athens Refugee Food Festival, and one in late September, celebrating Greece's fame as a muse for foreign scribes throughout the ages and featuring among the line-up, literary stars such as Victoria Hislop, Patricia Storace, Jeff Siger and Sofka Zinovieff. Meanwhile, the official Athens World Book Capital program, *Athens 2018 - books everywhere*, will bring together all major structures and stakeholders of the city along with select civic groups, creative initiatives and emerging businesses.

Expect a vivid and mobile patchwork of inclusive and innovative events across the city such as artworks, projections, walking trails, dance, cinema and workshops characterized by open dialogue between all.

Important foreign and Greek writers, experts and artists will participate in this prestigious European celebration. Speech events and roundtables, always inspired by the book's world, will broaden the public's horizons, while public readings in unexpected spots of daily life will provide a welcome creative hiatus for us all.

Plastic gets kicked to the curb

It's only been a little over a month, but already the new plastic bag tax has had a dramatic impact on Greek habits, with the number of bags being sold at the country's supermarkets during January down by a whopping 80 percent compared to the same period in 2017.

From the first of January this year, Greece finally caught up with many other European nations with a new 4 cents per bag plastic bag levy imposed by the Environment Ministry - set to increase to 9 cents per bag as of January 1, 2019.

Unlike other EU dictates (the anti-smoking legislation springs to mind), the implementation of the extra charge for plastic bags has been surprisingly rigorous right across Greece - traditionally among the world's most wasteful plastic bag consumers. Our guess is that the country's budding environmental conscience is happily aligning with the average Greek household's ever-present need to economise.

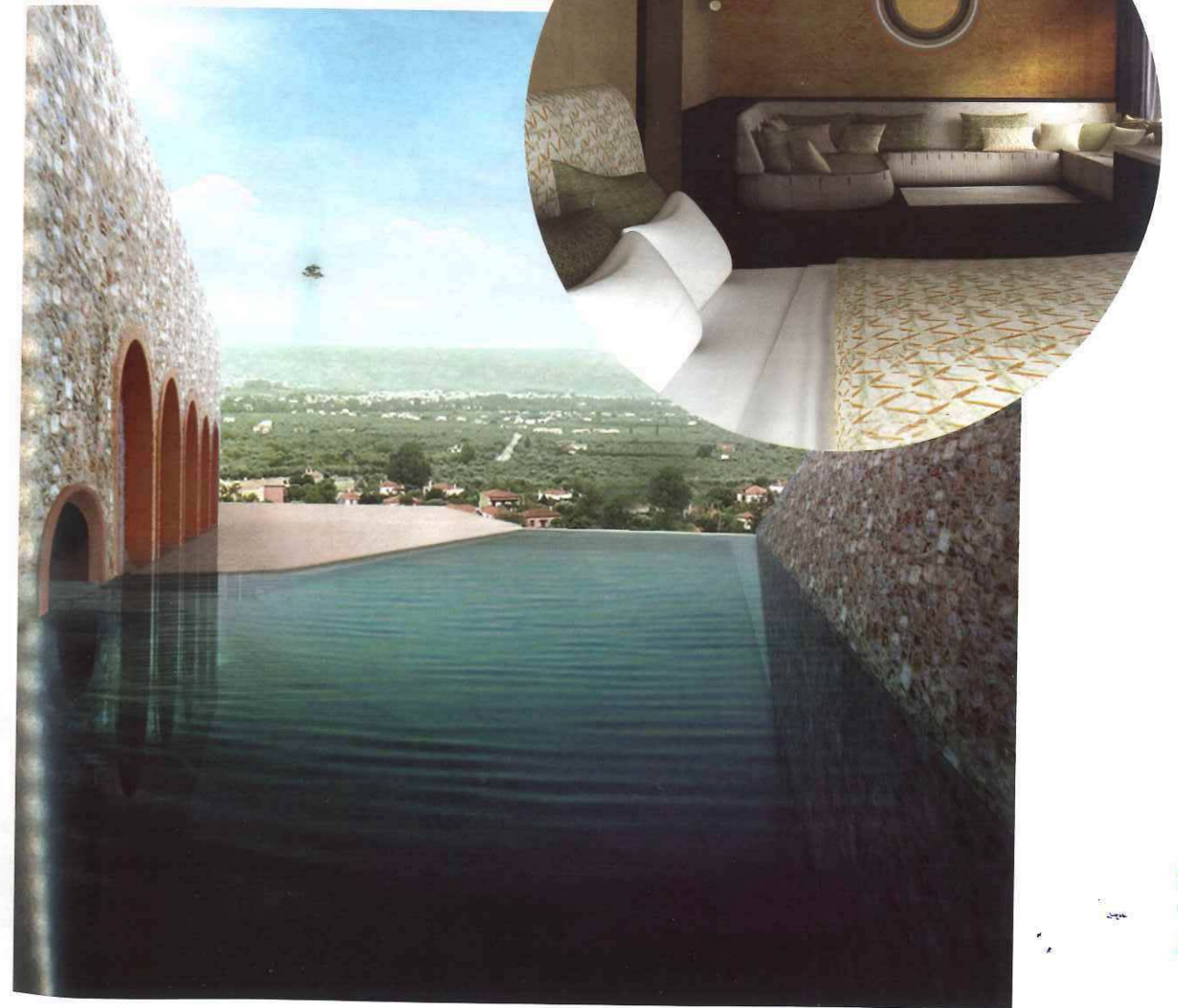
The Research Institute of Retail Consumer Goods (IELKA) has conducted surveys about the new plastic bag tax in supermarket chains, retail shops and other sales points, and has found that more than 2 out of 3 Greek households now opt for the solution of multipurpose bags rather than paying for a disposable plastic bag. Additionally, there's been an increase of over 5,000% in the sale of such multipurpose bags.

The IELKA survey also found that many clothing retail chains were opting to replace plastic bags with alternatives such as paper bags; while kiosks, laiki vendors and food outlets were largely still providing plastic bags to customers free of charge.

A State of Euphoria

This summer, embrace the ancient Greek concept of "εὐφορία" (a blissful and well-balanced life) at a novel new holistic spa destination about to open its doors on the outskirts of medieval Mystras, about one hour from Kalamata. Pitched perfectly for this era of deeper travel, Euphoria Retreat promises a transformative encounter through a melodic marriage of ancient Greek and Chinese philosophies and treatments, devised to help you lead a happier, healthier and more balanced existence. The spa will offer personalised healing programmes built around the fundamental elements of Water, Wood, Fire, Earth and Metal, while also being rooted in modern medicine and science. Sign up for a signature seven-day transformational programme and dine during your stay on nutritionally-elevated cuisine served in the panoramic Gaia restaurant. Quite happy as you are thanks? Just go for the glorious backdrop (mountains, sweeping valleys and citrus groves) and the ravishing aesthetics. At Euphoria, elegant curves of domes and arches blend within a soothing palette of yellows and golds, in a seductively modern re-boot of classical Byzantine colours and iconography.

www.euphoriaretreat.com



fast lane