

## **Solimán López \_ Re-Set: a short essay by Lena Theodoropoulou**

Solimán López's artistic practice achieves a celebration of the present, the contemporary, through the unification of tools and objects that come from the past, with the technology of the future. While his main field of research and practice is new technology, his artworks do not disappear in an impersonal network, but are present in the here and now of the social realm where he performs.

As the resident of **Create an Accident** at **Mercouri Estate**, Solimán López produces and presents the project Re-Set. Exploring and exhausting the natural environment, the tools and the history of the rural space where López was staying for three weeks, his final project is a fragmented narration of the conflict, the discontinuity and the occasional harmony between the natural, the technological and the human body. These three bodies participate in the artist's game in equal terms, interacting with each other, changing forms and shapes.

Re-Set is composed by six separate parts, where the artist, constantly present in the work, functions as the mediator between the awkward coexistence of technology with nature.

### **The Messenger**

The project is introduced with 'the Arrival', the arrival of the body of the artist that will uncover the TV sleeping on the beach. He will try to return it back to the sea, but as this action appears to be impossible, the artist will have to work on the coexistence of technology with nature. A first experiment of this interaction is 'The Attached', a series of photos where the human body and technology are trying to find their position in the natural environment they inhabit. This experiment will be interrupted by "The Incident", with its final resolution being 'The Hosting', the unification of the three powers in a single, aesthetically impressive formation.

### **Meatamorphosis**

A TV stands in an empty room, showing the image of an ancient sculpture. On top of the TV a piece of meat is rotting slowly, giving life to the frozen screen and transforming the image of the ancient cold marble. Having already introduced technology to nature, Solimán López takes a step back in order to expand his original artistic questions, putting the notions of communication and history in the picture. The raw meat, pure flesh with no other distinctive characteristics could equally refer to the human body or to a wild animal. In any case, this coalition between human and nature stands in contradiction but yet close to the immobile representation of history on a still screen.

*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas/ corpora;* ("I intend to speak of forms changed into new entities ;"), writes Ovid, in the opening lines of the poem *Metamorphosis*. In the same spirit and following the Latin poet's belief in constant change, López presents a visual amalgam of the forces that form the current natural and social narration, opening up some space for their critical approach.

## **D-Olimpo**

The ruins of Olympia stand in harmony with the surrounding natural environment. This calmness of the ancient landscape gets interrupted by the appearance of some androgynous characters that are looking for their own way to fit in this historical narration. Is it the sudden appearance of transformed ancient gods or the human body in its digital representation? In any case, these new bodies are part of the current history, or part of a forthcoming future and they are claiming their own space in the narrative of the landscape.

## **RGB**

Three vehicles are photographed in front of three different backgrounds. Their original use would be the transportation of their user to a different location. In these pictures though they remain still and yet active, as the logo designed on them has now become a means of transport. The viewer, through the free mobile application AURASMA can use them for a digital relocation on the web. What kind of information is encrypted though? While the vehicle originally would take its user wherever they would chose, now it is the artist that has decided the virtual relocation of the viewer, commenting on the secret and censored internet information.

## **ANTIVIRUS**

The artist is now in front of an old house in an outfit that indicates his intentions. The sign outside the building, stating that this is the house of 'The Internet' comes to contradict the viewer's first impression that the image refers to the past. On the contrary, the sign of the Internet implies that the old house is inhabited by something contemporary, an element though that has to be cleaned, washed, exterminated or just reset. The inside of the building is in accordance with its external appearance. It looks abandoned and mysterious but yet beautiful and charming. There is no sign of viruses or anything that would remind us of the World Wide Web but the body that has come to 'fix' it continues the cleaning process as if he has put himself in a completely normal situation. In any case, the chosen tools for the process match perfectly the surroundings, making an ironic comment on the contemporaneity of the virtual network that is somehow present there. The artist finally leaves the house in the same way he entered, without having left any visual traces.

## **Gutenberg Discontinuity**

The residency of Solimán López at Mercouri Estate is completed with the presentation of the work he produced and a live performance that has already taken place in different parts of the world. This final project is a ritual, a burial ceremony of the main symbol of technology, the computer. Each computer is accompanied by a unique file, a 3D representation of a hard disc. While every single of these objects is unique and their burial signifies a death, or an ending, they are obviously reproducible, diminishing thus the importance of their existence and disappearance. The memory they take with them might already be saved on another hard disc, reproduced an infinite amount of times, an action that guarantees the immortality of digital art. On the other hand though, this performance is a reminder of the importance of every single action, the materiality of the objects and brings in the picture a potential ending to a technology that we like to think as eternal.