

Ksenia Galiaeva

Unreal Estate

29.10–26.11.2023

For more than twenty five years, Ksenia Galiaeva has been photographing her parents in the seemingly paradisiacal surroundings of her family's Russian summerhouse in an attempt to influence her own memory and her family history. Due to her parents' advanced age and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Galiaeva is drawing this long-term project to a close with a book, an audiobook, a film, a film installation in four parts, a book.

In *Unreal Estate the Book*, Galiaeva brings together the autobiographic stories that have always been present as background and driving force of her work, without being fully told, as well as a photographic collection made from 1997 to 2022.

This film and book project, an extension of Galiaeva's photographic oeuvre, concludes the long period of working with her parents and is an ode to her characters and their history, which have shaped her as a person and artist, the only child of two Holocaust and labor camp survivors, and an ethnic mix of five nationalities (Jewish, Polish and German, Tatar and Russian) and four religions.

As part of the project's culmination, Ksenia Galiaeva is exhibiting a selection of photographs taken in the last two decades.

"Twenty-five years ago, I started to take photos of my parents in our summerhouse. This place, this garden could have been anywhere. I hated it that my pictures got framed as this cliché of nostalgia and exoticism and didn't want to illustrate other people's ideas about Russianness.

The photos had an effect on us as a family. They showed the unconditional love I have received from my parents and that I have tried to give back by making them into the main characters of my story. By selecting and re-enacting what to preserve, I wanted to influence our memories. My parents have totally gotten the hang of it and engaged themselves in the process.

We have built our own mythology full of symbols and repetitive actions based on the garden's needs and our own, in a place that seems timeless and endless. My need to build up this continuity comes from a desire to counteract its temporality. Preparing myself for the inevitable changes, I have saved as much as I could to try to lessen my future guilt and regret."

Ksenia Galiaeva, excerpt from her self-published book *Unreal Estate the Book* (2023).