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Carwan Gallery / Photo: Giorgos Sfakianakis

In Athens? Check Out These Three New Galleries in Nearby Piraeus

By **Anastasia Miari**
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Piraeus, a port city about 20 minutes by car from the [Athens city center](#), is easy to dismiss as little more than a departure point for boats to the islands. Recently, though, a creative crowd has trickled in, [transforming abandoned maritime warehouses into hip art spaces](#).

In particular, a single block of Polidefkous Street, mere steps from the ferry terminals, has seen three new high-end exhibition spaces pop up in the last couple of years. These galleries may be über-contemporary, but they lean on the traditional architecture and cultural influences of the neighborhood. Artemis Baltoyanni, the founder of The Intermission, was attracted to both the expansive interiors and the immigrant-influenced underground scene in Piraeus, which has been a hotbed of the Greek urban folk music *rebetiko*.



John Knight's *Headshots*, a *Work in Situ* at The Intermission / Photo: Stathis Mamalakis

"Practically speaking, the architecture of the space, particularly the height, was appealing to me," says Baltoyanni, who also cites "the fact that our area is an extension of the port—rather chaotic during the day, with activities that are mostly concerned with shipping."

Adjacent to The Intermission is another showroom, Rodeo. Founder Sylvia Kou- vali, a friend of Baltoyanni's, was also drawn by the feel of the neighborhood. "It's the spirit of the port and its people that I like about Piraeus," she explains, looking up at the soaring ceilings and wooden beams of her converted warehouse. "The architecture is unique for the Attica peninsula—you only encounter it in places like Lavrion or Venice, or some parts of Istanbul, where I had a gallery."



Hadi Fallahpishneh's *Young and Clueless* at Rodeo / Photo: Stathis Mamalakis

Just down the street is the design-focused Carwan Gallery. Both Rodeo and Carwan are offshoot galleries, the former spun off from a place in London, the latter from a defunct spot in the port area of Beirut. "The energy in Piraeus reminds us of Beirut," says Carwan director Adele Ferruzzi. "It's a melting pot, a working area, a womb of craftsmanship, with a constant exchange of people."

While the vibe may be local, the art is global. Carwan's latest exhibition boasts pieces by Norwegian designer Sigve Knutson, Rodeo is currently showing futuristic works by French artist David Douard, and The Intermission's next show, opening January 14, features installations by American artist Cooper Jacoby. Artists, too, are opening their own studios in the neighborhood. Yioryios Papayioryiou, a sculptor and painter who recently moved from Australia to Athens, is at work refashioning a nearby boat garage. The area's popularity makes sense, he says: "Artists love a port."

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