

## Manolis D. Lemos, solo show

### *Feelings*

Duration: 14.06.19 - 12.10.19

Three years after his last solo show in Greece, **Manolis D. Lemos** presents a solo exhibition entitled *Feelings* that includes a series of paintings, sculptures, photographs, a video and a book. Through a continuous and ongoing production process that he developed in collaboration with Konstantinos Daskalakis, his research team at MIT and a Deep Neural Network, the artist creates work with the help of an artificial intelligence and an abstracted, quite esoteric narrative approach that attempts to blur the clarity of concepts such as authorship, poetic gesture, moral responsibility and emotional expression, while continuously reflecting upon and envisioning the future.

Bio. Manolis D. Lemos (b. 1989, Athens) lives and works in Athens. He studied at the Athens School of Fine Arts (2007-2012) and at the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London. He works in a variety of media like painting, video, photography, sculpture, installation and sound that focus on the ways we dream about tomorrow and on examples of former states of prosperity that deteriorated reflecting on the ways these could be projected onto the future. In 2018 he exhibited his work at the New Museum Triennial "Songs for Sabotage" in New York, curated by Alex Gartenfeld and Gary Carrion-Murayari and received the Stavros Niarchos Foundation artist fellowship. He has also completed an 8 month residency at the Pavillon Neuflyze OBC of Palais de Tokyo in Paris and has participated in several initiatives of 89plus, an international research project co-founded by Simon Castets and Hans Ulrich Obrist. His solo exhibitions include "Tomorrow's Corporate Love (Forgetting from Athens)" in Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2017; "Crooked Grid Crude Carrier", 2015 and "Feral Remnants/Oinousses", 2013 in CAN Christina Androulidaki Gallery, Athens.

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Over the phone, Manolis tells me that most of the show is part of an ongoing process using Deep Learning, the broad field of research by which non-sentient create systems like neural networks. It creates for inputted data a broad range of potentially affective responses through proliferating rules, and can feature various degrees of actual human supervision.

With no explanation, Manolis sent me the Wikipedia entry for Constantinos Daskalakis. I ask him if this is a relation.

Constantinos is a professor at MIT's Electrical Engineering and Computer Science department and a member of the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. Formally, this show began with Manolis creating about 1000 rudimentary drawings, in an idiosyncratic abstract manner that at times suggests landscape. Constantinos and his research team produced and used two deep learning algorithms that sought to "learn" his cousin's way of drawing; and then create statistically likely landscapes evocative of Manolis's associations of images to feelings.

The paintings themselves are monochromes with drawn lines that appear to have been scratched, or applied with pressure and speed. More in a lyrical primitive way than in a violent way, and perhaps in a mode that suggests casual damage or erasure. Their connecting title is *Stray Horizons, Future Landscapes* and in each work one can notice a horizon line that has been displaced.

In Manolis' words, 'silver has always been the color of imagining the future, whereas brown is the inside of the earth', and 'if there's a horizon line it's a landscape'.

Manolis has also made sculptures that interpret samples of diagram lines as netted galvanized steel, in curved fence-like forms, or in the form of columns from different charts, partially filled with Greek pink marble rubble.

The exhibition is titled "Feelings", which typically involve authenticity. One might say that Manolis's work today has used observations on social transformation (and their spectral possibilities) to parody or critique the potential to achieve this same authenticity.

The painting works rehearse a history of avant-garde gestural and conceptual modes of treating canvas, and the ideological positions of each. They look above and below these suggestions. An examination of the non-human relies upon a definition of the human, which Manolis has displaced from feeling to citizenship. Or, obligations to sentience; or recognition of others.

As a starting point of the exhibition Manolis has included a book-sculpture glibly titled *Spurt*, and as an ending point a new video work that relates to the book's short story.

The book begins:

"Who's responsible for anything," she wondered as she gazed at the screen on her desk. Responsibility is motherless, it doesn't belong to anyone. She anticipated what was about to happen, but she didn't want to overthink it. The world knows.

Manolis's work to date has involved social transformations that have given over to style, a process that is writ large on this most recent project. It is difficult to find traditional sources of critique in this work, because the humanist values that informed them are giving way, breaking into systems that are as big as they are small.

**Alex Gartenfeld**  
Artistic Director, ICA Miami