

Press release  
“Future Relics” – Elena Lavallés  
July 13th, 2018



The Blueproject Foundation presents the exhibition "Future Relics" by Elena Lavallés, the winner of the third residence of 2018, which can be seen in the *Sala Project* from July 13th to September 30th, 2018.

“Future Relics” is a formal and conceptual investigation of three materials, gold, petrol and coal, and of the environmental, economical and political implications of their extraction.

Through photography, drawing and installation, playing between abstraction, documentation and religious symbolism, Elena Lavallés (Madrid, 1981) explores the relation between political ecology and aesthetic experience, reminding us how every landscape is political.

Blueproject Foundation, Barcelona / July 13th – September 30th, 2018.  
Opening: Friday, 13th July

The Blueproject Foundation presents the exhibition **"Future Relics" by Elena Lavallés**, the third resident artist of 2018, which can be seen at the *Sala Project* from **July 13 to September 30, 2018**.

"Future Relics" is the third of the three winner exhibition projects of the call for residences of the Blueproject Foundation in 2018. The exhibition by Elena Lavallés constitutes a formal and conceptual investigation of three materials, gold, petrol and coal, and of the environmental, economical and political implications of their extraction.

The independent curator Blanca De La Torre has written the curatorial text for the exhibition:

In this new body of work, Elena Lavallés continues her previous exploration on the three forms of gold (mineral, fuel and precious metal) to develop a discourse which reveals the interactions between transformation process, local history and the power relations of corporate capitalism.

In this case, the discourse plays with a sort of speculative realism, beneath which lies a biopolitic reading, which uncovers the connection between the exploitation of the territory and the exploitation of culture.

As a starting point, welcoming us at the entrance, we find a work inspired by the Breton Woods treaty, gold-plated by hand. The renowned book is the result of the 1944 agreement which established the free-trade policies which have governed the world ever since, together with the resulting establishment of the World Bank and the IMF and the consolidation of the dollar as the main international currency.

The triad of gold, oil and coal constitutes the foundation of the three installations which resemble reliquaries, suggesting their future disappearance or inaccessibility. If we carry on at the actual rhythm of the so-called Anthropocene, with time any object made up from any of these three materials will become an object of historic interest. The artist also establishes a relation between the religious character of relics and that of capitalism, comparing their viral condition. As Frederic Jameson pointed out: "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism." To emphasize these connotations, Lavallés shows these materials in reliquaries and, furthermore, offers to sell custom-made artworks to be realized with the gold, oil and coal used in the exhibition, once the exhibition has ended.

The drawings are made using topographic maps of the cities and surroundings of Ouro Preto (Brazil), Ciudad del Carmen (Gulf of Mexico) y Gillette (U.S.). The three areas are examples of what David Harvey has called "the resource curse".

Furthermore, the paper which Lavallés has selected is Khadi Papers, imported from India, which sooner or later will also become a relic, due to its disappearance or its high price once fossil fuels run out.

With the photographic section, Lavellés leaves the symbolism of the other two series. The images show the real impact of mining activities over the real landscape. They clearly depict the consequences of the exploitation of the land, not only through degradation and extinction but also through contamination and exploitation of human resources.

The exhibition as a whole shapes a landscape through three materials which have implied a multidimensional exploitation, of men and of the territory. It shows that every landscape is political and suggests that political ecology and artistic experience are intrinsically connected, for they both help us understand the interactions between the environment and the economic, social and political sphere."

Text by Blanca De La Torre

**Barcelona, July 13th, 2018**

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