

## PRESS RELEASE

### CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHIC PRACTICES AT NiMAC

#### **I. *Sharqi*** **Nicos Philippou**

##### **Exhibition and Book Launch**

**Duration:** 15 January – 12 March 2016

**Opening:** Friday, 15 January 2016, 20:00

The Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, Associated with the Pierides Foundation launches, as from 2016, a new exhibition and publishing programme under the general title *Contemporary Photographic Practices at NiMAC*. The programme aims at presenting the work and research of contemporary photographers from Cyprus and abroad. The programme is curated by Yiannis Toumazis.

First in the series is Cypriot photographer Nicos Philippou, who is presenting *Sharqi*, an exhibition and a publication. The opening of the exhibition and the book launch will take place on Friday, 15 January 2016, at 20:00, at the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre (NiMAC) and the exhibition will run until Saturday, 12 March. The publication will be presented by Yiannis Toumazis, Elena Stylianiou and Stavros Karayiannis.

*Sharqi* –Arabic for Sirocco– is an exhibition and a book that consists of 27 Polaroid photographs of Cypriot landscapes, which have been produced over a period of three years.

The photographs show aspects of a Cypriot landscape that has been visually silenced: a dry, arid landscape, almost post-apocalyptic, filled with cactuses, reptiles, palm trees, red lakes, but also with man-made industrial and mining remnants, as well as decorative artifacts like fake moufflons, eagles and classic columns.

Despite its harshness, this is a landscape that is familiar. And even though the images show the "other" Cypriot landscape, they are attractive; like Fata Morganas, they feel almost outworldly, like illusions, but again as Fata Morganas, they are seductive and enchanting.

The title alludes to Cyprus' geographical position and to the influences "blown" inwards from the region. Sharqi, a wind that is responsible for the phenomenon of the Haboob (sandstorm) –which often covers Cyprus with dust from the Sahara– is here used as a metaphor for regional cultural currents enriching Cypriot culture eternally.

The technology used to capture these images –an old Polaroid SX70 camera– proved very apt as the chromatic accidents of the new and rather experimental Impossible Project film used with it added an additional layer of surrealism to the place.

Nicos Philippou is a photographer with a strong interest in the Cypriot vernacular, topography and material culture. He has participated in several exhibitions in Cyprus and abroad. In 2010 he co-curated the exhibition *Re-envisioning Cyprus* and co-edited the publication with the same title. In 2012 he participated in the exhibition *Sense of Place: European Landscape Photography* at the BOZAR in Brussels and in *at Maroudia's*, a component of the major NiMAC exhibition *Terra Mediterranea-In Crisis*. In 2015 his book *Coffee House Embellishments* was shown in *The PhotoBook Exhibition* at the Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece. He is, also, the co-editor of *Photography and Cyprus: Time, Place, Identity*. His writings on photography and vernacular culture have been published in journals, art magazines and collective volumes. He is currently lecturing at the Communications Department of the University of Nicosia.

#### **NiMAC**

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**Duration of the exhibition:** 15 January – 12 March 2016

**Exhibition Opening hours:** Tuesday – Saturday: 10:00 – 21:00