

In Practice: Marina Xenofontos

Sep 23–Oct 23, 2023

SculptureCenter

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Marina Xenofontos is a sculptor whose work spans found objects, kinetic sculptures and film. Her practice examines the material and personal manifestations of ideology and knowledge. She views political narratives through an intimate gaze, where the malfunctions in their workings become discernible, affirming them as breeding grounds for both critique and invention. Her work often involves reforming found objects and materials she then pairs with novel constructions. Though they differ formally, these elements are entangled by their idiosyncratic ties with history and politics.

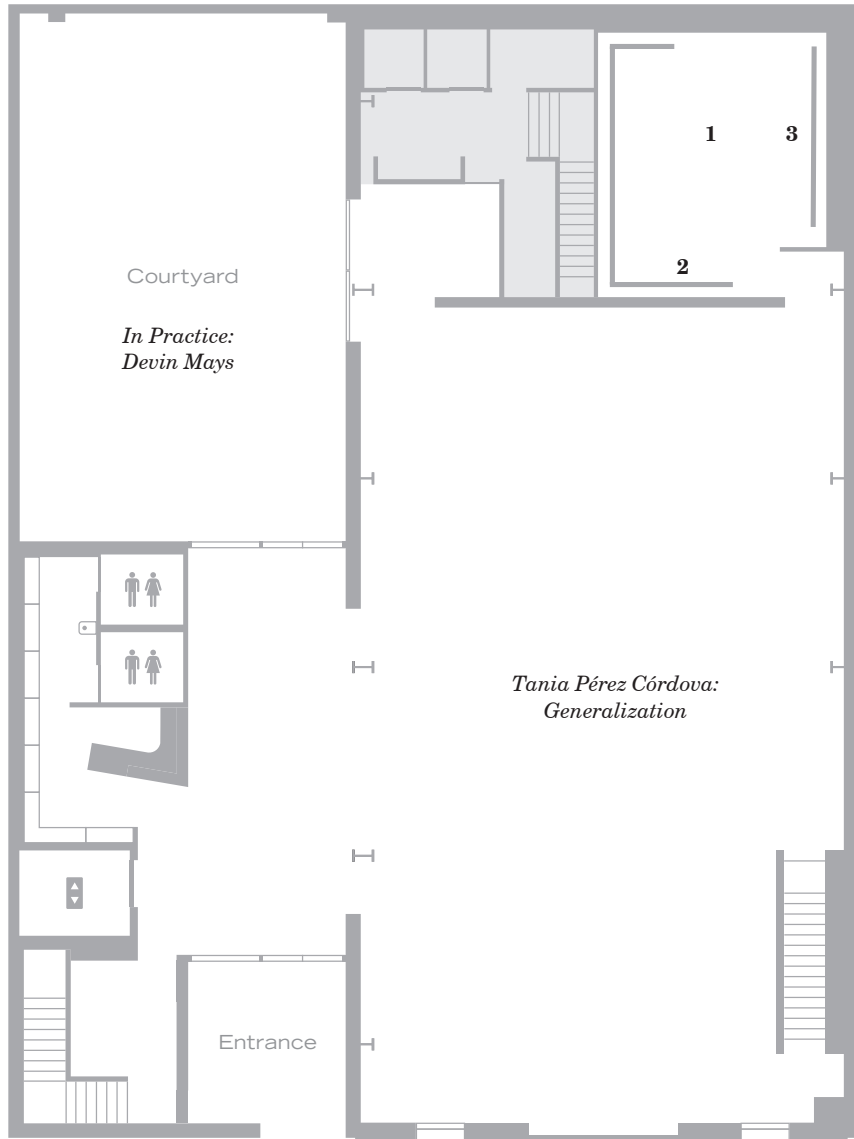
NEW FAITHFUL, 2023, her new video-based work, uses archival footage taken from sources like the United Kingdom-based television station Hellenic TV. The footage documents instances of the “Lemon Dance,” a dance competition carried over by refugees and migrants from Cyprus to the United Kingdom and the United States in the years since the 1974 conflict and partition of the island in the postcolonial period of the 1970s and 1980s (still unresolved). Couples are tasked with holding a lemon between their foreheads while slow dancing for as long as possible. The last couple to drop the lemon wins the competition.

Xenofontos pairs this montage with common monobloc chairs cast off from the production lines of Lordos United, a prominent manufacturer of plastic products based in Cyprus. The selected chairs (“The Queen” model) reflect necessary errors in the manufacturing process. Being either the first or the last item in the production line between two different color options, they are marbled with both and are considered unsalable. The chairs in *NEW FAITHFUL* evoke a form of industrial production that is both perpetual and disturbed by periodic glitches. Likewise, the lemon dance is a form of culture in displacement, performed with both endurance and levity. Across these elements, Xenofontos’s sculpture looks at forms of locality persisting abroad, as well as a near-universal form made locally in Cyprus, using imagery and found objects together to generate a churning sense of distance and withdrawal. The artist has described this feeling as an “acute sense of remoteness,” and a thematic of separation and recombination underpins both elements of the work. The chairs exist as errors between two defined production runs, and as forced recombinations of elements—two colors intermixed under the pressure of an injection mold; similarly, the lemon dance requires two individuals to press together and maintain enough tension, proximity, and intimacy not to let the lemon fall.

In the new site-specific works *Control Board #1* and *Control Board #2*, both 2023, Xenofontos lines the gallery walls with copper cylinders that slowly rotate on their axes through a synchronized motor mechanism. Wired to MDF control boards equipped with sound and motion sensors, the motor’s speeds accelerate or decelerate depending on the inputs received from their surroundings. Framing

the room with this subtle, ongoing movement, droning sound, and reflected light, Xenofontos introduces an ambiguous modernizing ambience to the installation. Industrial parts (copper pipe, motors) are enlisted in a function without a productive end—they simply keep on turning. The work serves as an anti-spectacular kinetic gesture, conveying duty and futility over animism. As with other rehabilitated ideas and materials in Xenofontos’s work, the machine connotes cultural relics, ruins, and urban memorabilia left in the wake of recent histories.

Works in the Exhibition



Ground Floor Plan

Ground Floor

- 1** *NEW FAITHFUL*, 2023
Single-channel archival video, rejected Lordos monobloc chairs
Video: 9:52 minutes; installation dimensions variable
- 2** *Control Board #1*, 2023
MDF, Arduino board, PIR motion sensor, sound sensor, motor, axis joints, copper tubes
61 x 276 x 168 inches
(154 x 701 x 427 cm)
- 3** *Control Board #2*, 2023
MDF, Arduino board, PIR motion sensor, sound sensor, motor, axis joints, copper tubes
61 x 177 x 7-1/4 inches
(154 x 450 x 18.4 cm)

All works courtesy the artist and Hot Wheels, Athens

On View Concurrently

Tania Pérez Córdova: Generalization
Sep 23–Dec 11, 2023

*Julian Abraham “Togar”:
Too good to be OK*
Sep 23–Dec 11, 2023

In Practice: Devin T. Mays
Sep 23–Dec 11, 2023

About In Practice

In Practice 2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of SculptureCenter’s signature open call program for artists, and the first year of a new format for the program. Our new format generates a yearlong series of solo presentations and provides more substantial financial and production support to artists who have not yet had an institutional exhibition in New York City.

SculptureCenter is a not-for-profit arts institution that takes the history and legacy of sculpture as a framework from which to consider the diverse activity taking place in the field of contemporary art. SculptureCenter’s program encourages artists and audiences to explore the possibilities of sculpture and the multifarious ways in which sculpture is developing and connecting to other forms of expression, including installation, video, performance, architecture, and other media.

Since 2003, SculptureCenter’s In Practice open call program has supported the production of new work by 250 artists.

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In Practice 2023 is organized by the SculptureCenter curatorial team.

In Practice: Marina Xenofontos is curated by Kyle Dancewicz, Deputy Director, and Christopher Aque, Exhibition and Program Manager.

Sponsors

In Practice 2023 is made possible by the generosity of the Elaine Graham Weitzen Foundation for Fine Arts. The Foundation's support for SculptureCenter's annual open call exhibition reflects Elaine Graham Weitzen's (1920-2017) lifelong commitment to emerging artists and her exuberant support of new ideas in art. Weitzen served as a devoted Trustee of SculptureCenter from 1987 to 2017.

Major support for the In Practice program is provided by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. In Practice is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.