

Marina
Xenofontos

Play Life

6.2.2026–
2.8.2026

Exhibition
leaflet

MUSÉE CANTONAL
DES BEAUX-ARTS
LAUSANNE
Espace Projet

Through sculptures, found objects, writings, and films, Marina Xenofontos interrogates the material manifestations of memory and history. For her MCBA show *Play Life*, the artist has worked with the question of the double, which she explores at the point where real and virtual space intersect.

The exhibition is centred on a video game, *Twice Upon a While* (2018–2025), which visitors are an integral part of. The game's main character, called *Twice*, is modelled on the artist herself. This girl moves through a seemingly ordinary place that constantly tips over into a dream world of choices to be made and dead ends, loops, and confusing twists to be navigated. The long-term development of this video game went from animation and sculpture to open-world RPG (role-playing game). Xenofontos is presenting the results for the first time in her show at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne. There is no linear story or predetermined narrative outlines. Rather, what plays out with the help of visitors to the show resembles an original scene, an infinitely revisited childhood memory whose outcome, or outcomes depend on the choices visitors make in the present. Within the space of the game a multiplication of doubles is opened up. *Twice* becomes a reflection of its players, who define their choices in their own image.

In 2020, Xenofontos literally staged the double in a sculpture with the same title as the video game, *Twice Upon a While*. It was a life-size wooden mannequin that the artist displayed seated, its head resting on a table with a mirror top, pointing us as much to the world of fairy tales (“Once upon a time...”) as to the myth of Narcissus. More abstractly the sculptures seen in this show can also be read as forms of doubles. *To the Knees* (2025), ~~which features rotating segments of aluminium tubes~~, suggests the world of industry by both the materials making it up and the sound they give off. Although emptied of their original function, these physical elements bear with them a memory of their initial use whilst embracing new associations. Likewise, *Found Construction Site Ladder* (2025) is a found object, stripped of its function and yet implicitly referring to the question of passing from one space to another and to the body, its presence and disappearance.

Whether static or in motion, Xenofontos's objects are in transition. From one context to another, one function to the next. They are objects that are replicas of others, or translations that don't strictly conform to the originals, like reflections or doubles that have come to haunt the exhibition space with the historical or personal content of their references. Through precise gestures, the artist lends those references new weight by shifting or transforming them and simultaneously reconfiguring the space they inhabit.

In *Play Life* the question of the identical and the almost same, true and false, real and virtual is diffracted and refracted, not in a play of dichotomies, but in a ~~shift~~ between levels of reality, contexts, time-frames, and given uses.

Biography:

Marina Xenofontos (born in 1988 in Cyprus) lives and works between Athens, Greece, and Limassol, Cyprus. Recent and future solo shows include *It Rests to the Bones*, the Cyprus Pavilion, 61st Venice Biennale (2026); *Eternal, Returns*, Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples (2025); *View From Somewhere Near*, Kunstverein Hamburg (2024); *Public Domain*, Camden Art Centre, London (2023); and *In Practice: Marina Xenofontos*, SculptureCenter, New York (2023).

Xenofontos earned an MFA degree in sculpture from the Milton Avery School of the Arts at Bard College, New York, and went on to study contemporary art theory at Goldsmiths, University of London. She was a resident at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (2018–2019), and at Lafayette Anticipations in Paris (2022). Since 2011, Xenofontos has been involved in artist projects and group practices in Cyprus, notably as a cofounder of the Konteiner Space in Limassol (2010–2013) and the Neoterismoï Toumazou art space in Nicosia (2011–2018).

Events:

Guided tour (in French)
Thursday, 5 March 2026
at 6:30 pm
With Nicole Schweizer

Guided tours for the Amis-e
du Musée (in French)
Thursday, 5 March 2026,
at 12:30 pm
Thursday, 21 May 2026,
at 6 pm
With Nicole Schweizer

Publication:
Nicole Schweizer (ed.), *Marina Xenofontos. Play Life*, with contributions by Maya Tounta, Marina Xenofontos with Aristotelis Nikolas Mochloulis. Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, 2026. At the MCBA Book- and Giftshop → shop.mcba@plateforme10.ch

Further information:
Access, hours
→ mcba.ch
Free admission

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