

From the digital into the physical, 16-year-old artist explores nudity at Atopos



David Marinos, 'Bird View' 2013.

By Elis Kiss

At first glance he's your typical 16-year-old male who spends a good amount of time browsing the digital world in search of inspiration and communication. Greek Ukrainian David Marinos, however, has taken his savvy use of technology the extra inventive mile: Through creative social media outlets such as Tumblr and Instagram, an increasing number of followers are tracking his reworked images (his own as well as existing photographs) of juxtaposed features and distorted silhouettes.

A portion of the young artist's work is currently on display at the premises of the Atopos cultural organization in Athens. The works were developed during a seven-day residency at the Metaxourgeio venue where Marinos explored the idea of nudity, a recurring theme in his work. During this time he got to shoot his first ever video – on-screen body explorations with neon lights, reflected off-screen through pieces of glass – and create a number of installations spread out throughout the public and more private areas of the neoclassical building.

Born in Athens, Marinos left Greece at the age of 4 with his Ukrainian mother after his Greek father abandoned the family. They landed in the United States, where he attended art classes at a school in Oregon. He is the founder of the online Lucent Kids

collective, uniting young international artists born after the digital revolution who share ideas and experiences, as well as co-founders of American youth apparel brand Icey.

For the Atopos project, Marinos traveled from Bulgaria, where he currently resides with his mother and attends school, for an opportunity to explore his art form beyond the digital dimension – a chance to see his digital work printed for the first time. He initially refused the invitation to work in situ, but agreed after his mother was invited to stay on the premises as well. His temporary bedroom is part of the exhibition, with a model taking his place on the single mattress.

"He has an eye, the ability to understand a three-dimensional space. He placed the prints in real space in the same way in which he develops his digital images. He moved from the two-dimensional to the three-dimensional in a natural, albeit fascinating way," Atopos co-founder Vassilis Zidianakis told Kathimerini English Edition. "He seems to be constantly searching and is interested in the body as creative fabric. Through his escapism on Tumblr, for instance, he is attracted to the notion of the body and its ideal."

Nudity is also very much the story of Atopos Unlocked, a new program which began as a means of celebrating the organization's 10th anniversary, focusing on the depiction of the naked body and how this is captured on social media by an emerging generation of young artists. The results of the ongoing research will be showcased in a publication developed in association with La Gaité Lyrique in Paris next year. The project will be added to a long list of activities developed by Atopos, a contemporary visual culture organization that explores the expression and adornment of the human body, founded by Stamos Fafalios and Zidianakis in 2003. A recent addition to the creative team is Angelos Tsourapas.

The current show, open for to visitors on November 19 and 26, is part of Occupy Atopos, a new residency program with Marinos as the first guest artist. Also on display is a rotating selection of rare items from Atopos's paper fashion collection, which includes creations by Issey Miyake and Hussein Chalayan, as well as the Campbell Soup dress after Andy Warhol and the Lisa Dress by Robert Wilson. Works from Atopos's Mon Petit Chou project (including pieces by London-based fashion designer Craig Green) also feature.

In the meantime, Marinos continues his multiple digital travels. What is it that inspires him? "I get inspired by many things," he wrote to a Tumblr fan recently, "but a lot of my inspiration comes from human interactions, emotions, different realities, dreams, galaxies, time and much more." [Kathimerini English Edition]