

## Manolis Baboussis

in his latest solo exhibition *Beyond Planning* unfolds his personal experience through installation, poems, drawings and photographs and constructs an unexpected story that shares real and fictitious elements. The artist makes a biographical statement presenting works from different chronological periods using a variety of media. The power of his artistic expression is the ability to comment on matters of common concern such as the existence of human nature, nature itself, beauty and disaster.

Manolis Baboussis invites the viewer to think, feel and wonder about spaces that have to do with memory whether it is collective, individual, social or existential. However, the main concern of Manolis Baboussis is the existence of the wall that dominates in his body of work. The wall as a notion and as part of a structural system. The work *Untitled* comments on the solid and profound social relationships where communication is a plasmatic process. He constructs a large scale sculpture from cement blocks and a set of chairs. He blocks the space between the seated persons thus preventing any kind of social interaction that could hypothetically be developed. The assemblage of the cement blocks creates a peculiar spiritual space and stretches the idea of an unrevealed situation as well as the need for something to be discovered. The choice of simple rough building materials (like wood and cement) enhances the architectural concerns of the artist.

The wall again is present in many of his drawings aiming to orientate physical space and the way that it is being formulated. Sometimes this wall is steady and sometimes it can be moved in order to create specific social conditions.

The natural elements prevail in his drawings and photographs attempting to emphasize the existence of nature in our social relationships. Humans are at the same dominant and absent. You can see them or presume their existence. The role of the human presence/absence is crucial as it develops the notion of the social transformation of space.

What is the role of architecture in everyday life? How do we perceive space and time and how do we interpret the environment and especially the urban landscape that is being constantly transformed? The importance of architecture is crucial as we need to reconsider its role in contemporary society and the way we deal with stereotypes. Manolis Baboussis proposes a new way of perceiving public space in order to understand our personal space. As he states in one of his poems: "...I view half of the face, hear half of the voices, the rest, radio jamming, in the city, we walk together in the country side, I view the trees in half, the sky, you aren't a stranger under the moon..." This sense of nostalgia also prevails in his photographs where he captures emotional moments again connected to human presence or absence. The unique accuracy of his photographs is the combination of conceptual and pictorial elements with social and political concerns.

Nostalgia, beauty, disaster, existential agony are also expressed through his poems. The poems are the literal metaphor of his works. They complete the personal universe that he wishes to communicate through his works. Simple in expression but with deep symbolisms the poems reveal an inner critique on personal and collective matters. The artist also poses questions regarding cultural industry and the role of art. He quests inspiration and tries to detect the importance of it. As a contemporary flâneur and urban explorer he records his thoughts creating a personal anthology.

Manolis Baboussis chooses to present together his photographs, drawings, poems and sculpture as a unique installation that arranges these “objects” in a sensitive manner in order to create a variety of emotions, relationships, affiliations and contradictions. Thus, inside the gallery, he articulates a very personal space, an exhibition that gathers together the components of his visual vocabulary. The uniqueness of this display is the fact that the viewer can see it as a whole or each piece as a unique commentary. There is not a linear narration that someone could follow but the narration is being constructed according to the personal and collective experiences. The intentional absence of time and space, the unidentified environment and location helps to formulate a kind of time-capsule, a documentation of ideas, images and thoughts on the contemporaneity of social matters.

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