



Manolis Baboussis

II. Installations

Manolis Baboussis

(b. 1950, Athens) studied Architecture at the University of Florence (1968–1975), where he worked under the mentorship of Adolfo Natalini, a founding member of the Superstudio collective. In 1976, he attended the restoration programme of ICCROM in Rome and subsequently worked as an architect on projects for the Organisation of School Buildings in Greece.

Since 1973, Baboussis has developed an interdisciplinary artistic practice that encompasses photography, drawing, installation, projection, and text-based works. His work investigates environmental degradation, collective trauma, institutional structures, and the conditions of visibility in contemporary culture, bringing together poetic, social, and political dimensions.

In 2003, the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens presented Manolis Baboussis: Works 1973–2003, the first major retrospective survey of his photographic production. In 1999, he founded the Department of Photographic Studies at the Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA), where he taught until 2013, playing a significant role in the development of photographic education and digital arts in Greece. As Vice Rector of ASFA, he conceived and oversaw the transformation of the School's parking area into a garden in 2011, creating a dialogue between landscape, ecology, and urban space.

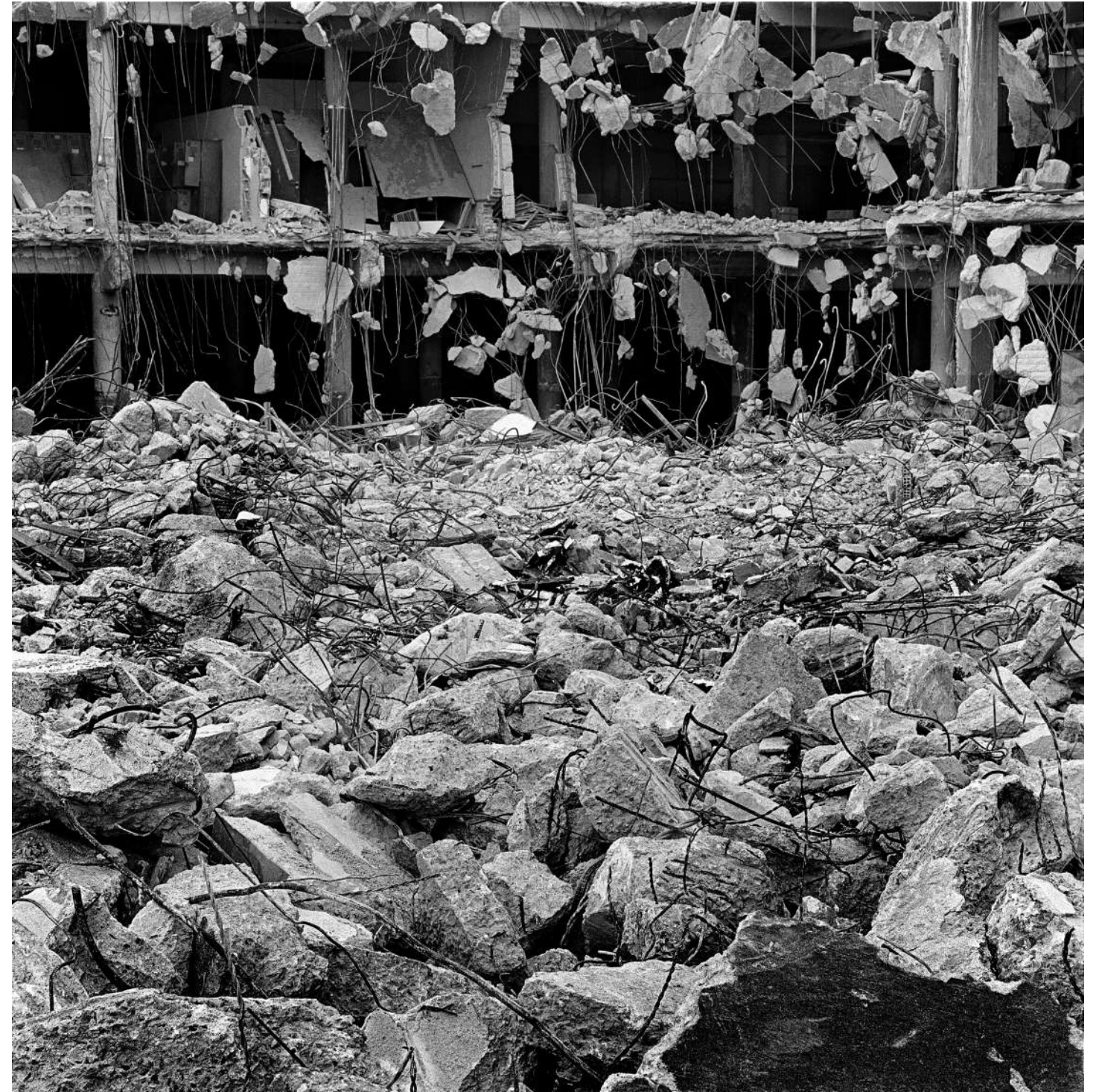
Between 1994 and 2017, Baboussis maintained a close friendship and collaboration with Jannis Kounellis, contributing interpretative insights informed by his sustained visual engagement with the artist's work. His work has been exhibited widely in Greece and internationally, including at documenta 14, the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome, and MOMus in Thessaloniki. His works are held in important public and private collections. He lives and works in Athens and on the island of Kea, Greece.

Cover photo, Untitled, 2014, Installation view, 24 chairs, cement blocks, 216 x 676 x 95cm

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Untitled, 2008, B/W photo,



Installation view
Manolis Baboussis, 2026,
Proposal
"Peace Is Not an Agreement,"
15 beach umbrellas, photo

«Η ειρήνη δεν είναι μια συμφωνία»

Ο κόσμος υπερέχει, υπερέχει στις δυνατές και αδύνατες στιγμές του, κυρίως στις δεύτερες. Υπερέχει στα συμβάντα του, στις κρίσεις που τον δοκιμάζουν και τον εγγράφουν στον εκστατικό του ορίζοντα. Δεν είναι η φυσικότητά του, η ψευδεπίγραφη ειρήνευσή του, αλλά η δόξα της κατακρήμνισής του, η επαλήθευση του στον ορίζοντα του αρνητικού.

Στην εγκατάσταση «Η ειρήνη δεν είναι μια συμφωνία», του Μανώλη Μπαμπούση, διακρίνεται όλη η αμφισημία αυτού του νοήματος, το ίχνος της ζωής όπως δεξιώνεται το ίχνος του θανάτου. Το φωτογραφημένο ερείπιο ενός βομβαρδισμένου κτηρίου και οι σωροί κατά σειρά μπροστά του μιας άλλης πανωλεθρίας. Σωροί ομπρελών θαλάσσης, μια αναφορά στην κατακλυσμιαία λαίλαπα του τουρισμού και στην αμεριμνησία του σύγχρονου ανθρώπου. Ένας πόλεμος κι ένας άλλος πόλεμος, μαζί κι οι καταστροφές τους. Εικόνες, που στη γλώσσα τους, πολλά σημαίνουν. Γιατί αυτή είναι η αλήθεια της σύγχρονης εικόνας, η εξαίρεσή της απ' τη ρητορεία της καταγγελίας και η έγερση της στο ίχνος της διαφοράς της, μια εικόνα έτσι αναστοχασμού.

Οι εικόνες του Μπαμπούση έχουν έναν ρηξιγενή χαρακτήρα, γιατί έχουν έναν ορίζοντα ελευθερίας, θλιμμένες μπροστά στο αποτρόπαιο, αλλά και θαρραλέες στις διακρίσεις τους και στις αναφορές τους. Και με μια αύρα ποιητική που τις διασώζει απ' τη μιντιακή κοινοτοπία και τη φενάκη του πολιτικού. Ο όλεθρος της τέχνης· πιο δυνατός απ' όλους τους ολέθρους.

“ Peace Is Not an Agreement”

The world prevails; it prevails in its moments of strength and weakness alike, chiefly in the latter. It prevails in its events, in the crises that test it and inscribe it upon its ecstatic horizon. What endures is not its naturalness, nor its spurious peace, but the glory of its downfall, the verification of its being upon the horizon of the negative.

In *Peace Is Not an Agreement*, Manolis Baboussis's installation reveals the full ambiguity of this meaning: the trace of life as it receives the trace of death. The photographed ruin of a bombed building and, before it, ordered piles from another devastation. Piles of beach umbrellas: a reference to the overwhelming scourge of tourism and to the carefree indifference of contemporary humanity. One war and another war, together with their devastations. Images whose language signifies much. For this is the truth of the contemporary image: its exemption from the rhetoric of denunciation and its arising in the trace of its difference, an image of reflection.

Baboussis's images possess a disruptive character because they open onto a horizon of freedom: sorrowful before the atrocious, yet courageous in their distinctions and associations. They are accompanied by a poetic aura that rescues them from media banality and from the delusion of the political. Art's devastation—stronger than all devastations.

Apostolos Artinos
Writer, Critic, Curator
Athens, June 2026



Untitled 2026, Artist Studio



Untitled, 2009, or Lehman Shock: The Suicide of a Two-Ton Safe
Installation View, two tones Remap2, Athens Keramikos ,

In the installation *Mon repow*, Manolis Baboussis engages in a subtle reflection on travel, nature, hospitality, work, and the experience of rest, inviting viewers to reconsider the relationships between movement, labour, and repose.

Mon repow, 2024, Installation view, *wanderlus* Schliemann-Melas Mansion,



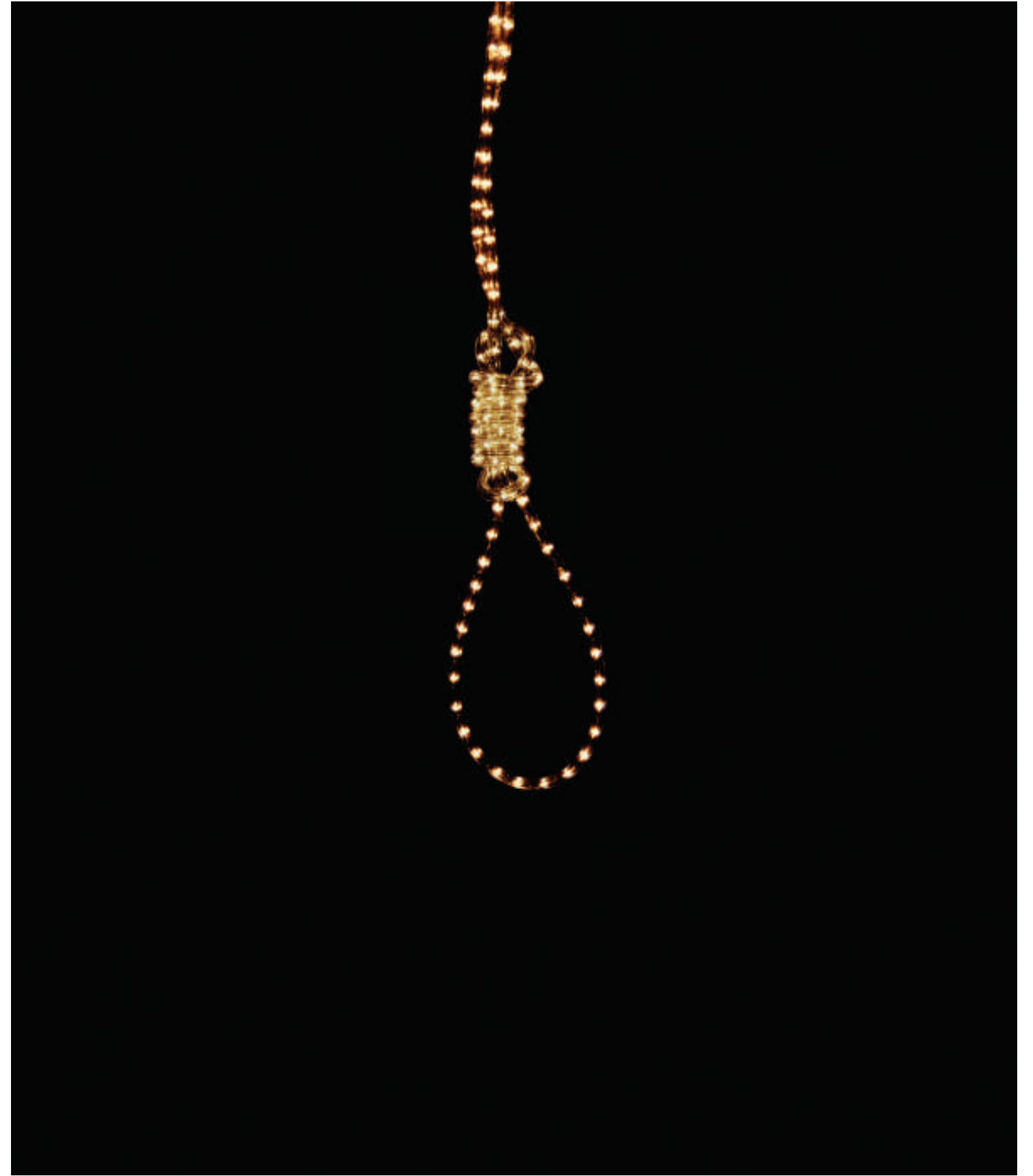


Mon repos, 2024,
Installation view,
photo, detail,

Στόματα Υπουργων και Πρωθυπουργών στην Ελλάδα.
των τελευταίων 50 χρόνων, εναλλάσσονται σε
μια βίντεο προβολή σ' έναν ερειπωμένο χώρο,
εργοστασίου. Πρόκειται για λεπτομέρειες από de-
bates, χωρίς ήχο

Mouths of Greek Ministers and Prime Ministers from
the past fifty years appear in succession in a video
projection installed within the ruins of an abandoned
factory. The footage is composed of close-up excerpts
from political debates, stripped of their original sound.





Untitled, 2005, led christmas light tube, photo, inkjet c print, 175 x 126 cm

“The Garden”, 2010-2022

Athens School of Fine Arts – MOMus, Nikos Kessanlis Venue

“Manolis Baboussis, who was not only the founder of the School’s Photography Lab (1999), the first professor of photography, and vice-rector of the school, but also an ecologist at heart and in action, one day imagines transforming the school’s parking lot into a garden. Neither botanical nor geometrical, the garden became an architecture soon buried under a few hundred plants and trees and roses native to Greece: an ode to wild nature—nature which knows so well how to grow as long as it is given the freedom. In the garden, a path leads to a sort of painted wooden hut—the “temple” of the garden...

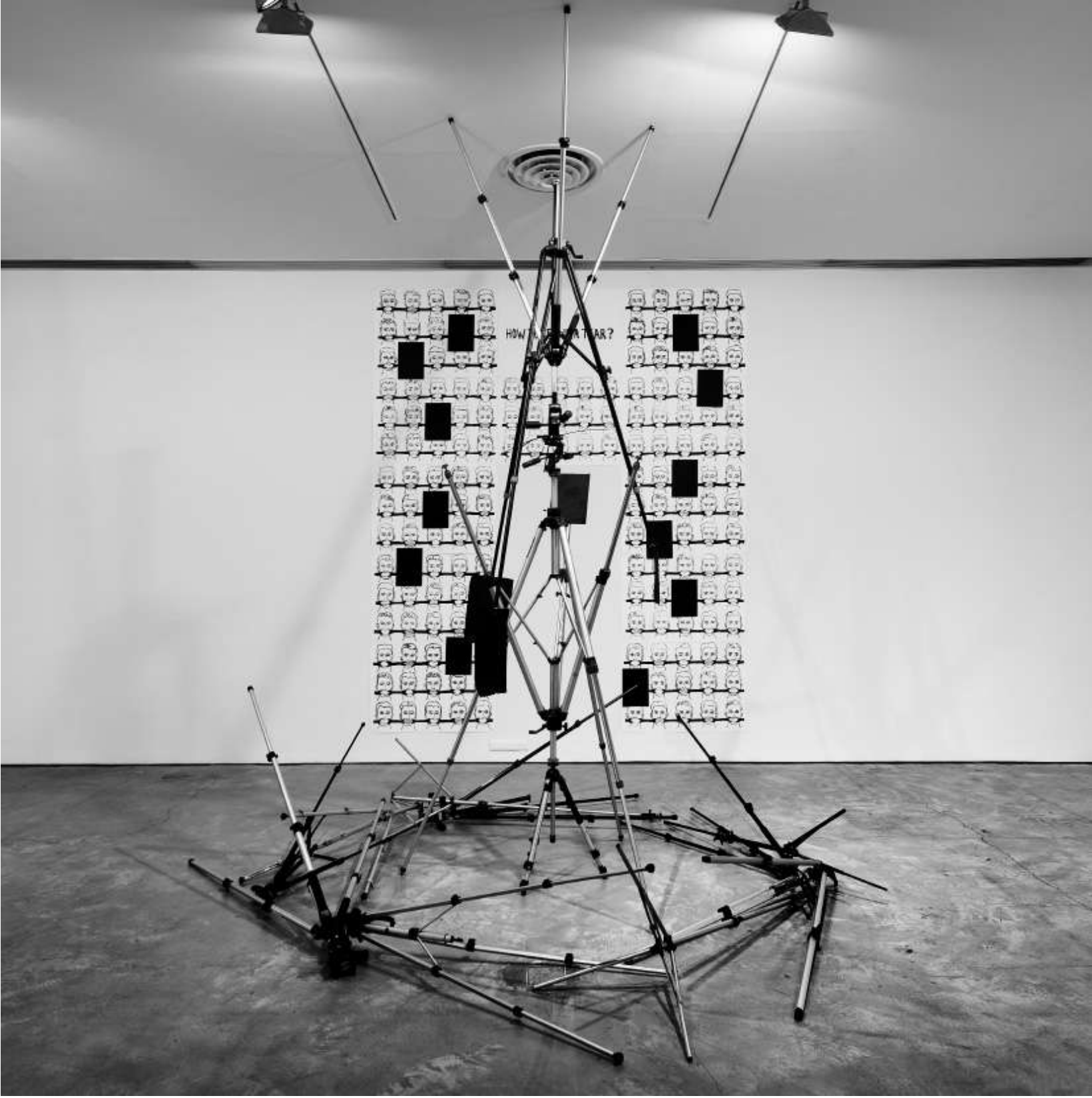
The garden is an invaluable contribution to the life of the school, a precious legacy that the artist donated to his school. Thus, the architectural plans, the lists of trees that Baboussis had planted, and countless images of this garden of almost paradise will be found in the exhibition, which is intended, among other things, as a tribute to this particular creative act. Symbolically, the garden is within the exhibition. The car park will also be revisited, but as a relic of the past, because here, at least, the garden has invaded the space, and nature has won. Visitors will be able to walk through the “real” garden as well as its representation, and in the Enchanter’s cottage, dream of the lectures that the teacher gave at the time, in which he detailed the works as if he had personally known the authors.”

— Barbara Polla, Curator Athens School of Fine Arts, – MOMus, Nikos Kessanlis Venue





The parking, 2022,
installation view, ASFA,
Nikos Kessanlis Venue,
car, tripods, two photos,
c print, 225 x 150 cm, and
250 x 225 cm



Untitled, 2019, Installation view, Center of contemporary Art Ileana Tounta.



Without, 2022, installation view,
ASFA, Nikos Kessanlis Venue
32 chairs, table 12 m, photo,
2003, lambda, c print,
170 x 125 cm, and video pro-
jection of photos, 1994-2022

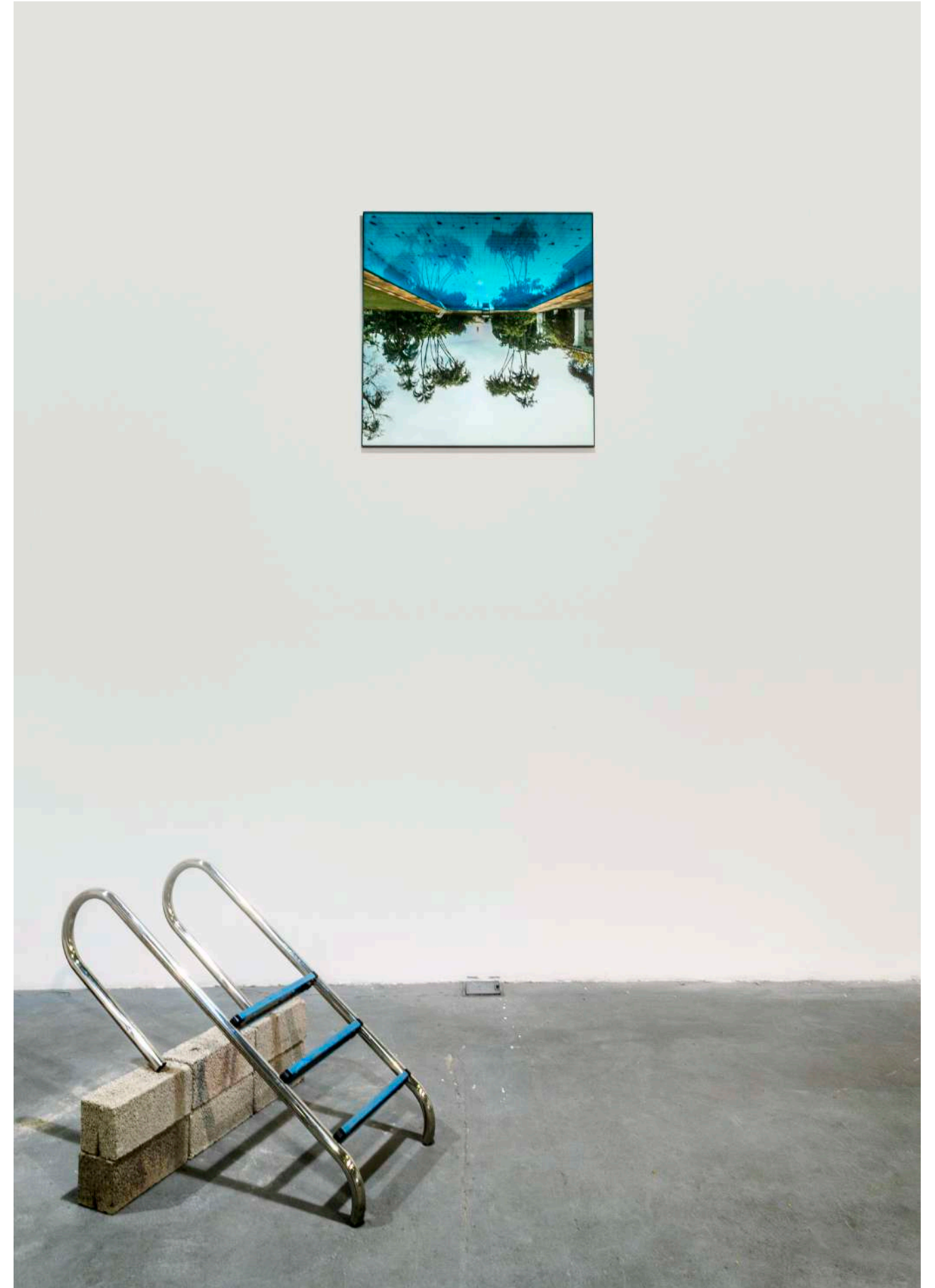


The work is configured as an assemblage of heterogeneous materials: concrete cubes, a tree trunk, some architecture books, all dominated by a photograph on the wall. The central theme is the permanent struggle between the organic element (the wood/tree) and the artificial one (the concrete). Baboussis portrays branches that, despite appearing imprisoned by the concrete, symbolize a vital force that persists and intertwines with man-made structures.



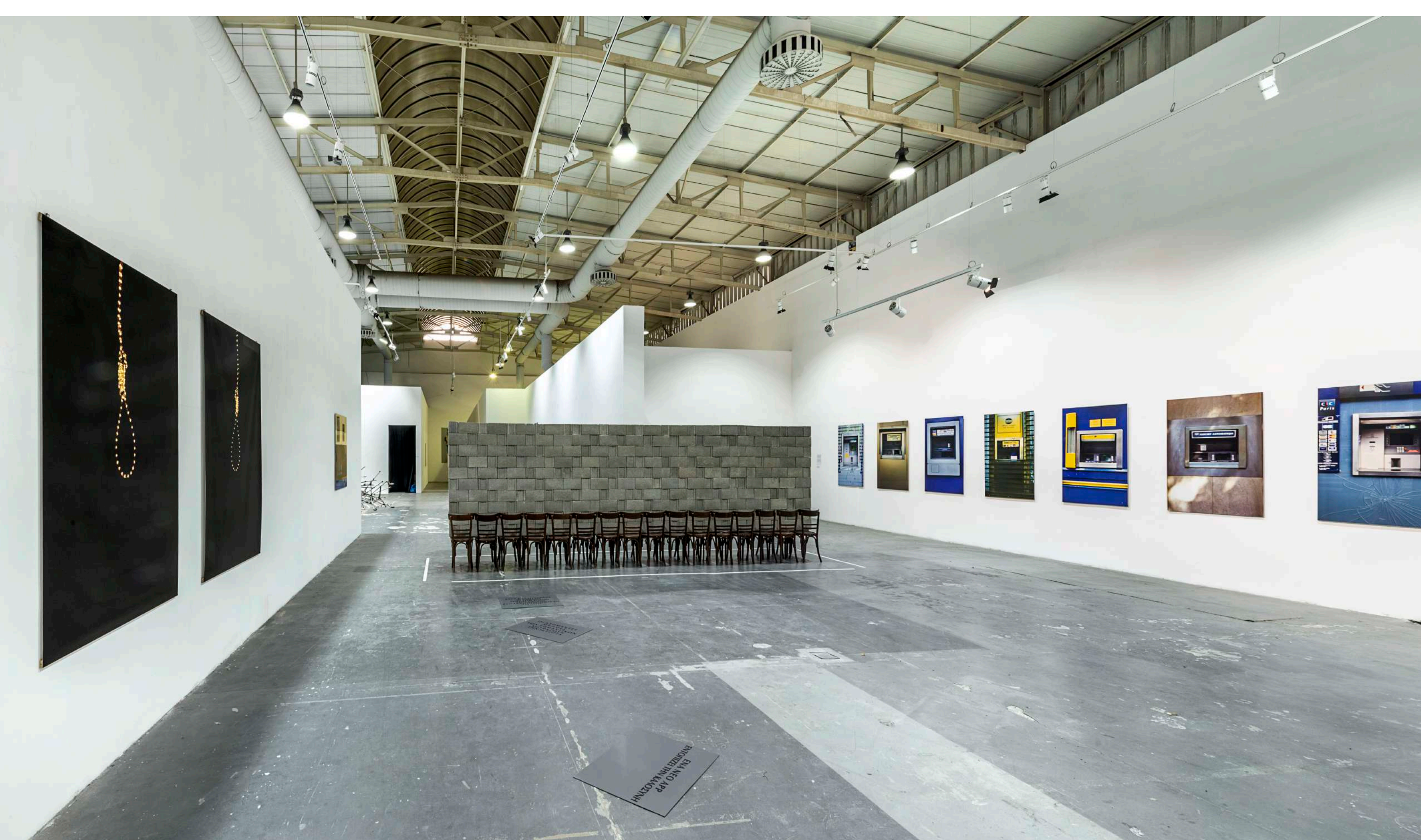
They grew up together, 2021-2022,, installation view, ASFA., Nikos Kessanlis Venue,, cobblestones, cement blocks, tree trunks, iron, architectural books, photos, variable dimensions

La piscine, 2022, installation view, ASFA Nikos Kessanlis, venue, photo, 2008, inkjet c print, inox pool ladder,





Salvation, Hospital, Athens 2019, photo, inkjet c print, 225 x 150 cm



Installation view, 2022, ASFA, Nikos Kessanlis, Venue



Tragedy in Baβousis's work arises not only from loss, but from the material manifestation of limits. His installations make visible the forces that divide, exclude, and weigh upon human experience. Ecstasy emerges when the gaze encounters these boundaries and simultaneously perceives both their necessity and their fragility.

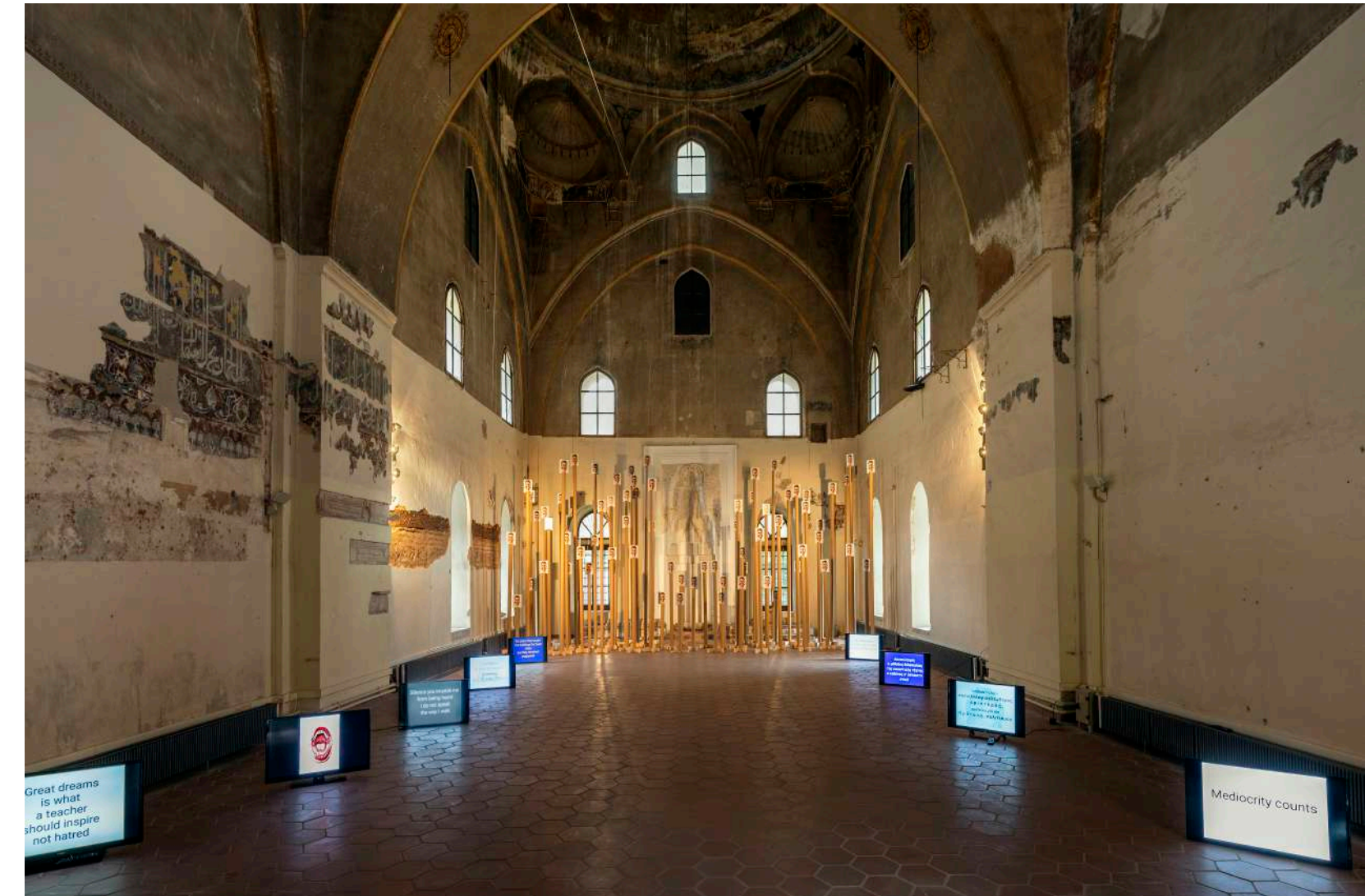
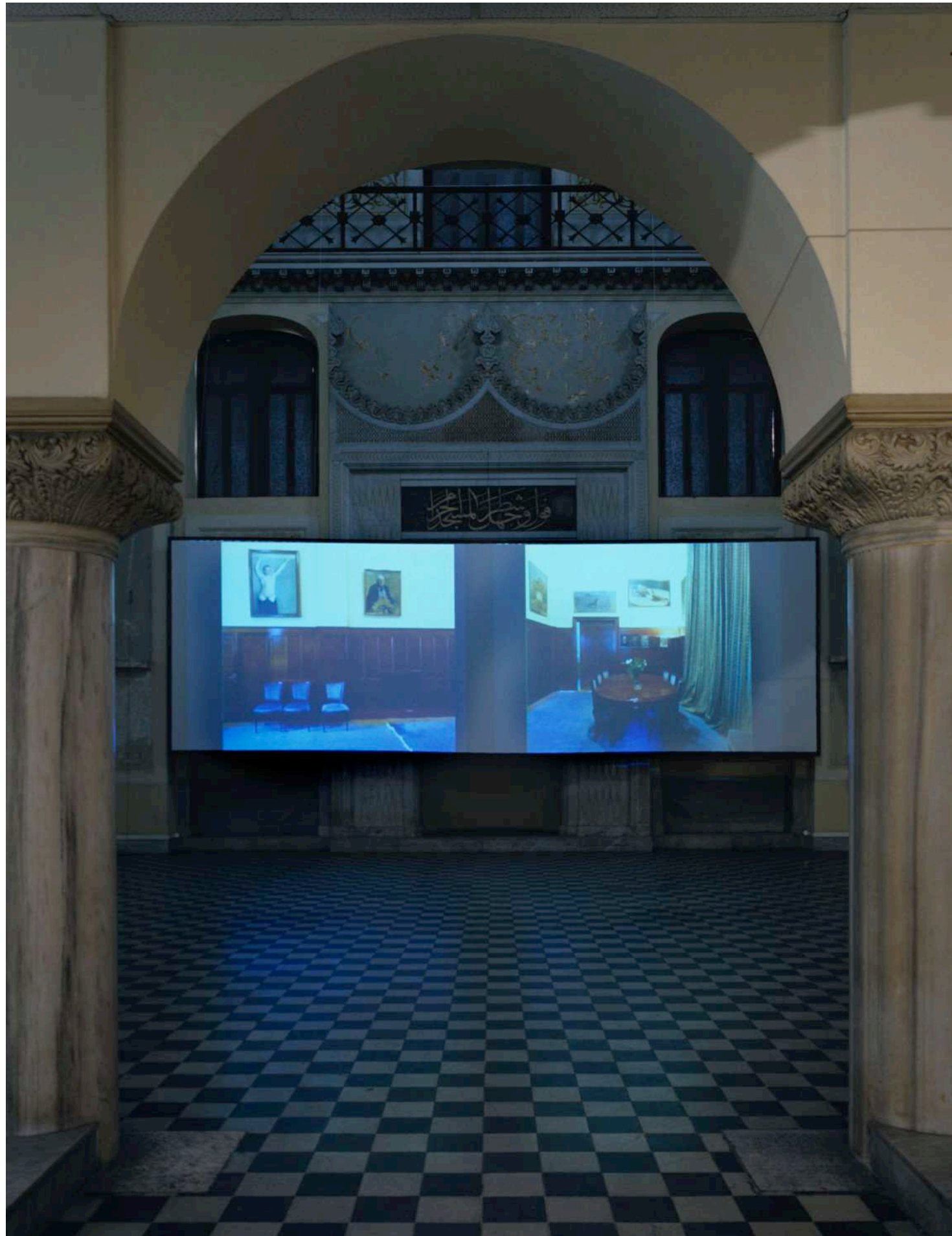
In this particular work, the chairs do not negate the tragic nature of the wall; they intensify it. For they reveal that the obstacle does not stand on its own—it is supported by the very forms of collective life. And this is a profoundly political thought, but also a deeply tragic one.,

Untitled, 2014, installation view, CCA Ileana Tounta,, chairs, cement blocks, 216 x 676 x 95 cm



Η τραγικότητα στο έργο του Μπαμπούση δεν προκύπτει μόνο από την απώλεια αλλά από την υλική εμφάνιση των ορίων. Οι εγκαταστάσεις του καθιστούν ορατές τις δυνάμεις που διαχωρίζουν, αποκλείουν και βαραίνουν την ανθρώπινη εμπειρία. Η έκσταση γεννιέται όταν το βλέμμα συναντά αυτά τα όρια και αντιλαμβάνεται συγχρόνως την αναγκαιότητα και την επισφάλειά τους.

Στο συγκεκριμένο έργο οι καρέκλες δεν αναιρούν την τραγικότητα του τοίχου. Την εντείνουν. Διότι μας δείχνουν ότι το εμπόδιο δεν στέκεται μόνο του· στηρίζεται πάνω στις ίδιες τις μορφές της συλλογικής ζωής. Και αυτή είναι μια σκέψη εξαιρετικά πολιτική αλλά και βαθιά τραγική.



Attention, works in progress , 2018, Installation view, Municipal Gallery of Thessaloniki

Judgment, Museum photography, Installation view, Thessaloniki



Monumentapolis, Guide, 2017, Installation view, Romantso



The Island, 2017, Installation view, Romantso

“The exhibition of Manolis Baboussis is a critical reflection upon the environment of the crisis and is structured around two beleaguered fields. On the one hand, the autistic stagnation of authority and its institutions—administrative, academic, artistic—as shown in a series of drawings of museums and academic facilities in his imaginary city; on the other, an over-accumulation of objects-signs which, despite their pluralism, cannot hide their dead-end multiplicity and multiplication capacity in their cosmic sphere.”

“ A sculptural reference to the island of exile before a photograph of the parliament. This scene establishes—always inadvertently—a new symbolic order, the faint trace of its objects’ difference. A suspended narrative which ultimately alludes to no origin, to no hereafter”.

(Apostoliw Artinow Writer, curator)



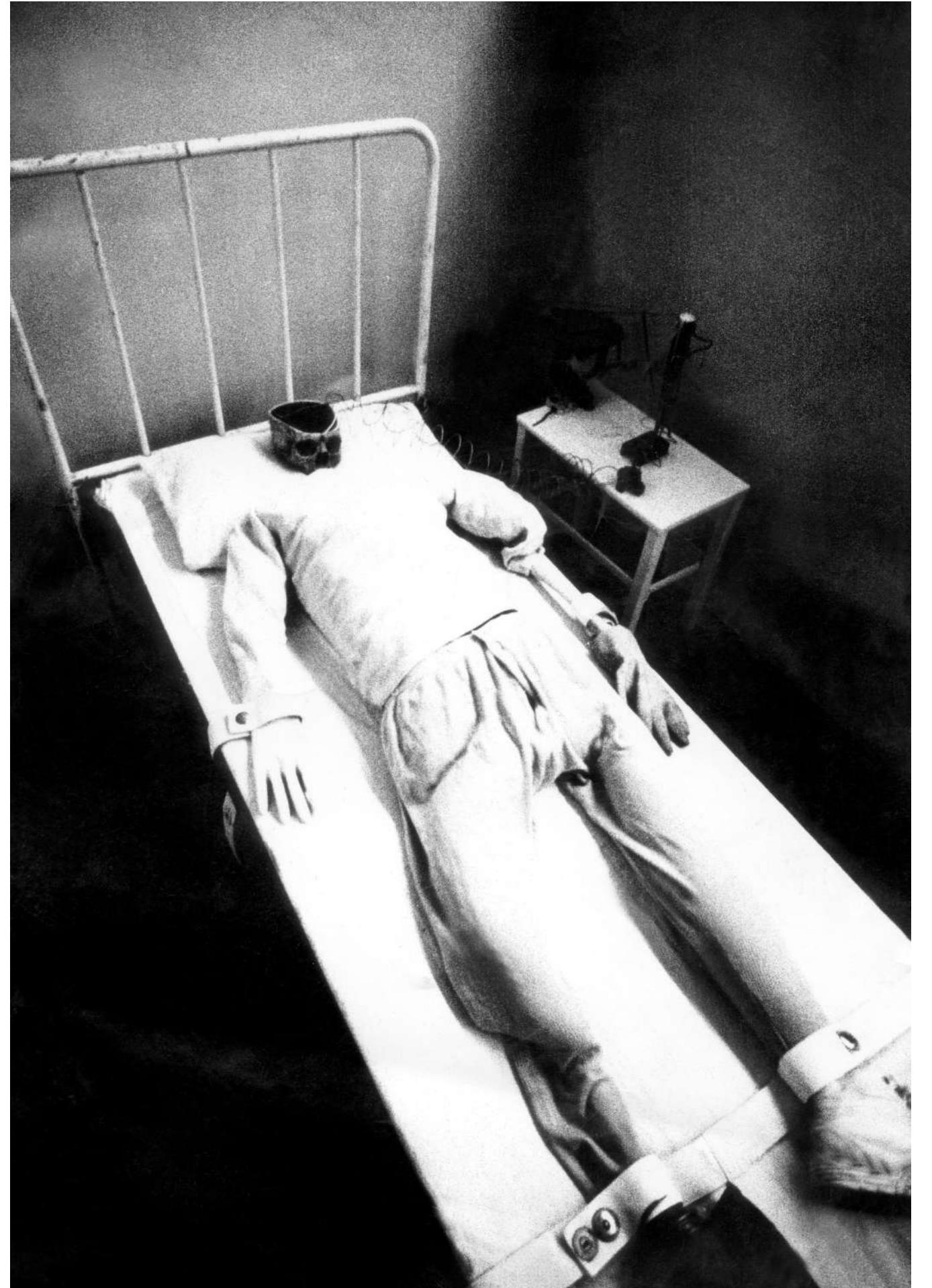
Monumentapolis, 2016, at Artist' s Athens, Studio



Volterra, 1974, photos, lambda c print, mounted on aluminum, 125 x 83 cm



Volterra, 1975, installation view, variable dimensions



Volterra, 1975, installation view, Arhitectural School, Florence Univerity