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2017-18 Franchise Proposal

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Slower, Smaller, Weaker

submitted by: Giorgos Nikas and Alexandra Streshna

Franchise location: Athens, Greece

The Olympic Village is situated in the Athens municipality of Acharnes and was built for the 2004 Athens Olympics in order to house 17000 athletes. After the necessary post-Olympics transformations, these apartments were offered as permanent residences to 2,292 low-income families of Attica.

The vast municipality of Acharnes, is one of the most infamously deprived areas in the whole country. Nowadays, the gated Olympic Village stands as somewhat of a 'meta-ghetto', a deliberately constructed ghetto inside an already existing one. The social and economic profile of the people residing there, have led to contempt and abandonment both by the state and the public opinion. Around 80% of the residents did not pursue higher education and 75% are currently unemployed. The public spaces are often vandalized and the crime rate is extremely high. The Village has no drugstores, shops, cafes or restaurants. There are still many abandoned venues and facilities and some streets continue to hold names of 'prominent' Greek athletes who had been stripped of their medals due to prohibited doping substances use.

The dysfunctionality of the Olympic Village, paired to the fact that it is a place of few encounters outside of homes, has transformed this zone in a kind of non-place. Any resident's effort for reactivation hopelessly fails, turning even more this heterotopia into a symbol of the passage from the days of prosperity to crisis, signalling the country's widespread transition from prime to decline.

The project titled 'Slower, Smaller, Weaker' intends to take place in one of the largest buildings of the Village, a former Olympic facility that has been turned into an Institute of Geology & Mineral Exploration which barely functions. The Olympic Village Residents Association has been eager to collaborate and already has secured the realization of the project in the specific building.

'Slower, Smaller, Weaker', aims to address questions of social, economic, political and cultural mutations of contemporary Greek society, as they are reflected in the unique qualities of the specific space and the community. The project will attempt to examine the processes of the institutionalization of differentiation, classification, marginalization and identity, which extend to the broader European field, by exploiting the contradiction between the initial ideal and the outcome— as asserted in the title, the inverted Olympic motto.

The project will consist of three parts: a group exhibition, experimental film screenings and a series of workshops. The exhibition will last a month and will feature 10 Greek mid-career and emerging artists, who will respond to the curatorial theme. The screenings will run for 3 days at the amphitheater of the building. Several 5-day filmmaker-led workshops, organized for participation of the local residents, will focus on topics directly related to their life in the Olympic Village. The whole project aims to create opportunities for encounters and communication among the local residents, to construct events in an un-eventful place and subsequently reactivate interest in it and draw attention to its concerns.

291 Church Street
New York, NY 10013
212.431.5270

info@apexart.org; www.apexart.org