

A world of machines

Purity and clarity of colours; precision in the composition; a solid, austere and contemplative use of form; vivacity and a scenographic practice that is decisively and clearly reflected in the end result: these are the elements that define this set of photographs by Christophoros Doulgeris, a series he has been working on for the past four years. The photo series depicts factories, industrial spaces and machinery. The photographs constitute a comprehensive proposition and configuration, a diverse connection of images and situations, an artistic concept, a cohesive artistic environment, one that is original and imaginative, gripping, allusive and abundant, rich in content, connotations and multiple readings. Doulgeris' images address, communicate and interact with, evoke and aspire to something that extends beyond the manifest. These photos are imposing, by virtue of their power and exceptional aesthetic. The machines –some out of order with visible signs of wear and terminal obsolescence; others modern and robust, at the peak of their function, but mostly autonomous and independent of the production chain they belong

to– acquire a monumental quality, towering over space. They resemble surprising, postmodern “still lives” or archeological finds, evidence of industrial age technology or expressive futuristic sculptures. They are remarkable for the dynamism of their form, the powerful plasticity of their masses, their shining metal surfaces, their steely architecture and geometrical design. The machines possess a life and defence of their own, acquiring a new role thanks to a process of transformation, reconstruction and “metamorphosis”. The artist expands and goes beyond the mere recording and capturing of the machines (although this function is neither negated or omitted), aspiring to build a comprehensive, systematic and well-documented archive.

The machines are approached and immortalised like peculiar portraits or members of the human body. Doulgeris' distinctive gaze and composition is conducive to such an approach, thanks to his symmetrical and balanced staging, the particular angles he chooses, and his distinctive combination of light, colour and cutting-edge image processing techniques. The atmosphere and environment surrounding the machines, as well as the general views of the interior and exterior of the industrial plants hosting them, acquire an unexpected, ambivalent, metaphysical and surreal tension. The photographs in this series build narrations about the past, present and future.

Life, creation and death, technological evolution, the crucial and controversial relationship between man and machine, are all prominent concepts that accentuate the more or less explicit symbolic references. Even the most modern machine will become obsolete and fall into disuse in the not too distant future. This photo series explores precisely this course, aided by the unique, almost experiential relationship Doulgeris has forged with his subject-matter, and by a conceptual approach, in which powerful ideas coexist with the exceptional technique of his sublime in situ photography. The relationship between aesthetic and cognitive value is mutual; beauty, perhaps magic as well, are present and elusive at the same time.

Giannis Bolis – Domna Gounari