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## **Petros Efstathiadis**

### *Gold Rush*

Part of Athens Photo Festival 2018

Duration: June - July 2018

(\* August by appointment)

CAN Gallery is pleased to present the winner of the prestigious 2018 HSBC Award **Petros Efstathiadis**.

In his second solo show in Athens the artist presents his prize-winning series entitled *Gold Rush* (2016-2018). These large-scale photographic works capture an idiosyncratic universe of objects and structures built entirely from scratch in Liparo, a remote village of Macedonia in northern Greece, where he stages most of his constructions. Following a precise and detailed script-like list, the artist for several days carefully collects and assembles haphazard raw materials building them into something that carries just the right amount of information.

Attempting to recreate the feeling of a boom town that is constructed around the desire of becoming wealthy, the artist connects the California and Klondike Gold Rush to his native village. Indeed, the new pipeline that comes from Azerbaijan passing across Greece crosses Liparo, where locals -in their vast majority farmers- have desperately tried to escape from the economic deadlock by signing off contracts to sell their land for the gas pipeline project.

Through the repetition of carefully chosen objects and interplay of structures of a rapidly developing settlement - a bridge, a store, a bank, a church, or local services, the *Gold Rush* series recreate this feeling of a booming colony. Efstathiadis' *Gold Rush* however, is not inspired so much by greed, as by delusion. The dream of discovering a treasure in the present day, the belief that finding gold and earning money quick will make life easier is a staged fantasy of capitalism and at the same time, a testimony of the destruction capitalism is causing.

These meticulous installations that often take the form of life-size sculptures are completely destroyed right after the shooting is done. Surviving only through their impressions on the photographic medium they leave the viewer wondering; Are they reflections of a distant past, or of a scary nearby future?

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In addition, images like the iconic *Preacher's House* reference classic American photographers of the Great Depression era like Walker Evans. Both Efstathiadis' and Evans' buildings stand like props; A mere facade with nothing behind, like a filmset out of a Hollywood movie. Fiction and reality however, magically blend creating the sense that the works are born out of authentic necessity.

As Efstathiadis says, "The whole thing needs to have a root in a certain place, in some story and in something real. To be a documentation, and to be political." *Gold Rush* is therefore a visual summary, essential for the collective memory. With his artistic self-confidence and radical, intensely personal vision Efstathiadis preaches a new gospel. *Gold Rush* is thus brilliantly located at the intersection of cinematic realism and theatrical spectacle, a parable of rapacious capitalism and a sometimes desperate adventure.

**BIO.** Petros Efstathiadis (b. 1980) graduated from the University for the Creative Arts Farnham, UK and now lives in his native country, Greece. Recent institutional shows include NiMac, Nicosia, Cyprus (2018); Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, New York, USA; Foto Forum Galerie, Bolzano, Italy (2017); *Equilibrists*, Benaki Museum, Athens; Izolyatsia Foundation, Kiev, Ukraine (2016); Serlachius Museum, Mänttä, Finland (2015); He has also presented work in MED Photo Festival, Rethymnon, Greece; BredaPhoto Photo Festival, Breda, Netherlands; Gibellina Photoroad, Gibellina, Italy; Circulation Photography Festival, Paris, France; Athens Photo Festival, Athens, Greece; Plovdiv Photography Festival, Bulgaria; 28<sup>e</sup> and 29<sup>e</sup> Festival International de Mode & Photographie d'Hyères, Hyères, France; Vevey Festival of Images, Vevey, Switzerland; CAN Christina Androulidaki gallery, Athens, Greece; Galerie Clementine de la Feronniere, Paris, France; Xippas Gallery, Athens, Greece; Galerie Le Réverbère, Lyon, France; He has been a guest lecturer at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), at the School of Applied Arts (CEPV) in Vevey, Switzerland and at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium. His work has been published in Wallpaper\* magazine, Monocle, Domus, Jeu de Paume, The Guardian and Le Monde. His first monograph entitled *Liparo* was published in 2018 by Xavier Barral editions.

Efstathiadis' works can be found in HSBC Corporate Art Collection; DESTE Foundation Collection and in various private collections in Europe and America.

Upcoming solo exhibitions:

Musée de la Photographie, Mougins, France | July 20 - September 16, 2018  
L'Arsenal, Metz, France | September 27 - October 29, 2018

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