

KUNSTVEREIN GARTENHAUS

29 Mar 2025 – 24 May 2025

MARINA XENOFONTOS Things We Lost

Marina Xenofontos' work employs film and sculpture to consider the inevitability of failure and the marginalisation of personal narratives in civic spaces. By shaping interpretations and meanings, she explores interrelated facets of simulations, objects, and translations that allow for a remembrance of symbols and errors in their functions. With this approach, traditional methods and processes embrace the ephemeral individual position within broader collective memory.

Marking the first solo presentation of Xenofontos' work in Austria, *Things We Lost*, is a fragmented biography through the gaze of geography and memory. A double-layered curtain tailored for the artist's bedroom in Limassol and used from 2020 to 2022, is hung on KUNSTVEREIN GARTENHAUS' window, obstructing any view from the outside while tinting the room in pink. At its center, the film *Overnight Coup Plan* (2025) directed by the artist on 16mm and mini-DV in Cyprus, follows the journey of a group of girls from Limassol to Ayia Napa. It's a coming-of-age tale, unfolding textured images in short sequences, a blurry impression of a dense experience. Filmed on the 50th anniversary of the coup d'état by fascist groups, in a style between documentary and fiction, the film tracks the motions of an average night out while simultaneously navigating the more obscure undercurrents of the landscapes and locations they inhabit.

"All images will disappear [...], they will all vanish at the same time," writes Annie Ernaux in *The Years* (2018). Images as memories meshed between fact and fiction, personal recollection and collective narrative. The film takes Ayia Napa, one of Europe's most prominent summer holiday resorts, as the main set. The city's topography and the architectural features of the strip are characterized by colonial and post-colonial history due to its proximity to one of the UK's largest military bases, and the waves of English tourists that populate its hotels and beaches. As decades pass from the establishment of Ayia Napa as a spring breakers' theme park, layers of urban decay and reconstruction settle in while post-colonial errors and legacies begin to surface. The aftermath of a long night out becomes mirrored in the topology of the town, etched in its buildings and streets; all signifiers of the village this city-like-resort replaced are erased, establishing a sinister collective memory.

A mahogany door, *Printed Hands*, (2025), lies on the wall and is illuminated by a sequence of lights that respond to sound. Taken directly from the artist's teenage bedroom, and typical of British post-colonial architectural standards, the door stands as an archetype, a symbol of emancipation, a border between imaginary states and reality. By singling out a common yet mass-produced object, Xenofontos invests it with personal significance, elevating its status in the exhibition site while reflecting on the cultural materials that define the fabric of civic life.

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A series of photographs *Circa 2005*, (2025) are slide-projected on the wall. Taken by the artist as a teenager, circa in 2005, they offer a private view into a moment, intimately unveiling the artist's surroundings—urban and domestic—her relatives, as well as details of her body. Close-ups of symbolically hand-painted clothing and small-scale paintings tap into the subconscious, overlapping with directly lived experience.

Overnight Coup Plan was co-produced by the Deputy Ministry of Culture, Republic of Cyprus and supported by KUNSTVEREIN GARTENHAUS, Vienna, and Mint, Stockholm.

List of works

Curtain made for the bedroom in the artist's apartment in Limassol, as an inner layer to the white velvet curtain. Used between 2020 and 2022. Fabric bought from Dapperstraat Market in Amsterdam in 2019. Pink velour fabric. Curtain length adjusted for Akwa Ibom, Athens.

Overnight Coup Plan, (2025)
Single-channel projection
13 min

Printed Hands, (2025)
Mahogany door removed from teenage bedroom, light, sound, LED Arduino Nano circuit
204 x 80 x 17cm

Circa 2005, (2025)
Slide projector
80 images

Frida Kahlo dress detail, (2005)
Paint on canvas
16 x 18cm

Marina Xenofontos

Marina Xenofontos (1988, Limassol, Cyprus) lives and works in Athens, Greece. Recent solo exhibitions include *View From Somewhere Near* at Kunstverein in Hamburg (2024); *Public Domain* at Camden Art Centre in London (2023); *In Practice* at SculptureCenter in New York (2023); *Carousel* at Akwa Ibom in Athens (2022); *I don't sleep, I dream* at The Island Club in Limassol (2021). She is the recipient of the Frieze Emerging Artist Award 2022 and recently participated in the 15th Baltic Triennial in Vilnius, Lithuania.

