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## **Demetris Koilalous**

CAESURA

The Duration of a Sigh

Texts by Demetris Koilalous, Bill Kouwenhoven

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**In portraits and landscapes, this series reflects the transitory state of refugees who have crossed the Aegean Sea on their way to Europe.**

*Caesura* is a collection of photographs about the transitory state of the people who entered Greece after crossing the Aegean Sea – the infamous »death passage« – on their way from their homelands in Asia and Africa to the land of promise and hope: Europe. Typically the term »caesura« means the brief silence in the middle of a poetic verse or a musical phrase – used in this context as a metaphor for a silent break amid two violent periods.

The characters in *Caesura* take on temporary identities as they pose for the camera in frames of transition and uncertainty. The photographs do not attempt to provide answers or make a historic statement about this mass exodus by simply exposing human agony. Rather, they seek to raise questions about the human condition and identity.

*»Caesura makes its point by depicting people stuck in limbo, whether in a Dantean Purgatorio or, perhaps more appropriately, on that sort of journey Orpheus and Eurydice faced passing through the underworld of Greek mythology. Here, in these barren, luminous spaces – the sites he chooses do indeed look like the setting for epic dramas where the gods – EU bureaucrats? – jest and toy with human protagonists over decisions of life and death – in this case, who gets a visa, who gets deported, who gets stuck in (apologies for mixing metaphors) a Byzantine, even Kafka-esque, paper chase and condemned like Sisyphos, not to push a rock up a hill for all eternity, but to find yet more documentation to justify one's passage into a better world.«*

– from the text by Bill Kouwenhoven

**Demetris Koilalous** was born in Athens; he has been working as a freelance photographer since 1990, specializing in portrait and theatre photography. He has collaborated with many public and private organisations, central and local government institutions, museums, and national, regional and municipal theatres; his works have been published in many Greek magazines and newspapers. Since 2004, he has been teaching photography in private and public institutions.

His works are found in numerous private collections, as well as in the collection of the Museum of Photography of Thessaloniki. His work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in festivals and galleries in Greece (the Benaki Museum, Athens; the Museum of Photography, Thessaloniki; the Museum of Contemporary Art of Crete, Rethymno; and the Chios Photo Festival), France (Les Boutographies – Rencontres Photographiques de Montpellier), Ireland (the PhotoIreland Festival, Dublin), USA (the Aperture Summer Open, New York and CENTER, Santa Fe, New Mexico), Australia (the Head On Photo Festival, Sydney), Malaysia (the Kuala Lumpur International Photoawards), Wales (the Millennium Centre and the Turner House, Cardiff), Georgia (the Kolga Tbilisi Photofestival) and Lithuania (the Yicca Awards, Vilnius) and has received numerous awards and distinctions.

[www.demetriskoilalous.com](http://www.demetriskoilalous.com)

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Barbara Karpf, [barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com](mailto:barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com)  
Sandra Dürdoth, [sandra.duerdoth@kehrerverlag.com](mailto:sandra.duerdoth@kehrerverlag.com)  
Kehrer Verlag, Wieblinger Weg 21, 69123 Heidelberg, Germany  
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