

Manolis Baboussis's new exhibition, titled *Skeletons*, constitutes an incitement to critical introspection, and is at the same time a call to the *bare minimum*, the essence of things. Etymologically, a skeleton suggests, among other things, the supporting framework of a building, a construction. Consequently, from a curatorial standpoint, the use of this particular notion proved to be a functional basis for the conceptual formulation and retrospective presentation of a corpus of work that spans a period extending from the early 70s to the present day.

Skeletons consists of forty-five photographs and two video projections that present the main preoccupations of the artist, putting emphasis on works produced during the past decade. As the show's title implies, it could be argued that the exhibited works study the frailty of life. However, those familiar with Baboussis's versatile oeuvre are well aware that such an assertion would barely reveal the meaning of his latest exhibition, or convey in a single phrase the explosive meeting between the artist's reflections and the images he captures.

The dialectical relationship between 'corpus' and 'corpse', where intellect is in the position of the former and still life is in the position of the latter; the 'skeletal' subject of late capitalism and its conflict with established views; spatial violence and the role of architecture in the era of commodification; the mode of the formation and juxtaposition of images and the extreme starkness and austerity in their composition as an antidote to the absurdity of human activity, are some of the major thematic axes in Baboussis's practice. Thus, my discussion with the artist, published in the present volume, constitutes a sort of 'skeletalogy', an attempt to summarise and review these key ideas. Concurrently, this conversation attempts to spotlight some less known aspects, such as Baboussis's curatorial interest, the humorous-satiric dimension of his images and his involvement in drawing.

The English phrase 'a skeleton in the closet' is particularly revealing of Baboussis's current exhibition and his ethos. At a time when the country undergoes a re-examination and administrative reorganisation, when everything and everyone is placed under judgement and supervision, when debt and deficit 'skeletons' are debated on a daily basis, and 'new skeletons' are sought in public finances, the artist has nothing to hide: he surveys his past and adopts a self-critical attitude, reminding us of a different kind of debt – that of the pure, contemplative and honest eye. This way, Baboussis's *Skeletons* allegorically refers to the present condition. It is the courage to face his work head-on and to confront the responsibilities that fall on him, both on an artistic and a socio-political level. By placing the 'skeletons' in the museum instead of the closet, the artist constructs, in a time of ubiquitous oblivion, an invaluable capital for the future of his work and, above all, for our collective memory.

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