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INTERVIEW: NIKOS ZAFEIROPOULOS

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Image courtesy of Nikos Zafeiropoulos

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Luca Curci talks with **Nikos Zafeiropoulos** during the **17th Edition of VENICE INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR**, at **Palazzo Albrizzi-Capello**.

He lives and works in Athens, Greece. At the beginning of 2023, he presented his first solo exhibition entitled LOOK BACK, under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture, hosted at the Panteion University of Athens. Its interdisciplinary project aimed to visually examine the abandonment of places and villages in modern, economically weakened Greece. His new photography project entitled VISUAL WINE is a photo-visual project that aspires to investigate

the causes and motivations for the presence of art in wineries while he attempts to capture the annual vine cycle and wine production. The VISUAL WINE exhibition will be presented in 2024 in Athens, on the island of Corfu and the island of Kos, Greece.

Nikos Zafeiropoulos has been in continuous action in professional photography since 2000, specialising in social events and portraits. In recent years, he has focused his artistic interest in two fields of photography: the photographic investigation of the performing arts during the process of rehearsal and production and the artistic photography of the landscape and of man. He systematically studies photography for the continuous strengthening of visual education and the artistic development

of the gaze. He studied Electrical Engineering at the University of West Attica in Greece and postgraduate studies in Telematics at the Danube University Krems in Austria.



Image courtesy of Nikos Zafeiropoulos

Luca Curci – Which subject are you working on?

Nikos Zafeiropoulos – My new project is entitled VISUAL WINE which exhibition will be presented in 2024-2025 in Athens, on the island of Corfu and the island of Kos, Greece. It is an interdisciplinary project that aspires to investigate the causes and motivations for the presence of visual works in wineries either as permanent collections or as rooms specially formed to host visual exhibitions, as well as the collaboration of wine producers with visual artists for the unique design of a wine label. Since 2021, I have attempted to capture wine production in all its stages. It is a challenging photographic project in terms of the time consuming (since every stage of the annual cycle of vine cultivation and wine production must be captured) of the ad hoc facing of outdoor conditions (weather conditions and natural

lighting) and indoor conditions (lighting without interventions) and of the achievement of a discreet creative relationship with vintners and winemakers while acting and working without disturbance, distraction or behaviour change.

LC – How did you get to your current artistic practice?

NZ – In 1992, at the age of 19, I started working in a photography studio as an assistant for all jobs. This gave me the ability to shoot with photographic film, to display photos, to get to grips with digital photography, and to edit photos. In 2000 I started working professionally as a photographer for social events and portraits. At the same time, I started -and still- do studies in the techniques and styles of photography, but a bigger school was and remains the contact with the person I photograph, his anxiety, his embarrassment, his joy, his personal moment. Covering events, I was surrounded by people, I was never alone. And sometimes I needed to be by myself. This need pushed me to travel with my camera, in an attempt (I realize it today) to get to know me through my choices, from the landscapes, the places, the details I would choose to photograph. 10 years ago I retired from active professional activity and focused -in terms of photography- on this constant conversation with my deepest self.



Image courtesy of Nikos Zafeiropoulos

LC – Among the several techniques you use, which one do you prefer to practice and which of them are most compelling for you?

NZ- It is my personal ambition not to choose any particular photography technique. Every time, the subject itself, the object of photography itself, and above all, the message I want to convey, will “choose” the technique.

LC – What do you think about art on social media? Are they turning into the new showcases of contemporary art?

NZ – I believe that the art exhibition is a top artistic event. It is the moment, the place and its lighting, that the visual artist chooses to converse with others, through his work. It is also the occasion that someone chooses to get ready, leave his home or work and come to the exhibition. There is nothing accidental about it: the artist, the curator, the space, call the audience and people meet. The works are in the desired lighting, at the right distance from the viewer, and in the correct colors, all necessary to start a real honest conversation. Contact with a visual artwork on social media is most often accidental. The artwork is crushed by the image crop, by the brightness of each screen, and by the ads on the side. Dialogue does not start, the scroll starts in a second, and the message is not transmitted.

LC – What issues do you intend to deal with in the future?

NZ – In a foggy landscape, like that of the future, I am fascinated by the landscape, the man in it and his absence, the theatre rehearsal. But I don't know what I will deal with, life itself, the one I live, politics, the people around me, they will define the new subjects I will want to photograph.



Image courtesy of Nikos Zafeiropoulos

LC – In which way the artwork presented in our exhibition is connected with the exhibition's theme?

NZ – In the context of Future Landscapes, I participated in the exhibition with some photos from my recent photography project entitled Look Back, which was trying to explore the

consequences of desertification & abandonment of the hearth. I tried to photograph the desolation of the rural village of Skoupi, Achaia, Greece in the case of the evacuation of mountain villages with the pretext of landslides during the period of the dictatorship in Greece in 1973. The photoshoot in Skoupi, after the refusal of the heirs of the cottages to be photographed due to the fact that the wounds of the Junta are still open today in Greek society, led me to the search for the old, real inhabitants of the village, through their absence and the traces of their past life. I felt like, I sometimes believe, they were still there.

LC – Can you explain something about the artworks you have in our exhibition?

NZ – I participated in two photos, the Blue Shelves and the Interior. Both were lovely country houses. I would say two-story mansions. Every detail exuded the passion of the people who built and inhabited them. A life calm, complete, in nature and its circles, a simple life, where time flowed in such a rhythm that allowed man to focus on the details of things. However, the inhabitants of these houses were violently uprooted by the Junta in Greece in 1973, suddenly, abruptly and definitively. They lived 5 kilometres down on the plain and had -and some of them still have- the ability to watch their homes crumble, in a sustained and silent post-traumatic stress that has never been recorded.



Image courtesy of Nikos Zafeiropoulos

LC – Did you enjoy cooperating with us?

NZ – I feel great about the collaboration! The direct communication, the interest, the consistency, the nice mood, the excellent organization of the exhibition, I am really very

pleased and taken care of.

LC – What do you think about ITSLIQUID Platform?

NZ – I believe that the ITSLIQUID Platform is an excellent initiative for honest contact between artists and audiences around the world. It opens up horizons for both artists and the visual experience of the viewer, dissolves borders, and highlights different cultures and the beauty that such a mixture has. It gives the artist a platform to speak, allows getting to know each other through art, invites to wonderful exhibitions and utilizes the digital potential in a useful and correct way.

LC – What do you think about the organization of our event?

NZ – The organization was flawless, and consistent, with direct communication, with clear information, I felt that the ITSLIQUID people had everything under control, no stress, no pressure, just the pleasure of creating the exhibition.



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