



THE HELLENIC CENTRE

# SMYRNA

THE DESTRUCTION OF A COSMOPOLITAN CITY 1900-1922

29 January - 10 February 2013

The Hellenic Centre's photographic exhibition, *Smyrna The Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City*, commemorates the ninetieth anniversary of the destruction of Smyrna in 1922 and responds to the growing interest in the history and characteristics of multicultural cities, the conditions that make them possible and the threats to their existence. These themes, not so long ago considered to be of purely historical interest have reacquired a striking relevance in our own times. The exhibition and the accompanying documentary film show images never before seen in the UK. The accompanying lecture series includes speakers such as Philip Mansel and Giles Milton whose books on the subject have won scholarly praise and achieved wide popularity.

The **exhibition** contains ninety two photographs arranged thematically. The first part, featuring material from around the turn of the twentieth century, focuses on the multiplicity of identities of the city; Ottoman subjects of all faiths did business with Levantines and foreigners, newspapers were published in seven languages, there was a vigorous cultural life and vast wealth was made. In contrast, the second part illustrates the growing threats to intercommunal stability with persecution of the minorities and ends with the Greek landing in May 1919. This leads to the third part, which contains images of the war years between 1919 and 1922 and ends with harrowing pictures of the city's destruction in September 1922. The exhibition concludes with photographs of Smyrniots in the new homes they had to make in other lands.

The **documentary film** is structured round original still and moving images of the period uncovered by extensive archival research. But not all the material is archival. We also hear and see still living witnesses and leading experts place the material in its historical context. Giles Milton (author of the book *Paradise Lost: Smyrna 1922-The Destruction of Islam's City of Tolerance*), Alexander Kitroeff (Haverford College), and Thanos Veremis (University of Athens) present the history, while Victoria Solomonidis (Fellow, Kings College), and Eleni Bastea (New Mexico University), both of Izmir descent, combine a historian's outlook with family memories. Leyla Neyzi (Sabanci University) brings us the story of Gülfem Iren, an Izmir Turk, and Jack Nalbatian, an Izmir Armenian, recounts his personal experience of the events of 1922.

**A series of lectures** by important speakers such as Giles Milton, Victoria Solomonidis, Renée Hirschon (St Peter's College, Oxford and author of *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*), Philip Mansel (author of *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean*), George Vassiadis (independent historian and genealogist), George Galdies and George Poulimenos (authors of *A Lexicon of Smyrneika* together with Alex Baltazzi) will complete this ninetieth anniversary tribute to the end of Smyrna and will allow for extensive discussion on events which are still controversial.



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### ORGANISATION

**Smyrna, the destruction of a cosmopolitan city 1900-1922** is hosted by the Hellenic Centre. It is produced by Proteus and was initially organised the Benaki Museum in Athens. The exhibition is curated by Maria Iliou, an award-winning film director from Greece, who is also the director of the documentary film. Among her directorial credits are *The Journey: The Greek American Dream* (2007 AFI SELECTION in Washington DC, The European Showcase), *Alexandria* (2001, Houston Film Festival Platinum Award, USA) and *Tris Epoches* (Three Seasons, 1997, Würzburg Festival Prize for Best Film, Germany). She is the founder of the Proteus Foundation in Athens. The historical consultant for both projects was Alexander Kitroeff, a historian who is currently Associate Professor of History at Haverford College. His publications include *The Greeks in Egypt, 1919-1937 - Ethnicity and Class* (London, 1989), *Wartime Jews: The Case of Athens* (Athens, 1995), *Wrestling with the Ancients: Modern Greek Identity and the Olympics* (New York, 2004) and numerous articles on the history of the Greek Diaspora.

### DATES AND OPENING HOURS

Open to the public: Tuesday 29 January - Sunday 10 February 2013

Weekdays 10am-6pm

Weekends 11am-4pm

On Saturday 2 February the exhibition can be visited between screenings

### FILM SCREENINGS

**Saturday 2 February**

**10.30am, 1.30pm, 4.30pm, 7pm**

### LECTURES

**Wednesday 30 January, 7.15pm**

*Smyrna: A Cosmopolitan City - A Story in Pictures*

Giles Milton and Victoria Solomonidis

**Friday 1 February, 7.15pm**

*The 1923 Greco-Turkish Exchange of Populations in Historical Perspective*

Renee Hirschon

**Tuesday 5 February, 7.15pm**

*'The Pearl of the Levant': Portrait of Smyrna as a World City*

Philip Mansel

**Friday 8 February, 7.15pm**

*Smyrna's Living Heritage*

George Vassiadis

&

*A Lexicon of Smyrneika*

George Galdies and George Poulimenos

Admission to all events is free **but please confirm attendance** at [press@helleniccentre.org](mailto:press@helleniccentre.org) or on 020 7563 9835.

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