Moving Images - Static Spaces: Architectures, Art, Media, Film, Digital Art and Design

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Postcards and Skin; Work and The Forgetting of Work in Elaionas

• Author(s) Name:
Ektoras Arkomanis

• University or Company Affiliation:
London Metropolitan University

• Presentation Method. I would like to:
i. present in person (with a written paper)

Note to the organisers:
The proposed format is a screening of the film (17 min), followed by a standard paper presentation (20 min).
The film has been previously screened in London Metropolitan University (March 2017), but only in a ‘work in progress’ format, not in its final version.

• Abstract (300 words):
Work / Memories of Work (Greece, 2016, 17 min) is a diptych short film. The first part is filmed in a tannery in the area of Elaionas, in Athens, where work is carried out under the intense smell of skin and incessant machine noise. Against this visceral routine, the second part of the film sets off moving images of former industrial sites and buildings in the surrounding area, remnants that carry the memory of work but also point towards the eventual disappearance of it.
The essay discusses filmic ways of addressing the temporalities within the subject: the nature of labour as something ephemeral, compared to the permanence of skin as a
commodity that has been traded since antiquity; and the employment of an on-screen postcard format for the depiction of industrial ruins, which hints at the passing of work into memory, but also comments on the invention of memories (nostalgia, collective memory, projective readings into the material remains, conjectures, etc.) which will eventually supersede the actual events and experiences. The essay also looks at filmic inversions of temporal relationships; for example, whereas the long static frame is employed for observing the short-lasting occurrences of labour/work in the present, mobile passing shots are chosen for the depiction of abandoned factories which have become derelict after decades of inactivity. These are presented in a novel ‘moving postcard’ format which illustrates the inherent desire of film to become synchronous with its subject and the impossibility of such instance. Consequently, the essay will consider how the film constructs a hybrid record, by internalizing its historical and anthropological observations.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Ektoras Arkomanis is a filmmaker and a senior lecturer in architectural history and theory in the Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design, in London Metropolitan University. He is currently researching and shooting his second feature film, A Season in Elaionas, about the area of Elaionas in Athens.