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## HYÈRES 2013: PETROS EFSTATHIADIS JURY GRAND PRIZE IN PHOTOGRAPHY



*Man with Apples, Liparo, 2008 Petros Efstathiadis*

“This is the year that Greece is going to win.” When these words resonated, April 28th, [Petros Efstathiadis](#) closed his eyes. Being the only Greek in the competition, he realized that he was winning the Jury Grand Prize of Photography of the 28th International Festival of Fashion and Photography in Hyères 2013. Here’s the story.

Through Petros, Greece is winning, and with it a raw, humble and serious type of photography. A type of photography which smells of sulfur and exudes a photojournalistic style. Attentive to his country, concerned with the crisis it is trapped in, Petros devises some playful representations (*Liparo*) and creates some sculptures (*Bombs*), with people and objects that come from his small village in northern Greece. The subjects are relatives or neighbors and the objects are from backyards or warehouses. The eye is focused locally and the movement, as we could have guessed, is inductive. By looking closely at what he knows by heart, Petros intends to reflect on his country as well as Europe. This aesthetic and theme show how the festival, staying away from stylized effects, knows how to underline all type of emerging photography as long as they are sought-after.

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*Cannon, Liparo, 2011 Petros Efstathiadis*

With Petros, there are no ancient columns nor pristine islands. *“The notion of Greece with its blue skies, sandy beaches and happy people, all the clichés, is not the heart of this country.”* It’s a radically different landscape, one of a Balkan Greece stained with Eastern colors, which the photographer is showing at Hyères. Another spatial *and* temporal reality is a movement against a general forgetting of what this continent went through in the past that his pictures become a reminder of.

The style is realistic, the look uncompromising and the violence diffused. However, Petros’ Greece has nothing in common with the country which is outlined on our TV screens.

Everywhere, poetry: in models’ eyes, in installations’ fragility, in the vibrant look to the past, in fake petrol bombs’ harmlessness. Petros is ready to fight but only with flowers, *“la fleur au fusil”* as we say in French.



*Bomb #1, Bombs, 2012 Petros Efstathiadis.*

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*Petros Estathiadis Hyères 2013 photo by Girls meet Paris*

And what about his process? Petros calculates as much as he improvises. He starts by writing down his ideas – which can take quite long. Then it's time for construction, letting surprise elements come into it. The composition completed, he takes a few photographs, destroys everything and then puts everything back where it belongs. A laborious process which accelerates incredibly at the time of shooting in order to better accentuate the act of photography. What Petros does, in other words is recompose reality. And really, what is photography other than reconstructing reality? Perhaps more than Greece, it is this love of the medium that the jury wanted to reward.

This year, it is Greece that won. A Greece that smells like powder and adds some flowers to its Molotov cocktails. A Greece far away from postcards and not so close to the sad reality. A Greece revealed by a particular eye. *By Aurélie Laurière in collaboration with Girls meet Paris*

