

Meliksetian MB Briggs

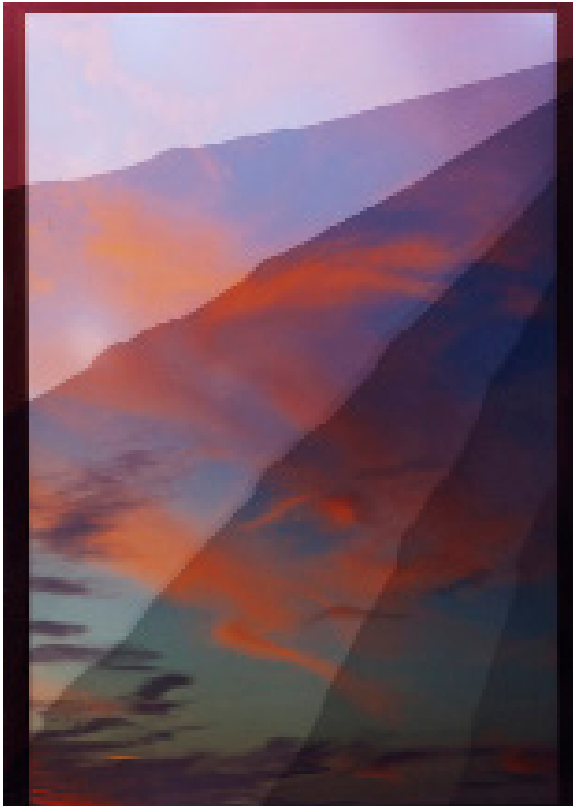
Mustafa Hulusi

Recollections of Underdevelopment

September 12 - October 24, 2015

Opening Reception:

Saturday, September 12th 6-9pm



Meliksetian | Briggs is pleased to present *Recollections of Underdevelopment*, a new series of photo-based works by London born and based, Cypriot Turkish artist, **Mustafa Hulusi**.

Hulusi uses photography, painting and video to, in the words of critic and art historian Sir Norman Rosenthal, “depict, obliquely sometimes, the story of Cyprus as a location for the cultural engagements, not always happy, that this island has lived through over the millennia.”

The six large-scale photo works in this exhibition have as their subject the island’s rustic and scenic Mediterranean landscapes. However, Hulusi complicates the easily consumable, romanticized imagery with political reality through an artistic intervention, disrupting the uncritical digestion of the

images and the logic of their aestheticization. This series is an eloquent utilization of photography’s critical potential that evolves from two seemingly contradictory tendencies, the one aestheticizing and obscuring, the other fragmenting and exposing.

Underlying the picturesque images is the dark history of this region of Cyprus where ethnic cleansing and depopulation took place as recently as 1974. The division of the island in that year into Turkish and Greek territories respectively, had purposes both political and military. Politically, to suppress leftist or non-aligned politics which threatened US and European hegemony, and militarily, to create a NATO frontier on the Eastern flank of the Mediterranean facing Syria, a significant geo-strategic region of the Middle East. The front for NATO is no longer the ground but the air above and the electro-magnetic field - through GPS weapons systems - drones, satellites and high altitude aircraft - proving theorist Paul Virilio’s ideas first espoused in the 1990s about the new verticality, as opposed to the traditional horizontality, of contemporary warfare. People have been cleared out of the region so as not to dispute the territorial actuality that facilitates this.

The photographs’ bucolic landscapes are the result of a “walk through nature,” in a region once inhabited by the artist’s family, echoing the style of the photo-documented art of 1970s Land Artists, an act infused with the ideals of Romanticism. Hulusi disrupts the images by superimposing grades of differing exposure times into them by hand, delineating the territory above and within the landscape, suggesting a manifestation of Virilio’s ideas. This self-reflexivity simulates the chemical processes of photography, dividing the picture plane into different exposure times; an analog technical process normally used to calculate the ideal picture exposure, being used aesthetically and critically, to expose the photographic medium with its claims to both truthfulness and fabrication in the age of digitization. In doing so, Hulusi invites us to contemplate similar contradictions and paradoxes in *what* is being photographed.