

Design/Arts/Culture

Vol 2 (2021)

Design | Arts | Culture —Open theme—



ERT 2013

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doi: [10.12681/dac.27433](https://doi.org/10.12681/dac.27433)

To cite this article:

Vardopoulos, P. (2022). ERT 2013. *Design/Arts/Culture*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.12681/dac.27433>



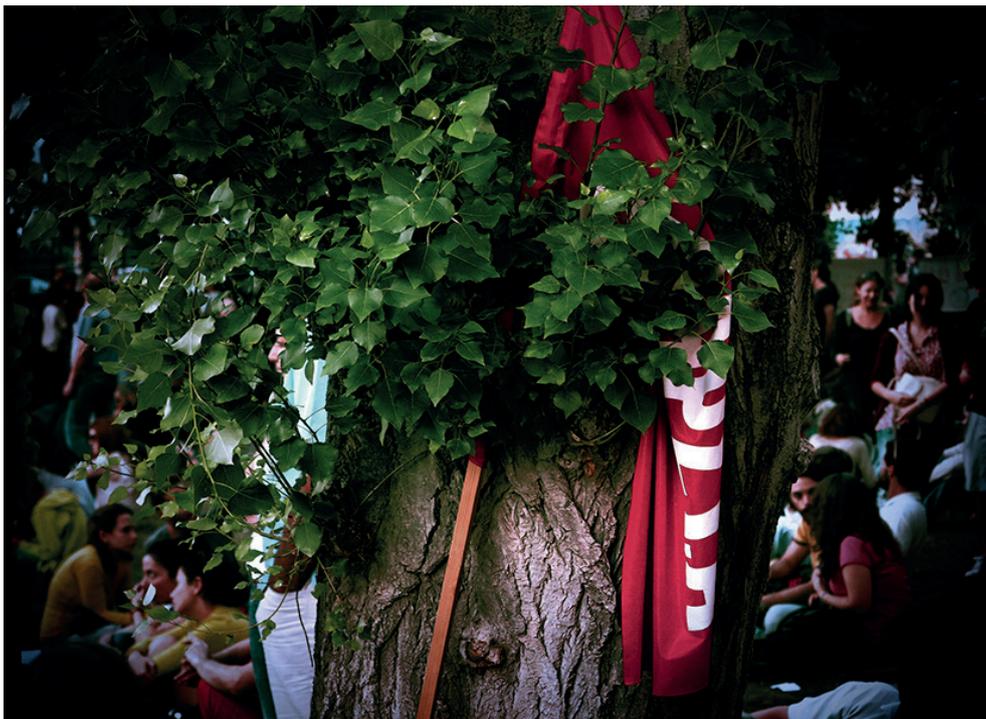


NEW CONDITIONS AND OLD CUSTOMS

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Figure 1: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq,
digital photographic image



For Greek society, the era between 2010 and 2015 was characterized by economic collapse followed by a severe social crisis. In June 2013, the Coalition government formed by three political parties (ND / PASOK / DIMAR, in Greek) decided to shut down the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT, in Greek) in order to create a new entity called “New Greek Radio, Internet and Television” (NERIT, in Greek). This decision was demonstrably aimed by the government at restructuring its human resources balance, including the financial policies that were implemented within it.

This new entity was received with strong criticism locally and abroad, being considered as understaffed and politically controlled. Accordingly, several negative reports were aired in the international media with regards to the implementation of the new policy on moral grounds (e.g., freedom of press), including condemnations by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and some of its members such as its members BBC, ARD, ZDF, Rai, RTVE, RTBF and France Télévisions. Finally, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe also expressed their dissatisfaction and condemnation, resulting to the withdrawal of the Democratic Left Party (DIMAR) from the government coalition.

The actual shutdown of the emission that led to all television screens going black in Greek households took place on 11 June 2013 and became known as “the ‘black’ on ERT”. Immediately as it happened, crowds of citizens gathered in the

courtyard of the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation headquarters in Athens, to protest and support the majority of its employees that had occupied the building, in order to keep the broadcast alive. The author participated in the protests and photographed them through his lens, mostly during the evening hours. Having no intention to document the actual event, he focused on the surrounding natural environment instead. As such the later appears to have a strong presence within the pictures that creates an eerie atmosphere when juxtaposed with the buzzing crowd. The viewer observes parts of the building’s official signs among the trees, while protesters are hanging their banners on the courtyard fence. Above them we see the dark and starry sky merging with the city lights, creating a union between natural and man-made existence.

Time and again cinema portrays landscape as a character in its own right, establishing a notion of resistance against the oppressive will of film’s protagonist. In the photographs presented in the author’s portfolio, landscape appears to take a stand against injustice, supporting the protesters in their struggle. The work also refers metaphorically to the Greek tradition of open-air religious gatherings, fairs and festivities, whereby the religious artifacts and merchandise counters are being replaced by the political act of protest.

These protests ended on the night of November 7, 2013, as the riot police (MAT, in Greek) invaded and evacuated the area by order of the government.



Figure 2: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.ge.

Figure 3: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 4: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 5: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 6: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 7: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 8: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image



Figure 9: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 10: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 11: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 12: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 13: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 14: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 15: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 16: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 17: 2016, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 18: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





Figure 19: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.

Figure 20: 2013, Greece, ERT_hq, digital photographic image.





PANOS VARDOPOULOS

Panos Vardopoulos was born in Athens in 1956. He holds a degree in Economics from the University of Athens. He works with photography and digital image, still and moving. He conducted solo and group exhibitions in Greece, England, Italy, USA, Canada, Peru, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany. He exhibited in the Athens Photography Month, the Thessaloniki PhotoSynkyria, the Biennale of Young European and Mediterranean Artists, the Lisbon World Exhibition, the Mediaterra festival, the Skopelos Photographic Center, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art. He is a lecturer at the University of West Attica/Department of Photography and Audiovisual Arts.

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