Myrto Xanthopoulou

Biography

Born in Helsinki in 1981. Lives and works in Athens.

Born in Helsinki, bilingual Myrto Xanthopoulou showed an early interest in language as an expressive tool, exploring semantic misunderstandings, wordplay, and verbal games in her work.

Her works—installations, constructions, drawings, videos, and performances—stem from distinctive, improvised poems or short phrases that resemble fragments of imaginary everyday dialogues or spontaneous internal monologues. The artist writes or collects these linguistic elements, creating an informal archive. At the same time, she gathers all kinds of disposable materials, various types of paper (including aluminum foil, sandpaper, cigarette paper, packaging, or tracing paper, on which she intervenes with spray paint, glue, acrylics, etc.), as well as "secondary" or single-use objects from her urban surroundings, domestic, and work environment. These include perishable multi-use materials, leftovers, or expendables such as papers, carbon paper, sticks, pencils, pins, garbage bags, bottles, sea urchin spines, light, and fruit peels. She also works with clay and plaster. Additionally, she captures stills of the city with her phone, usually overlooked urban views, or unnoticed objects.

From this experiential, diary-like "baggage"—a source of phrases, objects, images, materials, and textual and visual notes—she constructs a microcosm, merging her initial materials and transforming them into a code with multiple meanings and dualities (such as light-heavy, large-small, humorous-serious).

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Through persistent and systematic manual labor, the artist tends to her fragmented objects and materials, giving them new life, character, and presence. Starting with language, with a playful, tender, and contemplative approach—often melancholic yet humorous—she subverts a mundane perception of everyday life, transforming it into a game of paradoxes with its internal logic of imagination and associations.

Her works create environments out of small gestures that highlight the power of detail and the minimal, as well as the artist's bodily engagement with her materials.

Her compositions and constructions often resemble models (as in her solo exhibition *ΜΠΟΥΦΑΝ, [from French: bouffant*, meaning winter jacket], 2020), reversing the logic of the solid sculptural work. Many of her works follow a DIY aesthetic, challenging the notion of high art. They appear as temporary, fragile excerpts of reality, states, emotions, as well as snapshots, stages, or pauses in a process. They imply an elusive meaning, a sense of loss, and, conversely, a desire for preservation or healing, as seen in *ΜΠΟΥΦΑΝ.*

The artist also perceives the works that comprise her exhibitions or installations as phrases, words, or punctuation marks that complete a meaning or suggest its absence. The titles of her works and exhibitions are crucial, and words become both material and subject matter. Often, the title of one exhibition leads to the next—*ΜΠΟΥΦΑΝ* was followed by *STORM (I don't have a pen)* (2022). Through words, the artist envisions images that translate into artworks, which, in turn, reinterpret the words, creating an inseparable whole filled with small surprises between what the title suggests and what the work represents.

In *The Battleship* (2013, her first solo exhibition), the title dictates the tone of the works: the installation revolves around a sculpture—an overturned bathtub—that the artist imagines also as a zeppelin, a whale, or a rescue buoy, playing with the word "battleship" [thorikto in greek] as something related to war abut also vulnerability or humor.

With the exhibition *sing* (2015), Xanthopoulou introduced video into her practice (in the form of video stills—static city shots from her home), while also transitioning to two-dimensional wall pieces. Some of these include her characteristic sequential repetition of

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phrases in geometric patterns. In *Doves in Alexandras Avenue* (2015, *sing* exhibition), the continuous repetition of a phrase, which can be read both forward and backward in horizontal and vertical columns, results in the phrase sometimes losing and sometimes regaining its meaning. The artist plays with meaning and the flow of everyday language, "weaving" with marker on transparent paper a pattern reminiscent of a cryptographic message or a symmetrical textile-like design.

In the exhibition *Rendering the Sky* (2018), words become perforated motifs on computer paper (as in *In the Night*, a construction with paper, light, and bamboo sticks). Elsewhere, she cuts her notes into plasticized strips—"scraps"—and weaves them like a loom into a composition that resembles a rag rug, playing with the contrast between hard and soft. The frayed edges of the composition suggest an ongoing process, an unfinished, open-ended work, as well as unfolding time. Through the rawness of material and the manual process, words take on physical form, their meaning expands, and they "become" action and experience, image and fragments of everyday life—minor events and passing thoughts that are both trivial and significant.

The sense of human energy, voice, and presence is particularly evident in Xanthopoulou’s solo exhibition *STORM (I don’t have a pen)* (2022) (specifically designed for the Museum of Folk Art and Tradition "Angeliki Hatzimichali"), where phrases like "The asterisks fall to the floor", "The tap is dripping", and "I don’t have Xanax" are integrated into the works. Performativity is also evident in the video installation *100 Karate blows* (2021-2022), in which the artist vocalizes short phrases, handling language not only as content but also as pauses and rhythm. Meanwhile, raw footage captures details of small, everyday performances as well as the artist’s sculptures.

Although the embodied presence subtly permeates her entire practice, in her more recent works, video and performance take on an increasingly significant role (as in Everytime *I swallow an island*, a sculptural and performative work, 2023). Xanthopoulou’s everyday life and surroundings merge seamlessly with her artistic practice, transforming fleeting moments into expressions of psychological states and moods that seek small meanings within the flow of daily existence.

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Education

2000 – 2004 History of Art, Bachelor of Arts, Deree – The American College of Greece, graduated with Honors.

2004 – 2009 Studies in Painting, Athens School of Fine Arts.

Distinctions

2020 Stavros Niarchos Foundation Artist Support Program (NSF Artworks Fellowship).

Solo exhibitions

2025 *Asterisks in my Mouth*, CITRONNE Gallery, Athens.

2022 *STORM (I don't have a pen)*, curated by Christoforos Marinos, Museum of Folk Art and Tradition "Angeliki Hatzimichali", Athens (organized by OPANDA).

2020 *ΜΠΟΥΦΑΝ*, EIGHT / ΤΟ ΟΚΤΟ, critical institute for arts and politics, Athens.

2018 *rendering the sky*, Elika Gallery, Athens.

2015 *sing*, Elika Gallery, Athens.

2013 *the battleship*, Elika Gallery, Athens.

Group exhibitions and projects [selected]

2023 *Here Within She Resided*, video, curated by Stavros Gasparatos (presented online, commission within the framework of OPEN PLAN, Athens and Epidaurus Festival), in collaboration with Panos Iliopoulos, sound design and composition.

Warp, curated by Stefania Orphanidou, MISC Athens, Athens.

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Repetitions I, curated by Tatiana Spinari-Pollali, CITRONNE Gallery, Poros.

Repetitions II, curated by Tatiana Spinari-Pollali, CITRONNE Gallery, Athens.

The Nightmare of Persephone, curated by Christoforos Marinos, Christos Chryssopoulos, Monastery of the Sacred Heart, Tinos.

2022 *Directed by Desire*, curated by Daphne Vitali, Arnisa Zeqo, Rongwrong, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

BFFEAE, curated by Commotirio, Municipal Gallery of Kallithea, Athens.

REBETIKO, curated by Christoforos Marinos, Olympia Municipal Theatre Maria Callas, Athens.

2021 *PORTALS*, curated by Elina Kountouri, Madeleine Grynsztejn, Tobacco Factory, Athens.

The Opposite of Falling, in situ installation, 3137 Artist Run Space, Athens.

A Stitch in Time, curated by Vassilis Psarras, Nancy Charitonidou, Old Paper Mill, Aigio (PRIMAROLIA Festival).

Day Wavers, curated by Theodora Malamou, Isaias Mansion, Athens (as part of the Back to Athens Festival).

2020 *Collectanea, the measure of all things*, curated by Christoforos Marinos, ACG (American College of Greece) Art Gallery, Athens.

For Staying is Nowhere, curated by Ioanna Gerakidi, Haus N Athen, Athens.

Botanical Rhapsody, Martinos Gallery, Athens.

2019 *Curved Arrows*, curated by Kostis Velonis, Kunstraum am Schauplatz, Vienna, Austria.

City in Pieces, curated by Vassilis Noulas, Kostas Tzimoulis, EIGHT / TO OKTO, critical institute for arts and politics, Athens.

The Popular, Museum of Angeliki Hatzimichali, curated by Apostolis Artinos, Athens (first presented in 2018, Panourgias Residence, Amfissa, as part of The Symptom Projects).

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Nomades 13, curated by Marina Velisioti (itinerant exhibition as part of the Velvet Bus initiative / stops: Corfu, Paxos, Lefkada, Kefalonia, Ithaca, Athens).

2018 *Privilege*, curated by Marina Velisioti, Monitor Fest, Heraklion, Crete.

Walking the Dog in the Salt, curated by Marina Velisioti, Marpissa, Paros (Routes in Marpissa Festival).

Stopping Point, curated by Kostis Velonis, Daily Lazy, Athens.

2017 *Hello, I Love You / Studios: A Retrospective*, curated by Christina Dilari, Eirini Bachlitzanaki, Iphigenia Papamikroulea, TAF (The Art Foundation), Athens.

Landscape Revisited, Elika Gallery, Athens.

Bolero Project, curated by Maria Oikonomopoulou, Els Vanden Meersch, EOS Gallery, Athens.

2016 *The Equilibrists*, curated by Gary Carrion-Murayari, Helga Christoffersen (in collaboration with Massimiliano Gioni), Benaki Museum, Athens.

Regarding Nicolas Callas, curated by Teresa Papamichail, Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA), Athens.

The Day After the First Day, curated by Vassilis Papageorgiou, Danae Ioannoglou, Enterprise Projects, Athens.

2015 *Curious Artefacts*, curated by Becky Campbell, The Artwall, Athens.

2014 *Artissima 2014*, Turin, Italy (Elika Gallery).

Reverb: New Art from Greece, curated by Eirini Efstathiou, Evita Tsokanta, Museum School of Fine Arts, Boston, USA.

Receiver: Inside the Sack, curated by Ioanna Myrka, Sofia Simaki, CAMP, Athens.

Statement Made, curated by Artemis Potamianou, Art Athina Contemporaries, Athens.

2013 *Synthesis*, curated by Christina Petrinou, Francoise Heitsch Gallery, Munich, Germany.

Afresh: A New Generation of Greek Artists, curated by Daphne Vitali, Daphne Dragona, Tina Pandi, National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), Athens.

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Desk Issues, Sluice Art Fair, curated by 3 137, London, UK.

Thrills and Chills, curated by Christina Androulidaki, Daily Lazy, CAN Gallery, Athens.

Floating Walls, curated by Vassilis Zografos, Kodra Fresh, Action Field Kodra, Thessaloniki.

What I Almost Missed, curated by Theofilos Tramboulis, Salon de Vortex, Athens.

..., curated by Galini Notti, 3 137 artist run space, Athens.

2012 *How to Draw a Dog*, curated by Myrto Xanthopoulou, 3 137 artist run space, Athens.

2011 *Whatever Melts into Air is Solid*, curated by Galini Notti, Elika Gallery, Athens.

Workshops, curated by Galini Notti, Evita Tsokanta, Evangelia Ledaki, TAF (The Art Foundation), Athens.

2010 *Visit*, curated by Kosmas Nikolaou, Katakouzenos House Museum, Athens.

Walk the Line, curated by Marios Spiliopoulos, Greek Film Archive, Athens.

The Sotiria Plan, curated by Panagiotis Papadopoulos, Sotiria Hospital, Athens.

2009 *Rooms*, curated by Lina Tsikouta, St George Lycabettus Hotel, Athens (organized by Kappatos Gallery).

2006 *What Remains is Future*, curated by Nadia Argyropoulou (participation in a group project following a workshop with Zafos Xagoraris), Old Arsakeio of Patras, Patras (organized by a.antonopoulou.art).

Collaborations [selected]

2016 Artistic direction of the theatrical performance *The Box* by the theatre group of HIV-positive inmates of Korydallos Prison, directed by Despina Chatzipavlidou, “technodromo” initiative.

2015 Participation in visual arts activities at Green Park, in Activation #1, and in the conference *Institutions, Politics, Performance*.

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2012 Set and visual design for the performance *The Hens and the Fleas*, directed by Vassilis Noulas, Nova Melancolia group, Patari Theatre, “Empros”, Athens.

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