

Red Soil, Upon Which Tender Plants are Grown
Nicolas Lambouris

Opening: Wednesday February 25th, 6–8 pm
26 February – 07 April 2026
Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 3-7pm and by appointment

The exhibition draws inspiration from the account *Cyprus, as I Saw It* in 1879 by Sir Samuel White Baker, who described the island as barren, treeless, and in need of transformation under British rule. His writings intertwine observations of landscape, flora, and local communities with the political ambitions of the Empire - including the vision of Sir Garnet Wolseley, who sought to “transform the treeless surface” by planting eucalyptus groves and date palms.

At the center of the exhibition lies the story of the first Governor’s House in Nicosia. Shipped as a prefabricated structure and erected on a hill known as “Vapers’ Hill,” the building became a powerful symbol of colonial presence. After being burned during the 1931 uprising, it was rebuilt in a hybrid architectural style blending Gothic, Ottoman, and Byzantine elements - a calculated gesture of imperial diplomacy. Today, the building stands as the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Cyprus.

From these historical fragments, Lambouris constructs a poetic, semi-fictional narrative around a local stonemason, Costas Christoforou, who worked on the reconstruction of the Governor’s House. While carving stone friezes to British specifications, Christoforou also created his own botanical motifs inspired by Cyprus’ native flora. These quiet, personal gestures subtly resisted the imposed transformation of the landscape, and become that poetic anchor point in which the deemed “infertile” land bears a symbolic array of plants, depicted by Lambouris from different perspectives and mediums.

An archival photograph of the hill from 1877, sourced from the British National Archives and described by Baker as a “dreary plain,” becomes a key point of departure. Reimagined through contemporary image-making technologies and informed by Christoforou’s drawings and surviving carvings, the barren terrain is transformed into a speculative landscape, as shown in *The Snake Hill, 1877, 2025* (Edition 2/2). Through carefully selected materials and unique processes, Lambouris creates an exhibition where sculptural practice, photographic material and archival references are used to reconsider how land, memory, and power are intertwined.

Nicolas Lambouris (1975) has been exhibited internationally and published by La Fabrica, IAPT Press, and Yard Press, with writings appearing in journals such as **Photographies** and **Membrana**. He is President of the International Association of Photography & Theory, directs the PFM — Photography, Film + Media Lab, and teaches at Frederick University in Nicosia.

