

TO BHMA

International edition

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San Francisco Is Going Nuts Over a Giant Sea Lion Named Chonkers

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Robert McMillan

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

San Francisco is not only on the rebound, she is in love. His name is Chonkers. He is a 2,000-pound Steller sea lion who swam up to a dock on Pier 39 a month ago and has decided to stay.

The city noticed immediately. Chonkers is about three times the size of the California sea lions that typically inhabit the San Francisco Bay, and when he crashes his mighty frame down on the dock he's chosen to sleep on, it sounds like an oak tree falling down.

Online commenters quickly began tracking his every move.

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From the Telegraph to the Smartphone: How Information Technology Unified a Nation

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By John Steele Gordon

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"USA250 : The Story of the World's Greatest Economy" is a yearlong WSJ series examining America's first 250 years. Read more about it from Editor in Chief Emma Tucker.

For most of history, messages could rarely travel farther or faster than a human could shout or a horse could travel.

A series of technological revolutions radically changed all that. They started brewing around the same time as America had its own Revolution—and they would be crucial to the growth of the nation over its 250-year history.

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TO BHMA International edition

Greece Wants the World to Hear its Jazz

By Maria Paravantes

BREMEN, Germany — It's just after 10pm, and a mesmerizing mountain song of Crete can be heard blending with some urban jazz. Further away, inside one of the city's top theaters, a bold bassist breathes new life into a traditional Greek island melody, giving it a modern jazz twist.

This was all happening in the German city of Bremen, which last week hosted one of the most influential jazz trade fairs and talent showcases in the world: jazzahead! For four days, Greece was there in full force, staging shows, negotiating bookings, building networks, and

seeking pathways to international circuits.

TO BHMA International Edition was on the ground in Bremen and spoke with musicians, producers, representatives from the country's active export office, and festival organizers about how Greece is taking steps to export its music and shape a new cultural presence abroad.

Jazzahead! A springboard

Now in its 20th year, jazzahead! has become one of the most important annual meeting points for the jazz industry, bringing together labels, managers, festival directors, bookers, journalists, artists, and export offices from around the world.

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Violinist and composer Maria Manousaki brings an air of Crete to Bremen during this year's jazzahead!

TO BHMA International edition

Trumpworld: Europe Faces a New Political Reality

By George Gilson

In the 15 months since the beginning of Donald Trump's second administration, the US president has brought about a global geopolitical and economic cosmogony that has left America's friends and foes scrambling to adjust in a world in which old red lines are rapidly

vanishing and the hyper-globalization inaugurated in the 1990s is in the process of being supplanted by the state, which is making a "huge comeback".

In Europe, the new realities require a radical transformation on many levels, according to Loukas Tsoukalis, Professor at the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po and

Emeritus Professor of the University of Athens.

In an interview with TO BHMA International Edition, following his discussion on a panel with the Financial Times' chief economics commentator, Martin Wolf, at the recent Delphi Forum, Tsoukalis tells us what this radical transformation signifies for Europe.

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U.S. President Donald Trump at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, January 21, 2026.

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California sea lions basking in the sun at Pier 39, San Francisco.

San Francisco Is Going Nuts Over a Giant Sea Lion Named Chonkers

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

He swam up to Pier 39 a month ago and decided to stay, captivating locals with his massive frame and disregard for his dockmates' space

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Soon after he was spotted, a San Francisco-based Redditor named Des Tan called him Chonker, a play on chonky, which is slang for humorously chubby, and it stuck. "Chonkus Maximus is the Latin name I believe," wrote another Redditor.

Since then local posters can't seem to get enough. "Chonkers the stellar sea lion is back at Pier 39 today!" reads one post. Another is entitled, "Pier 39's Steller Sea Lion Belly Scratch Action!"

Chonkers is a Steller, a different species from his dockmates, according to Laura Gill, public programs manager with Marine Mammal Center. Her team has been tracking the giant since March 13. Stellers are lighter-colored yellowy giants that you are more likely to spot in Washington state or Alaska.

Like other visitors to the City by the Bay, he probably came for the seafood. "There's just a lot of food right now," Gill said.

Sea lions are thigmotactic, a scientific term for very social creatures who like to cuddle. And they like to

horse around. So, despite his size, Chonkers seems to fit right in. He can often be seen sunning himself on the dock, with other sea lions dozing or barking away nearby.

Last week he delighted visitors by shooting his one-ton body out of the water and hopping up on one of the floating docks west of the pier, sending two of the previously lounging 700-pound California sea lions skeetering into the bay's frigid water.

The crowd of more than 100 tourists and locals watching from Pier 39 let out a cry mixed with both awe and appreciation.

Chonkers's great leap briefly squashed the side of the structure down to the level of the water. "We didn't build those floats for 2,000-pound animals," said Sheila Chandor, harbormaster for the Pier 39 marina.

Steller sea lions will occasionally pop up at Pier 39 for a few days, but Chonkers has been here for weeks now, she said. "We're a pit stop, that's how we saw ourselves."

Every now and then sea lions try to colonize the docks used by boaters. Harbor staff try to ease them along to



Chonkers and his dockmates draw a crowd to Pier 39.

the 42 floats built to accommodate the creatures and they use big wooden panels, called herding boards, to gently shoo them away from the boat docks. Chandor isn't sure what she'd do if Chonkers tried to plop down somewhere else.

"I'm really happy to say that hasn't been a problem we've had to face," she said. "He doesn't have anything to prove and that works in our favor."

Chonkers isn't the first sea lion to capture the heart of San Francisco. In the late

19th century another Steller, called Big Ben Butler, became a local celebrity. When he died in 1895, he was stuffed and put on display at a nearby swim complex.

Ben Butler didn't frequent the Bay, though. He was a regular at the former sea lion hangout just south of the Golden Gate known as Seal Rocks.

But in 1989, shortly after the Loma Prieta Earthquake, an intrepid group of pinniped adventurers swam beneath the bridge and head-

ed east to Pier 39's K-Dock, where they decided to make a home.

It was clear immediately that they'd found their shark-free Shangri-La: No predators, lots of food and no annoying ocean waves splashing the sheltered docks.

"It used to be full boat slips where people had their boats parked," the Marine Mammal Center's Gill said. "But one sea lion told another sea lion..."

Now Pier 39 can host as many as 2,000 sea lions, de-

pending on the time of year.

Local Bay Area swimmers have mixed feelings about the sea lions, which have been known to administer bacteria-filled bites to humans.

Members of the nearby South End Rowing Club, home of many Bay swimmers, are fascinated with Chonkers and many have popped over to Pier 39 to check him out, said Vanessa Marlin, the club's president.

But there's a sense of menace, too. "When you see a sea lion, it's 'Oh no, we don't want them anywhere near us,'" she said. A few years back, a sea lion jumped into a South End rowboat. Had it been a Steller, the boat would have capsized, Marlin said.

Back during the 1989 pinniped invasion, South Enders briefly tried to reclaim the harbor around Pier 39. They jumped off Pier 39, as a local TV station rolled camera. The sea lions didn't seem to notice, said Peter Ross, one of the jumpers.

That didn't matter to the humans. "We were going to claim victory, regardless," Ross said.

From the Telegraph to the Smartphone: How Information Technology Unified a Nation

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Right from the start, the British colonies along the East Coast of America faced daunting communication problems. The settlements were strung out along 1,000 miles of coastline and 3,000 miles from Europe, and sending messages was molasses-slow. For instance, news of the Battle of Lexington—the opening shot of the American Revolution, fought on April 19, 1775—reached New York on April 21, Philadelphia three days later, Charleston about May 9, and London only on May 28.

After the Revolution, slow communications seemed like a threat to cohesion in the new nation—which was four times the size of France, the largest country in Western Europe. George Washington, for one, feared that the area west of the Appalachians might soon break away because it was so remote and it traded via the Mississippi River and New Orleans, then in Spanish hands.

Binding a nation

The new government did what it could to make communications more efficient, like establishing a reliable post office. But a new technology was in the works that would eventually unite the nation as never before, even if it would take decades for the idea to come to fruition.

As early as 1753, someone known only by his initials, C.M., had proposed in the Scots Magazine that electricity could be used to send messages down a wire. Like so many inventions of the industrial era, the electric telegraph (“writing at a distance”) was the work of many individuals, especially William Fothergill Cooke and Charles Wheatstone in England and Samuel F.B. Morse in the U.S.

Morse’s system and his marvelously efficient code—the only part of his system that was wholly Morse’s idea—soon became standard.

The telegraph began to extend across the country, using the rights of way of the fast-spreading railroads. By 1861, only 17 years after Morse had tapped out his first message via wire—“What hath God wrought?”—a telegraph line reached all the way to California, 1,500 miles west of the Mississippi, over mostly unsettled territory.

News in Boston could now be news in San Francisco the same day, and the modern media was born. It quickly evolved into a po-

At the birth of the country, its vast size made a lack of cohesion one of the biggest threats. These inventions made all the difference.



litical “fourth estate,” a term coined only in the 1830s.

The new telegraph network also made it possible for the Civil War, fought over an area larger than any previous land war in history, to be monitored—and directed—from afar. President Abraham Lincoln spent many evenings in the War Department telegraph office reading dispatches and issuing orders.

Beyond the oceans

Undersea telegraph cables soon crossed the English Channel and other narrow waters, and in 1866, American businessman Cyrus Field laid a cable across the Atlantic Ocean. Even with steamships, information had taken two weeks to get from Europe to the U.S. With the cable, it took seconds. By the 1880s, a cat’s cradle of submerged telegraph lines wound around the globe.

When Krakatau in the Dutch East Indies exploded in 1883, for instance, one of the greatest volcanic explosions in recorded history, scientists around the world knew of it within hours and set to studying its many global effects.

And with the Atlantic cable in place, the securities markets of Wall Street and London, by then the two largest in the world, could effectively merge, with prices the same in both markets.

Commodity prices as well became worldwide. “Today,” wrote Yale economist Arthur Hadley in 1886, “the wheat of Dakota, the wheat of Russia and the wheat of India come into direct competition. The supply at Odessa is an element in determining the price in Chicago.”

Telegraphy was nearly instantaneous, but it required skilled operators at each end of the line to encode and decode the message, effectively slowing transmission. The impasse was broken in 1876. That year, Alexander Graham Bell introduced a technology that let people speak across distances, not just write.

The invention was, of course, the telephone—and business took to the technology immediately. Within 10 years, the commercial districts of major cities were festooned with the new telephone wires added to the old telegraph poles.

But while business quickly adopted the telephone, it was expensive, and few families could afford one. In 1927, when the first trans-Atlantic phone calls became possible, the charge was \$25 a minute, with a three-minute minimum. At that time, \$75 was a middle-class weekly income.

Most American households wouldn’t have one until the mid-1940s. In urban neighborhoods, the local candy store often had a pay phone and acted as a message center for the surrounding area.

The empire of the air

But let’s back up for a moment, to the mid-19th century. Even as Bell introduced a technology to revolutionize communication over wires, a scientific discovery was about to eliminate the need for wires altogether.

In 1864, James Clerk Maxwell, one of the towering figures of 19th-century science, published a theory of electromagnetism, unifying

the two forces, now known as “Maxwell’s Equations.” In 1886, the German physicist Heinrich Hertz demonstrated the existence of electromagnetic waves and discovered radio waves.

Over the next decade, Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian aristocrat, developed a practical system of wireless telegraphy using radio waves. At first it could transmit only over very short distances, but by 1902, radio signals could cross the Atlantic. In 1912, the Titanic was able to radio for help, and, as the British postmaster general wrote at the time, “Those who have been saved, have been saved through one man, Mr. Marconi...and his marvelous invention.”

Inventors soon made it possible to send speech over the air, rather than just Morse code. By 1920, radio broadcasting as we know it began in the U.S. and quickly spread to wherever electricity was available.

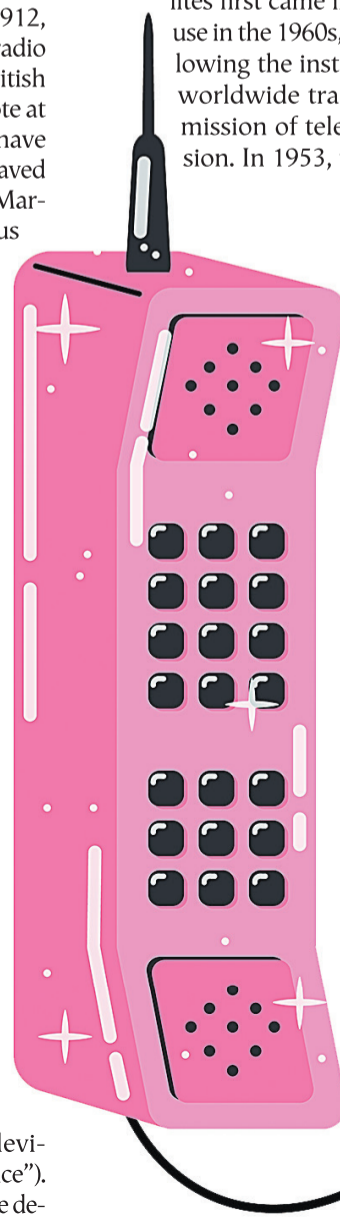
American culture and markets began to merge as they never had before. People began laughing at the same comedians and enjoying the same songs simultaneously. The new medium soon became a powerful political tool as well, such as Franklin Roosevelt’s artful use of “fireside chats.”

In turn, radio set off the search for “television” (“seeing at a distance”). Mechanical systems were de-

veloped in the 1920s, especially by the Scottish inventor James Logie Baird. Philo Farnsworth in the U.S. used the cathode-ray tube in his system, which became the standard.

World War II delayed the onset of the television age, but by 1948 it was spreading fast, and further strengthening the cultural trends radio had begun.

Communication satellites first came into use in the 1960s, allowing the instant worldwide transmission of television. In 1953, the



coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was seen on American television the next day using film that had been processed on the flight across the Atlantic. Portions of Sir Winston Churchill’s funeral in 1965 were watched live, thanks to AT&T’s Telstar satellite.

Going digital

The 1940s saw another great technological revolution begin—one that is still playing out today.

In 1945, the first programmable computer, Eniac (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), came on line. The new machine could do tasks about 1,000 times as fast as the electro-mechanical calculators that preceded it, but it was unwieldy, to say the least. Eniac had 18,000 vacuum tubes and thousands of other electronic components, as well as five million hand-soldered joints. It also sucked up 150 kilowatts of electricity and weighed about 30 tons.

The invention of the transistor in 1948 hugely reduced the size and electricity consumption of computers. In 1972 came another revolutionary leap, when the first microprocessor—a computer shrunk down onto a silicon chip—hit the market. The cost of computers began to collapse, and the power of computers soared. Today, high-school students have in their backpacks more computing power than the Pentagon had in the 1950s.

By the 1990s, the spread of personal computers enabled the growth and popularization of the internet. Meanwhile, portable phones, at first the size of bricks, were introduced in 1992. By 2006, smartphones that could fit in a pocket gave users instant access to all the world’s information and entertainment. Today, there are more smartphones in use in the world than there are people on the planet.

As the U.S. reaches its milestone anniversary, the information revolution that began at its birth is roaring along at ever greater speed and with ever greater integration. It is a good bet that, to paraphrase Al Jolson—who starred in the first talking movie a century ago—“You ain’t seen nothing yet.”

SHAWN MICHAEL JONES FOR WSJ

TO BHMA International edition



Greece Wants the World to Hear its Jazz

Greece didn't just show up at this year's jazzahead!, it made a case for itself. *TO BHMA International Edition* spoke with Greek artists and professionals about turning talent into export power

Continued from Page One

According to organizers, more than 3,000 professionals attended this year's edition. Greece was one of 60 countries participating, marking its fourth consecutive official national presence. Before that, Greek artists and producers would attend independently.

"The idea is that we can learn from each other," the festival's artistic advisor, Götz Bühler, tells *TO BHMA International Edition*. "Jazzahead! is all about people and connection." That matters because careers are often built here, he explains. Artists leave with festival invitations, booking agreements, media attention, and new touring opportunities.

For Bühler, himself a life-long jazz enthusiast, the festival offers something even more important: reassurance. "It reminds artists that they are not alone; that there is an international community out there ready to listen, connect, and support what they do."

"The festival turns 20 this year, and it would be great if culture ranked higher on political agendas," he says. "In times of despair and chaos, we need these anchors. We need hope."

Export strategy a must

Among the thousands of participants arriving from countries as far away as Chile and Chad, Greek jazz artists also came seeking

stronger visibility and direct access to the international jazz marketplace.

Under the umbrella of the Greek Culture Ministry, which organized the country's stand, Music from Greece, the country's active export office, and the Jazz Solidarity Network, artists and jazz stakeholders came to Bremen with a clear message: Greek jazz is ready to move beyond national borders.

"It's time we shifted from isolated artistic success to a fully organized and coordinated export strategy," explains Angeliki Spyridaki,

founder of Music from Greece. "That's why Greece's coordinated presence at major industry events like jazzahead! matters."

For Spyridaki, the goal is not only to give Greek artists the international opportunities they deserve, but also to reshape how Greece is seen abroad.

"Music can have an immense impact as soft power, and as such, can be a very powerful tool."

Creating opportunities

The global live music market, which includes concerts,

festivals, tours, and ticketing, is worth approximately \$35 billion. It is a major source of revenue through ticket sales, sponsorships and brand partnerships, VIP experiences, hospitality, merchandise, and festival tourism.

"Creating opportunities in this market is extremely important for Greek artists," explains Kosmas Anagnostopoulos, an engineer by profession and a jazz enthusiast who has been running the Jazz Solidarity Network (JSN) since 2023.

JSN is a community cre-

ated to support Greek jazz artists, Anagnostopoulos explains. Its activities include fundraising, promotion, and creating opportunities for sales or festival and concert participation. The network is also behind several events, including the annual Aegina Jazz Festival.

"Greece's presence here is crucial; the country's artists gain international visibility, which is extremely hard to do." He explains that for Greek musicians, geography creates an additional challenge. Touring from Athens can be far more expensive

than traveling across Central Europe by road or rail. That cost difference can determine whether an emerging act gets booked or overlooked.

Anagnostopoulos adds that on top of that, there is no state financial support comparable to that which exists in other countries. "This makes it difficult for Greek artists to remain competitive, despite being highly skilled."

The talent is already there

Few question whether Greece has the musicians. Among the most internationally recognized is Petros Klampanis, the Zakynthos-born bassist and composer whose lyrical style blends Mediterranean folk traditions with contemporary jazz. After moving from Greece to New York, he built an international career that has included performances at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Also performing at jazzahead! this year was Maria Manousaki, a violinist and composer trained at the Berklee College of Music, whose work fuses Cretan musical tradition with jazz and world music. In addition to performing, Manousaki is behind several music festivals on Crete.

Other Greek artists attending this year's jazzahead! included oud soloist



From above: jazzahead! One of the most influential jazz trade fairs and talent showcases in the world.

GREECE

Alekos Vretos, known for his distinctive mélange of Greek, Middle Eastern, and jazz sounds; Rotterdam-based pianist Yiorgos Bereris, who just released his latest album “Sea in Common”; and German-born Greek saxophonist Melina Paxinos.

The missing piece: infrastructure

What Greece lacks, explains veteran producer and booker Thrassos Irinis, is not talent but systems.

“For the past 35 to 40 years, we have been struggling to build a jazz scene in Greece. Things have definitely improved: the standard of music education has risen, a new generation of exceptionally trained young jazz artists has emerged, and there is now a roster of musicians whose skills match those of their international peers and who can easily perform on global stages. Yet they still struggle to break through,” Irinis, artistic director of the iconic Half Note Jazz Club, one of Athens’ first venues dedicated to jazz, blues, and soul, tells *TO BHMA International Edition*.

Insufficient long-term public support, coupled with the absence of a coherent policy framework, leaves artists to fend for themselves, Irinis explains. At the same time, Greek musicians often underestimate how much personal investment is required to build a career abroad, he adds. A single successful showcase is never enough; continuity and consistency are what matter. Festivals, professional networks, funding mechanisms, and meaningful state involvement create sustainability, not fleeting visibility.

Helen Kontos, who has spent more than three decades helping Greek artists such as Savina Yannatou reach international markets, says that building a career beyond Greece begins with a strong and distinctive artistic identity. Fragmented promotion, she argues, is not enough.

Artists, or their managers and booking agents (for those lucky enough to have them), must understand the practical steps involved in developing an international career. Attending trade fairs and showcase festivals such as jazzahead! offers valuable insights into how the industry operates. Building a strong professional network is equally important, she adds.

Speaking to stakeholders from Greece and abroad here at jazzahead!, one thing becomes crystal clear: if Greece wants to see its artists on international stages, sustained funding is essential.

More than just music

A musician, performer, cultural policy & development



MARIA PIRAVANTIS

Greece was one of 60 countries participating this year, marking its fourth consecutive official national presence.

specialist, and head of Music from Greece, Spyridaki adds a new dimension to the discussion. For Spyridaki, music is much more than a form of entertainment; it can generate revenue and contribute to social cohesion.

“In a world that often feels divided, culture re-

mains one of the most effective ways to bring people together; gently, yet powerfully enhancing intercultural dialogue, often with immediate results compared to policies, through interaction, mutual understanding and collaboration,” she tells *TO BHMA International Edition*.

Positioning Greek jazz and other forms of music and the arts within broader conversations gives Greece access to creative industries, strengthening the country’s position internationally.

“To do this, we need to include music export in the country’s cultural policy,

build export structures, ensure consistent public funding, and formulate a long-term international export strategy rather than merely promoting” she says.

Germany’s model: what Greece can learn

If Greece is searching for

a model, it need only look around Bremen. Germany already has one firmly in place: a system that invests in its artists, supports its music sector, and provides strong infrastructure across every stage of development, including export support.

Through Initiative Musik, Germany’s Music Export office, artists and companies can access grants for recordings, tours, marketing, live venues, and international development. It is a prime example of how a state-backed strategy can turn local talent into global presence.

With the aim of broadening international awareness of German jazz, festival organizers, club promoters, and media representatives from abroad were invited last week to a special showcase event organized by Initiative Musik during jazzahead! There, we were introduced to eight promising German acts selected by an international committee.

“The idea behind the initiative is to build bridges for emerging German artists,” explains Neus López, Head of Export and Structural Funding at Initiative Musik, “giving them a better chance to build sustainable international careers and promoting German creation.”

This year’s selected acts were: Crutches, Sarah Decker – Expand, Re: Calamari, Abase, Richard Koch – Rays of Light, Sorvina, Bonsai, and Kristina Brodersen – KRISTINA 4.

For Greece, the lesson is straightforward: talent matters, but talent without infrastructure rarely scales.

Small market, big step

Last Sunday, after four days of networking, conferences on everything from AI and music to radio programming, showcases, club nights, parties, and jam sessions, it felt rewarding to see Greece and its artists finally being included.

It’s time now to move from understanding the strategic importance of promoting Greek cultural creation to making it happen. The real test begins today, after the lights have gone out and the business cards are filed away.

Jazz may be a small market in Greece, but as a genre deeply rooted in expressive freedom, collaboration, and exchange, it has the power to open the way to something far bigger. The momentum is already there. We saw it in Bremen.

And how will we know Greece is getting it right? As Maria Manousaki put it, in words that seem to echo the hopes of many Greek artists at this year’s 20th jazzahead!: “We’ll know when people start calling you to book.”



JENS SCHLEIKER / M3B GMBH

More than 3,000 industry professionals attended this year’s edition of jazzahead!

TO BHMA International edition

This Greek Designer is Reimagining Luxury Shopping A La Grec

TC Athenian House has opened its doors in Kolonaki with handmade creations and Greek hospitality



Designer and entrepreneur Teti Charitou photographed in her showroom, in Kolonaki, Athens.

By Nansy Samaka

In the heart of Kolonaki, a new luxury experience with a uniquely Mediterranean atmosphere has come to rival larger boutiques. Instead of relying on prolific advertising, the only way to find this store is to hear about it—or miraculously stumble upon their carefully curated social media, which offer a glimpse into its world. TC Athenian House redefines haute design shopping in Greece to include the warmth of a traditional Greek household with a modern architectural flair. The high fashion house merges nostalgia with innovation, in a way that feels both intimate and elevated. *TO BHMA International Edition* was invited to discover the newly-renovated showroom, and spoke with founder and designer Teti Charitou about the vision behind her namesake brand. A vision that extends far beyond garments into a fully immersive cultural experience.

The opening of this creative space has been in the making for many years, shaped gradually through persistence, experimentation, and a clear sense of identity. Originally, the TETI CHARITOU brand was a bridal atelier and oc-

asionally crafted theatrical costumes for different plays, giving it a strong foundation in craftsmanship and storytelling. As time went on and Teti matured as a designer, both artistically and personally, she began envisioning a bigger concept that would include everyday and formal garment options. She wanted her pieces to accompany a woman through all aspects of her life.

The brand itself has been moving in that direction steadily for years prior, evolving through each collection, while the showroom was being crafted to perfection to complete the story and serve as its physical manifestation. “I’ve been renting this space and renovating it for longer than I can remember. The showroom has always been at the core of what I want to create: the clothes are only one small part of the tale. If you don’t visit the atelier, you won’t get the full effect,” Teti explains. Inspired by her love for Greek culture overall, and taking from her own experience living in Athens, TC is meant to be all being Greek encompasses. Containing its rich history, resilience, creativity, and hospitality—without compromising on style, daring designs, and a willingness to take fashion risks that challenge convention.



Teti Charitou, founder and designer of TC Athenian House.

The global high fashion scene has always been fond of Greek design, often drawing from its rich heritage and craftsmanship. Celia Kritharioti has custom made several outfits for Beyoncé down the years, bringing Greek couture to an international stage. Other notable names include ‘affordable luxury’ jeweler Anna Maria Mazarakis and designer Paris Valadoros. They have all taken up a significant amount of space in global retail, showcasing how Greek designers can successfully balance tradition with contemporary appeal.

Teti Charitou does not see her brand, TETI CHARITOU, as a competitor within this landscape. In fact, wholesale and mass production generally go directly against the ethos of TC, which prioritizes individuality and emotional connection over scale. “My purpose behind creating TC was to showcase Greek hospitality beyond the traditional food, drink and sense of community (known as *para*)” Teti explained. “We want to highlight our heritage,” she adds, emphasizing that the brand is as much about cultural storytelling, if not more so than fashion.

TC Athenian House is located inside a well-preserved 1950s neoclassical apartment block, a setting

that immediately grounds the visitor in a sense of history and place. High ceilings, arched doorways and white candles set on black candelabras characterize the showroom’s aesthetic, with a dramatic yet welcoming ambience. Natural light filters through tall windows, illuminating textures and materials that have been carefully selected to evoke both elegance and warmth.

Displays of clothing, pottery and novelty items are arranged separately and labeled like you’ve entered a museum—which is exactly the point. Each piece is given space to breathe, encouraging visitors to slow down and engage with it thoughtfully. “Our space is part showroom, part gallery. Anything you see has a story worth reading, and anything you choose to take with you will contain that story.” This philosophy transforms shopping into an act of discovery, where every object carries meaning and memory.

While browsing the shelves and clothing racks, music by the beloved Greek composer Manos Hadjidakis echoes through the space, adding an auditory layer to the experience that deepens its emotional resonance. Shoppers are offered a drink menu with standout local options, such as the wide-

GREECE

ly enjoyed freddo espresso and traditional aged tsipouro from Macedonia, reinforcing the sense of hospitality that defines the brand. If you look close enough, you will notice that everything—even the ice cubes in the drinks served—are branded with the TC logo, a testament to the meticulous attention to detail that permeates every aspect of the space. Artist collaborations are also a big part of the brand's identity, serving as a platform for creative exchange. "There are so many young Greek designers who are doing really unique things." Through creative partnerships in homeware and special edition wearables, Teti wants to showcase "Greece as it is now" by reimagining classic designs and pushing them forward. The 'Greek Proverbs' ceramic vases created in partnership with Antigone Ceramics and the Theros tabletop lamps designed in tandem with Studio Aristotelis Barakos are the standout collectors' items, embodying this dialogue between past and present.

The rise of second-hand shopping brought with it a renewed appreciation for couture and garments made to last, as consumers began to question the sustainability of fast fashion. Reflecting on the ever-changing qualities of Athens, designer Teti Charitou feels that Greece has "truly become a European country." There is a clear shift towards better quality of life on all levels, with a greater awareness of sustainable practices and mindful consumption. Several loyal shoppers of fashion giants like Chanel have complained about quality and longevity of products being compromised in favor of faster production cycles. New videos online of people showing off new luxury purchases that after just a couple wears break or scratch continuously go viral, sparking conversations about value, authenticity, and craftsmanship. Within this context, TC positions itself as an alternative—one that values durability, intention, and emotional connection over fleeting trends.

In the world of Teti Charitou, the term 'pret-a-porter' is used very loosely, almost redefined to suit a slower, more thoughtful approach to fashion. The designs in her permanent collections (Grammi, NEON and the newest addition Roe) are made in limited quantities (about 30 units per garment), but can also be made-to-order once sold out, ensuring that demand does not lead to unnecessary surplus. "Fashion is an extremely wasteful business. It is vital to us that we limit our production waste as much as possible," Teti



A photo of the original sketch and the resulting garment in the NEON collection.



PANOS KOUGIAS/TO BHMA INTL EDITION

PANOS KOUGIAS/TO BHMA INTL EDITION

tells *TO BHMA International Edition*. This commitment to sustainability does not stop at the manufacturing level. Once you've picked out a wearable piece that speaks to you, it is wrapped in a custom-created cotton

cloth and secured with the brand's monogram TC pin, transforming packaging into a keepsake rather than disposable waste. No detail is spared, no excess plastic is used; these same rules apply to the accessories and every

other item sold, reinforcing a holistic approach to responsible design.

When ateliers and made-to-order clothing dominated the Athenian market, trying on samples always meant having a

seamstress on hand to assist you, creating a highly personalized experience. This was especially true of richer Greek households, where seamstresses would often work with clients in their living rooms, forming close relationships built on trust and understanding. To bring back that tradition, the changing room at TC has been created to allow clients to try on clothes with the assistance of a sales associate, recreating that sense of care and attention. "People can opt out of this if they would rather not have someone dress them, but to me it is the epitome of luxury," Teti explains as she presents the changing room space. "We want our clients to feel truly cared for, in the same way that our great-great-grandmothers had their own personal seamstresses." This approach elevates the act of trying on clothes into a ritual, one that honors both heritage and individuality.

Balancing out tradition with modernity can be a tough trick to pull off, but for this home-grown business it comes naturally, as both elements are deeply embedded in its identity. Special thanks to Panos Kougias (Director & Social Media Manager) for his contributions for the NEON collection

→ Interior of TC Athenian House, homeware and accessories section.



↑ Aged tsipouro, as served in TC Athenian House with a custom monogrammed ice cube.

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Trumpworld: Europe Faces a New Political Reality

In an interview with *TO BHMA International Edition*, Loukas Tsoukalis, Professor at the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po, discusses how Europe's new realities call for a profound transformation across multiple levels

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The subject of your panel at the Delphi Economic Forum was economics versus politics: Who wins in a Trumpian world? Why economics versus politics?

It was me who proposed the title and Martin Wolf agreed. If you go back 20 or 30 years ago, we were told in times when neoliberalism was at its peak and there was only one superpower, namely the United States that markets ruled and Politics would take a back seat, the state as well.

What we have been witnessing more recently is exactly the reversal of this, namely the state is making a huge comeback in terms not only of security, but also in terms of industrial policy. And politics takes supremacy over economics through, for example, the weaponization of international economic interdependence. The United States uses that a great deal, also the Chinese, and the Europeans are trying to defend themselves. So that's what we meant by the title.

Do you think that Trump administration's approach puts the state front-and-center in other countries as well?

President Trump is the global disruptor par excellence. But it is not only Trump. Liberal globalization and the markets' rule had suffered even before he came back to power. From a US point of view, it allowed the emergence of a new superpower, namely China, which took advantage of this liberal economic order, but also because globalization created a large number of losers within developed countries, most notably in the United States. The difference between the US and Europe is that Europeans have a developed welfare state which alleviates the negative effects on losers from trade. Americans don't, so the only thing they have in the United States is protectionism, and this is precisely what President Trump uses.

How effective is that? Tariffs are meant to be

beautiful but they do not exactly deliver the goods. President Trump proclaimed a world in which tariffs would bring back industrial production to the United States and give jobs to the workers. But there are so many things produced in China and Asia more generally that can no longer be produced in the US. Simply in terms of economic efficiency, there's no way of doing that. Tariffs are a disruptor, but they're not going to bring about a huge reversal in the international division of labor.

Regarding the way Trump views the world—let's take first of all the Euro-Atlantic relationship. He seems to have put the European Union in the trash bin. How do you see that developing so far? Do you think the EU is going to be able to consolidate and have an estimable geopolitical presence in a Trump world?

I would go even further. President Trump has launched a frontal attack on many of the things that Europe has for a long time stood for, including liberal democracy, individual rights, inclusive societies, the rights of minorities, climate policy, and last but not least, regional integration. He considers the EU almost as an alien organization. It is true, however, that every US president, with virtually no exception, has preferred dealing with individual European countries rather than Brussels.

President Trump has crossed all kinds of red lines, most notably with respect to Greenland. And he has been

'Europeans need to add a defense dimension to what essentially used to be a peace project, which is European integration'



Loukas Tsoukalis, Professor at the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po and Emeritus Professor of the University of Athens.

negotiating with Russia on Ukraine treating President Putin as a more serious interlocutor than his other European counterparts. Europeans are beginning, slowly and painfully, to adjust to this new reality.

It takes time. Some are adjusting faster than others. Now there is a growing sense of unity among Europeans but it takes time to abandon established ideas that you have held for decades.

What are the necessary adjustments that the Europeans must make, in your view?

Europeans need to add a defense dimension to what essentially used to be a peace project, which is European integration. Secondly, they have to couple trade liberalization with industrial policy at home, including more and coordinated investments in key sectors together with a capital markets union. Last

but not least, Europeans, Brussels in particular, have to start to think geopolitically. It will take time. And one of the major problems we have today is that leadership in Europe is weak.

One month before the American elections I interviewed Trump's former National Security Advisor John Bolton, and he remembered that in 2018 at a NATO summit, Trump was on the verge of taking the US out of NATO. And so he and General Kelly persuaded the President at the last minute not to go forward. What do you see as the future of NATO in the Trumpian era?

Europeans consider the US as an indispensable partner and will do all they can to keep the US as part of NATO. Of course, the higher the perceived secu-

rity threat from Russia the more dependent are Europeans on US protection. At some point, they will need to talk with Russia not only via intermediaries.

At the same time, Trump is saying to the Europeans, "I don't want to defend you anymore. Pay your bills and get lost." He's saying it very clearly. Still, there are so many Americans who realize that

'European public opinion is becoming increasingly critical of President Trump and consequently the leaders of far right parties are also taking their distances'

NATO is not only useful for the Europeans, but also very useful for the Americans. We are in times of big transition. The combination of geopolitics, geoeconomics and a new technological revolution are creating an almighty change in the world. And it's very difficult to predict what's going to happen, even more so because you have the president of the still most powerful country in the world who has made unpredictability a key factor of his foreign policy.

In the United States, Trump has made a lot of headway in dismantling the rule of law, and we see that sort of spreading contagiously, I think, abroad to Europe and elsewhere. Is what he's doing in the United States being seen as a model in certain European countries and affecting us in that way?

That's one side of the story, namely President Trump supporting far-right parties in Europe. But European public opinion is becoming increasingly critical of President Trump and consequently the leaders of far right parties are also taking their distances. Take Giorgia Meloni in Italy, a former admirer of the US President. She has unequivocally condemned the attack on Iran and criticised in strong terms his treatment of the American Pope.

Trump's actions have made it clear that he doesn't believe there is international law. In a January interview with the *New York Times* he was asked what are the limits of his power and he replied "Yeah, there is one thing. My own morality. My own mind. It's the only thing that can stop me."

He's not the first US president who does not consider respect of international law as one of his priorities, for that matter, alas, together with leaders of other big powers. But President Trump does it without any camouflage.