

# istanbul-off-spaces

## Programme

Saturday, July 4, 4 p.m.

4 p.m. **Talk** by Deniz Erbaş, art worker from Istanbul, on organization and working conditions of artists and initiatives in Istanbul (in English)

4:30 p.m. **Presentation** of the participating groups and works and discussion on situation of alternative art in Istanbul with guests from 5533, Apartment Project, Artık Space, atilkunst, Daralan, Hafriyat-Karaköy, Kurye, Masa Project, Nomad, Upgrade! Istanbul, Oda Projesi and xurban\_collective

Moderation Deniz Erbaş

(in English)

from 7:30 p.m. **Barbeque** on the balcony

8 p.m.

**Panel discussion** on Berlin / Istanbul in comparison, with Nancy Atakan (5533, Istanbul), Deniz Erbaş (Istanbul), Stephan Kallage (Westgermany, Berlin).

Moderation: Stéphane Bauer, Sencer Vardarman

(in English)

## Paralel Event

Saturday, July 4, 6 p.m.

**Video Screening – Selda Asal: BİR RÜYA OL! / BE A DREAM!** of the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, within the scope of „mehr PomPoms!“ - Berlin's Young Culture Weekend (for further information, cf. www.ballhausnaunynstrasse.de)

## Accompanying Projects

**BİR RÜYA OL! / BE A DREAM!** by Selda Asal & Serdar Ateşer (Apartment Project). Lyrics & performers: Cemre Ceylan, Şirin Gerçek, Sandra Hallman, Havin, Havva, Nalan Kılıç, Kubra, Rada Mavinkovic, Ljiridion Meldii, Danijela Nitz, Gamze Ozan, Okan Seven, Toki, Natalija Wutke, Ziad

**SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS – BERLIN & ISTANBUL** by 5533 – common project with participating groups:

from Istanbul: Altı Aylık, Apartment Project, Artık Mekan, Atıl Kunst, Bas, Caravansarai, Daralan, Hafriyat, Galataperform, Kop-Art, Masa Project, Nomad, Pist, Oda Projesi, Videoist

from Berlin: Arttransponder, Art laboratory, copyright, Kulturpalast, Wedding International, MAI.FOTO, TÄT, Uqbar, Visite Ma Tente, Westgermany

**first term of TONGUE – a Project of Oda Projesi und Nadin Reschke** in Public Space. Continued 1 to 21 november 2009, within the scope of: beyond belonging:translokale (www.ballhausnaunynstrasse.de)

for further information, please cf.

www.berlinerpool.de/istanbul-off-spaces

July 4 to August 16, 2009

Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien

istanbul-off-spaces

Independent Art Spaces in Dialogue Exhibitions and Events

Opening Friday, July 3, from 7 p.m.

Welcome Address: Dr. Franz Schulz, District Mayor Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

Programme day Saturday, July 4, from 4 p.m.

Exhibition

July 4 to August 16, 2009

Open every day from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Admission free

Invited are:

5533, Apartment Project, Artık Mekan, Atilkunst, daralan, Hafriyat-Karaköy, Kurye, Masa Project, Nomad & upgrade! Istanbul, Oda Projesi, xurban\_collective

istanbul-off-spaces

Every Artist an Organised Artist!

istanbul-off-spaces exhibition and event in Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien is meant to draw attention to a phenomenon that has arisen in recent years: the increasing number and growing influence of project groups and independent non-commercial art spaces in Istanbul.

In Istanbul, art project spaces act as important locations for social discourse and discussions about civil society. As a result of increasing internationalisation, but also as a consequence of growing independence and burgeoning self-awareness, locations, publishers, magazines and players in the field of contemporary visual arts have established themselves as outstanding elements of social and political discourse in Istanbul.

The activities in Berlin are aimed at initiating a dialogue between these projects and their protagonists offering a presentation platform in Berlin.

Stéphane Bauer, Sencer Vardarman

The concepts most frequently utilised to describe the projects, spaces and production platforms formed over the last couple of years in Istanbul largely by the initiative of artists and curators are “initiative”, “organisation” and “independent”. Ever expanding their field and their effectiveness, these formations are better understood as functional reflexes emerging from existing micro and macro conditions rather than as manifestations of a popular movement.

Once a Third World country, now among the developing states and a candidate for European Union for more than 40 years, Turkey, aside from its specific conditions, exhibits many characteristics of the peripheral geography it forms a part of. Primary among these characteristics comes the framework defined by Fredric Jameson as “national allegories”. In Jameson's words: “the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society”.<sup>2</sup> This sentence provides a unique key in understanding contemporary art production in general and artist initiatives in particular.

First we should start off with the observation that the opportunities presented to the artists by the general institutions, people and exhibitions that make up the activity in the art scene are inadequate in fulfilling

the production and presentation needs of contemporary art. For one thing, they can't get far from being mere institutional frameworks that do not allow much room for artists to move in comfortably, with their “untouchable” walls, secured entrances requiring invitations, contextual sensibilities and drive for consistency in terms of institutional identity. Ultimately, this framework frames art in a space which can be termed as “art specific” rather than allowing it to exist in public space. The increase in the number of initiatives, independent spaces and artist groups stems from this sense of being framed and locked.

While the spaces of art remain inadequate to open up a public space for art, the existence of art in public space by itself has always been very problematic and limited since the very beginning. Within a deep-rooted and persistent structure that regards art in public space merely as monuments/sculptures and that does not know any way of using the public space panorama other than filling it up with gigantic advertisements and billboards, car parks, fake flowers that frame café-bar-restaurant tables, peddler stalls, gigantic flags, posters and cloth banners, the visibility of art in public space has been limited to special occasions and periodical applications. In this regard, the visibility of art in public space is not small; it is almost non-existent. This being the case, the audience reached by art cannot exceed a limited group of people who are the natural frequenters of the special art spaces discussed above.

The non-existence of public spaces that would facilitate the unmediated encounter of art and audience could only be overcome by the initiative of artists and curators, since it was no use waiting for private

initiative to open up space for art with such concerns. Pist, located right at the periphery of Istanbul's art centre, Pangalti, in a predominantly residential area; 5533, transforming the shop number 5533 of the İMÇ, a lively community of traders and artisans numbering about 20000, into an archive, library and exhibition space; and Hafriyat Karaköy, opening shop in the middle of a neighbourhood housing spare parts, decoration and repair-traders/artisans and brothels are all expanding the boundaries and set the special art spaces located downtown and opening up space for art in the public space by their sheer existence. Aside from these, Apartment Project located at Tünel district provides spatial infrastructure for artist projects while BAS located at the Şişhane district infiltrates public space through printed materials by focusing primarily on artist books.

The initiatives behind the spaces discussed above were all artist groups of different intensities in the beginning: Hafriyat is an artist group which has been organising their own exhibitions since 1996; the artists and curators making up 5533 were working closely way before they opened up their space; the initiator of the Apartment Project, Selda Asal has realised numerous collective projects that include various artists like 2 + 1.

Another development that stems from the physical non-existence of art in public space is the formation of practices developed to exist in public cultural space. A set of mechanisms that rule the public plane of the city dictates the rules for both societal life and individual existence. The oppressive structure that encircles culture and society makes no exceptions for art. This is the exact opposite of the environment of freedom necessary for artistic production. To a large extent due to this lack of freedom, the artists become political through questioning the mechanisms that generate social encirclement and oppression as well as their various manifestations, hence drilling holes into the prevailing intellectual climate of the public space:

**Makul (Acceptable)** exhibition examining gay rights and the issues of gender, opened in parallel to the closing case against the LAMBDA Society in Istanbul; the feminist action-exhibition taking its name from the clause number 5237 of the Turkish Penal Code on “unjust provocation” in sexual crimes organised under the title of “causes extenuating penal responsibility”; the FEAR OF GOD posters exhibition organised by Hafriyat Karaköy and which will be shown again in istanbul-off-spaces; info/document compilation and installation bringing together all “murders by unknown assailants” under the title of “Münferit” (Individual), realised on the occasion of the first year of the murder of Hrant Dink by the January 19 Collective that sprang from the traumatic event of Dink's murder and that is mostly composed of artists; the Sulukule Exhibition documenting the urban transformation and forced displacement, which has been taking place over the last three years in Sulukule, organised by the support group Sulukule Platform...

In addition to these action/exhibitions, there are also alternative channels affecting the agenda of the public space: January 19 Collective publishes images in newspapers and magazines; atilkunst e-mails weekly stickers in response to the current agenda; Istanbul's map of neo-liberal redistribution, IstanbulMap, prepared by Barcelona based artist Anna Sala in 2007 as a result of a 3 months long collective work bringing together architects, urban planners, sociologists and artist initiatives from Istanbul and published and freely distributed in 15000 copies, continues to be a reference for all urban transformation studies.

The common point of these exhibitions, events and organisations is that they co-operate with social groups and organisations operating actively on the subjects that they handle, thus drawing these groups and organisations into the field of art. As a result of this interaction, they not only get acquainted with social organisation models but they also develop interdisciplinary practices: collaborations with organisations like Amargi, Filmmor, Lambda Istanbul, Sulukule Platform, İmece, Toplumun Şehircilik Hareketi (Society's Urban Planning Movement) are examples of this situation.

The main characteristics of these initiatives/organisations is that the artists come together through shared sensibilities regarding issues that define the social and political agenda of Turkey as well as its public space, widening their field of in-

fluence and resistance through interacting with people and organisations from other disciplines; hence developing organisations and events that focus on the impact of action rather than on immanent and aesthetic concerns. Hence begins the unmediated relation of art with social reality and the process of extending the field and right of art to have a say on the public and political realities and micro and macro problems. It can be claimed that the infrastructure provided by the experience of “working and producing together and using common mind” for the last 10 years in artist organisations provided the basis for the development of artist initiatives and spaces, exhibitions and actions discussed above.

The artists are coming together and forming initiatives at an increasing rate in order to be nourished by each other's production processes or by knowledge and instruments of different disciplines; to open up original spaces in the art scene by uniting their forces and without leaning on the institutions of the established order; to share their helplessness in the face of societal pressures; to use common mind and to fulfil similar other needs.

The next step in the field of art should be bringing into the agenda through macro-organisations the vocational rights of the artists and art professionals and the independent and free development of art. The existing professional organisations are inadequate in defining and giving voice to the needs of the art scene and their activities in this regard amount to almost nothing. Right at this point, it can be helpful to listen to Burak Delier and Kamil Şenol's call entitled “An Organisational Text” published in their blog called “What should be done”: “We are not just concerned with freeing ‘art’ but with emancipation in general. Art will have a meaning only if it can contribute to the project of emancipation. The relative emancipation in art has no meaning and significance whatsoever if it does not correspond to an emancipation in the world at large.”<sup>3</sup>

Deniz Erbaş, Istanbul 2009

1 “Manifesto issued by the Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters, and Sculptors, Mexico City 1922”, “Theories of Modern Art”, University of California Press, USA, 1984, pp 461—2

2 Fredric Jameson, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism”, Social Text, N° 15, 1986

3 ne-yapmali.blogspot.com, 2008

ries about events, people, and eras. Neither seems more true than the other.

(By Volkan Aslan and Nancy Atakan.)

Exhibited Project 2: SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS IN BERLIN

*Participating groups from Berlin: art-transponder, Art Lsaboratory, copyright, Kunstpalast, MAI.FOTO, Meinblau, TÄT, Uqbar, Visite Ma Tente, Westgermany.* — In February of 2008, inside the store numbered 5533 at the 5th Block of İMÇ in Unkapanı, Istanbul, 5533 opened its first project to the public. To commemorate the completion of this establishment's first year, the first in a series of projects under the title of SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS began on Saturday, February 14, 2009, with Nancy Atakan and Volkan Aslan as coordinators.

This project was organised around an open invitation to independent art spaces, collectives, artist initiatives, and initiatives of all types located in various real and virtual neighbourhoods of Istanbul. Aiming to create opportunities for communication, networking, sharing, and artistic practice, this event also gave spectators a chance to become closely acquainted with these groups. The exhibition in the space at 5533, organised as an Istanbul panorama, included documentation about the different groups, black and white wall drawings depicting their Participants or spaces, and a piece of needlepoint designed and executed by members of each group as well as video films showing interviews with neighbours of 5533 and the other initiatives.

Participants were: **Altı Aylık, Apartman Projesi, Artık Mekan, atilkunst, Bas, Caravansarai, daralan, Hafriyat, Galataperform, Kop-Art, Masa, Nomad, Pist, Oda Projesi, Videoist.** Remnants from this event will be displayed at the istanbul-off-spaces event in Berlin. Furthermore, 5533 has asked various Berlin initiatives to create a needlepoint design to exhibit alongside and juxtaposed against the ones made by the Istanbul groups. Why needlepoint? Since every group has its own personality, language and aims, using this technique, we attempt to implement visual tools to join disparate elements. An 'x' sown into a square (reminiscent of contemporary computer pixels), allows the designated artist from each group to use traditional tools—a frame, a canvas, a needle, and colored thread—to design a logo to represent themselves. Everything becomes a metaphor for networking and communicating.

#### Apartment Project

www.apartmentproject.com  
Seyhbender sokak no 4/1, Tünel, Beyoğlu

*Members: Selda Asal<sup>B</sup>, Zeren Gökten, Ceren Oykut, Serra Özhan<sup>B</sup>, Can Turkinan and temporary project members.* — *Apartment Project* is an initiative founded in the year 1999 by the artist Selda Asal. It is structured on personal exhibitions and performances as well as workshops. It continues its existence with workshops including Participants from various disciplines and with its sub-groups of 2+1, NBC (no-borders collective) and **Ses Odası** (sound room).

Exhibited Project 1: *Video screening* FREE FALL / SERBEST DÜŞÜŞ (3 min) — RECIPROCAL VISIT / İADE-İ ZİYARET (20 min) — 2+1 (15 min) — *everyday* 12 p.m. to 7 p.m.

FREE FALL / SERBEST DÜŞÜŞ

The *Apartment Project* developed the FREE FALL / SERBEST DÜŞÜŞ project to transform and extend the practice of workshops and to achieve a new level of experience.

This was based on an organisation principle where the Participants would not be in physical contact and where the works would develop through dialogues and free falls on a communication network.

The exercise begins with the sending of an image to the project by Selda Asal and continues through the replies in the form of images, texts and sound recordings from some or all of the Participants.

This reciprocal exchange goes on until the end date of the FREE FALL / SERBEST DÜŞÜŞ project. While these exchanges go on, a counter works to measure the time of the exchanges to archive the intensity of replies at a certain point in time.

The results can be theoretical, mundane or extremely abstract. But as was stated above, this is an experiment in creating a new breed of workshop. The result will always be a surprise of success or failure.

The exhibited work will be extremely digital one and once someone from the audience starts to read the correspondences, he/she will be able to trace all the exchanges between the Participants in real time. This will help challenge the reading of the audience: multiple readings will make everything ever more complicated or ever simpler.

RECIPROCAL VISIT / İADE-İ ZİYARET

Currently the *Apartment Project* is working on its new project, RECIPROCAL VISIT / İADE-İ ZİYARET.

The concept of the project was developed by the founder of the initiative and video artist **Selda Asal** and the curation and organisation of the project are undertaken by **Serra Özhan**. The participating artists include **Endam Acar, Selda Asal, Volkan Aslan, Fatma Çiftçi, Zeren Gökten, Deniz Gül, Gözde İlkin, Ceren Oykut, Gökçe Süvari** and **Sophia Tabatadze**. The first round of this collective project was realised by their visit to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran in April 2009.

Between the nations and states, which we can term as spaces of identity, there is a second set of borders besides the physical borders that stems from the political problems between the states and that turns the physical borders into walls: whether you can pass or not is determined by the nationality on your passport and even a visa cannot help you a bit. This is a political wall that doesn't let someone from Turkey to pass over to Armenia or vice versa. A similar border wall exists between Armenia and its eastern neighbour Azerbaijan.

Yet there are cultural exchanges that offset all the border stories set up by the states. One of these is the tradition of reciprocal visit. As distinct from Western Europe and as is the case in most Arabic countries and Turkey, the culture of reciprocal visit still exists in Armenia, Iran, Azerbaijan and Georgia. For instance, just like it is the case in Turkey, the visits paid by the neighbours—even those that you are not acquainted with—are regarded as pleasant. It is actually what should be: a "must". You go over with a box of sweets and say hi.

This project sets off to visit and to receive reciprocal visits in spite of the hostility of these states towards each other, to critically break down the physical, political and intellectual obstacles created by the borders. In this respect, a shared cultural value that makes borders meaningless, the tradition of reciprocal visit forms the basis of our project.

The collective undertook an experimental exercise that was created there and then throughout their journey by bus and train: different ideas emanating from the collective, different experiences brought on by being together and sharing, various narratives using different materials... Participants coming from various disciplines such as photography, video, music, performance, painting and sociology engaged in an experimental workshop consisting of photographs, films and texts, interactions and talks, created or experienced in places that they passed through and stayed.

The name of the project is RECIPROCAL VISIT / İADE-İ ZİYARET because it is based on visits to Georgia, Armenia, once more to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Iran and the reciprocal visits of two artists from each of these countries: this is a familiar word for us and for the artists from these countries. It is a connecting word.

The second round of this project will bring artists from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran to Turkey in July 2009. They will pay us a visit at the Tobacco Depot and the *Apartment Project* and take part in a two-term workshop. The resulting works will be exhibited at the Tobacco Depot between November 14 and December 19.

2+1

2+1 is a sub-group of the *Apartment Project*. It comprises **Selda Asal, Ceren Oykut** and **Serdar Ateşer**. All the members of this trio continue to pursue their artistic care-

ers independently, creating both personal projects and projects with groups other than 2+1.

2+1 conducted two workshops in Lille in February 2009; one with a group of 15 year-olds from **Paul Verlaine High School** and one with a **group of young rappers between the ages of 20 and 22** at **Maison Folie Moulén**.

Ceren Oykut reconstructed the pictures drawn by the youngsters in Paul Verlaine High School, representing dreams and realities, in her own studio.

Selda Asal conducted a text exercise with both groups on dreams and difficulties and these texts formed the pieces of a collage text by Selda Asal. With the collaboration of the musician **Serdar Ateşer**, these texts were turned into lyrics of two rap songs and they together started working on two separate rap videos to be filmed and edited by Selda Asal. The titles of these videos are **I DREAM BUT...** and **NEXT TURN**.

Exhibited Project 2: *Video screening* BİR RÜYA OL! / BE A DREAM! (6 min) — 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. daily

SEI EIN TRAUM! / BE A DREAM! / BİR RÜYA OL!

*Digital Film. Concept @ camera @ post production: Selda Asal. Music production: Serdar Ateşer. 2009, Berlin.* SEI EIN TRAUM / BE A DREAM! / BİR RÜYA OL! is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the projects consisting of video films, sound installations and music videos realised by Selda Asal since the year 2007 with teenagers from Turkey, Germany, Denmark, France, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Iran. All videos have different titles, but conceptually they all focus on difficulties and dreams.

This project named **SEI EIN TRAUM** was realised with the collaboration of **pupils between the ages of 16 and 18 from the school Kurt-Löwenstein in Berlin Neukölln**, who participated in a workshop between the May 18 and the June 26. Selda Asal worked with these youngsters on texts focusing on dreams and difficulties and then prepared a new collage text from parts of what they have written. This collage text forms the lyrics of the rap music video.

In June, the music of the video was produced with the collaboration of **Serdar Ateşer** and the final work was filmed as a music video by Selda Asal. The video is six minutes long.

#### Artık Mekan

www.artikmekan.blogspot.com  
Bankalar Caddesi, Yanık Kapi Sokak, no 3/1  
Sumahan Karaköy/Istanbul

*Members: Gonca Sezer<sup>B</sup>, Yeşim Ağaoglu<sup>B</sup>* — *Artık Mekan* originated from the idea of exhibiting our personal works unmediated, in a totally independent way with our own means, as an alternative to the inadequately numbered exhibition spaces and galleries of Istanbul.

I think that our difference from the other independent spaces lies in the fact that we are not actually a group but two independent artist and that *artık* is probably the smallest (about 2m<sup>2</sup>) of the existing independent spaces.

And this is one of the reasons why we named our space *artık*. *artık* has two meanings in Turkish; it means both "starting now" and "left over". Actually both meanings coincide with the existence of our space. This space, almost the size of a shop-window, located in a multi-storey office building, was originally conceived as a tea-shop. It really looks like "left over" among all the offices and a gallery that fill the building.

On the other hand, the fact that we can now exhibit our works when we want and for as long as we want freely without waiting to be invited for an exhibition coincides with the "starting now" meaning of the word.

We don't form a group with Gonca Sezer but we do solo and group shows at *artık* space. Since we pay for all the expenses, we prefer to give priority to our personal works. But still, we are open to suggestions and willing to exhibit other artists' works from time to time.

(By Yeşim Ağaoglu, April 2009.)

#### Exhibited Project

*Yeşim Ağaoglu and Gonca Sezer* will represent *artık* in the Istanbul-off event in Berlin by showing an installation on the subject of **WOMAN AND THE CITY**.

The exhibition will deal with issues like the relation of the woman as an individual with the city, her existence in daily life and the social roles she is expected to take on. Sezer will approach the concepts of time and identity ironically and examine the oppressions on the identity of women in a poetic language through the application of designs on photographic images. Ağaoglu, on the other hand, will present the photographic images of women from different social positions as an installation with a feminist outlook.

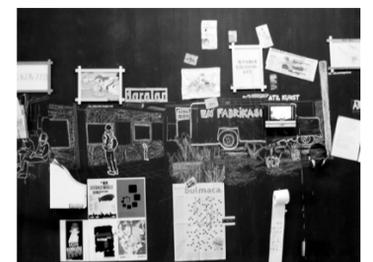
#### atilkunst

www.gundemfazlasi.blogspot.com  
www.myspace.com/atilkunst  
www.atilkunst.blogspot.com

*Members: Gülçin Aksoy<sup>B</sup>, Gözde İlkin<sup>B</sup>, Yasemin Nur Toksoy<sup>B</sup>* — *atilkunst* started working in the year 2006.

*atilkunst* views the world with action-based irony. Rather than examining a single concept at length, it creates a contemporary reaction area. *atilkunst's* actions start off with the spoken word. Then the word transforms into printed image and that printed image confronts us in numerous places, be they public or private, sometimes in the form of videos, sometimes photo-novels and sometimes stickers. These actions cannot be exactly considered street art but they use the streets. *atilkunst* intervenes in the political agenda and the dominant discourses of the everyday life using the streets and the communication instruments of the mass media.

Though *atilkunst* stems from an artistic context, it can more generally be regarded as an activist group and a cultural jammer. In today's world where we are constantly bombarded by images, *atilkunst* aims at creating an alternative culture by fighting those images with their own instruments.



5533, excerpt of an exhibition view from SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS, Istanbul, February 2008



apartman, GEGENBESUCH on the way to Teheran.



artık, BIRD FLOWN AWAY (excerpt). Installation view, 2008. Joint work of Gonca Sezer, Yesim Ağaoglu



atilkunst, Mahya „COME TO THE POINT“. Traditional light installation at the main entrance of Bethanien (installation diagram)

5533

www.imc5533.blogspot.com  
İmç 5. Blok No: 5533, Unkapanı / Istanbul

*Members: Nancy Atakan<sup>B</sup>, Volkan Aslan<sup>B</sup>, Marcus Graf* — Founded by Nancy Atakan, Volkan Aslan and Marcus Graf, 5533 opened in February 2008, with its storefront window gallery, library, artist/curator/art initiative/new media/sound art, and portfolio archives, as an independent space for research, discussion and exhibition of contemporary art. Talks, workshops, public roundtable discussions, and readings taking place in this former shop located in the Istanbul Textile Traders' Market (İMÇ) Block No. 5 creates a forum for an interactive review of artistic concepts and practices. In addition to analyzing art's theoretical context, at 5533, video screenings, performances and exhibitions turn a former business environment into a 'contact zone' where visitors from different backgrounds, professions, and communities interact with İMÇ inhabitants to experience various artistic forms in a non-exclusive and non-elitist atmosphere.

Exhibited Project 1: BİR VARMIŞ BİR YOKMUŞ... (once upon a time...)

By **Nancy Atakan, Volkan Aslan.** *Photographs, digital prints, videos, found objects. Installation, 2009* — Whenever memory plays a role in relating information, the outcome, whether verbal, visual, or a combination of the two, becomes narrative. In a complex chaotic city like Istanbul, storytelling exists as a part of the natural texture of the place. In this installation entitled, **BİR VARMIŞ BİR YOKMUŞ**, Volkan Aslan and Nancy Atakan show alternative ways to tell stories about the worlds they inhabit by presenting a historical/imaginary space that reflects the multiple-layers of reality/fiction found in Istanbul as well as the Unkapanı area around 5533.

The environment around 5533 joins the traditional, Muslim and historical with touches of contemporary life to allow parallel worlds to stand side by side as well as overlap and penetrate each other. Plexiglas, neon, plastic, glass, advertisements, videos, contemporary music intertwine with traditional Muslim women's readywear, a local tea shop, a semi-deserted modern shopping centre, faded photographs, arabesque music, and discarded objects. Aslan and Atakan's installation indirectly recreates this atmosphere using their individual artistic practices. While Atakan starts from personal experience, family photographs and stories of her relatives, who initially established the shopping centre in which 5533 exists, Aslan's narrative begins with found objects from past eras. Both artists realise that objects outlive humans and that objects leave traces, carry smells, and reflect the atmosphere of what remains. Objects document and carry memory. Whether these objects come from someone known or unknown, they tell sto-

Exhibited Project: MAHYA „SADEDE GEL“ (traditional light installation, “come to the point”)

Mahya is the name of the illuminated writings that are hung between the mosque minarets and that contain expressions of religious content. In Persian, the word mahya literally means “monthly, specific to the month” and it connotes specifically the month of Ramadan.

The historians date the first mahya lights to about 400 years back and claim that mahya was an important branch of the Ottoman decorative arts. Traditionally, mahyas were done with oil-lamps. Today, incandescent bulbs and even LED technology are used. Traditionally, mahya-making is a skill that was passed down from the master to the apprentice. For this project, we will be working with one of these masters.

We are planning to hang up a mahya reading “Come to the Point” between the two towers of the Bethanien building. “Come to the point” is a frequently used popular expression. It means tell the gist of it, cut it short, be clear, don’t fool around. It is chosen for this project as an expression that invites the viewer to be himself/herself.

daralan

www.daralan.com.tr  
www.daralan.blogspot.com

**Members:** Dilan Gümüş<sup>B</sup>, Erdinç Gümüş, Sesil Beatris Kalaycıyan<sup>B</sup> — *daralan* is an independent art project that develops and coordinates exhibitions that usually bring together young artists from various disciplines. It defines itself as a project open to all disciplines as well as non-disciplines and displays an interdisciplinary approach in its exhibitions. Aside from its own exhibitions, the project also welcomes collaborative projects with other initiatives and groups.

The project was initiated over two years ago and opened its program with the exhibition entitled WIDENING NARROW SPACE on December 14, 2007.

Exhibited Project: WIDENING NARROW SPACE (installation)

**With Alperen Kahraman, Sesil Beatris Kalaycıyan, Evrim Kavcar, Ozan Tüzün** — Survival is the most fundamental instinct of all living beings. Human beings are the most systematic employers of this fundamental instinct, narrowing or extinguishing the living spaces of all other organisms for their own sake. Those human beings, who extend their abstract and material boundaries way more than they should, owe this extension to the narrowing of the abstract and material spaces of other human beings within the structure we call society—given that the total amount of space is given and permanent. This is a basic fact of life that remains constant even if the roles that people play within this scenario may shift from time to time.

Even though the structure that is composed of these narrowing spaces may expand on the whole, the already-narrowed spaces either preserve their narrowness or narrow down even more. The structure made up of these elements represents actually a widening of the narrow spaces in spite of its deceiving illusion of grandeur.

The indicators that rank first on the parade of the signs of narrowing down of abstract and material spaces are as follows: narrow rooms as physical living spaces; numerous gigantic yet narrow cities that expand not only horizontally but also vertically and that house millions; wide but packed autobahns filled with inching vehicles; new communication forms with widening fields of influence that offset distances but possess a limited amount of reality; the transformation of bodies into commodities that consume and that are consumed; the necessity of living one’s desires and passions within the limits set by the society rather than in accordance with one’s true nature; and the transformation of clothes, which were originally devised to protect men from nature, into signs of identity, social status and power or even into instruments of influence.

Hafriyat & Hafriyat-Karaköy

www.hafriyatkarakoy.com  
Necatibey Caddesi No:79 Karaköy/Istanbul

**Members:** Murat Akagündüz, Banu Birecikligil, Antonio Cosentino, Fulya Çetin, Nazım Dikbaş, Extrastuggle<sup>B</sup>, Tan Cemal Genç, Hakan Gürsoytrak, Mustafa Pancar<sup>B</sup>, Neriman Polat, Nalan Yırtmaç

Artists group: Hafriyat

*Hafriyat* is a common platform and field of thought formed by a group of artists who have been organising exhibitions for 10 years. It is also an effort to break free from the tight membrane of the rigid, sterile, conservative commercial and academic art environment composed of the art dealers, artists, collectors and viewers. *Hafriyat* turns its gaze to and empathizes with the discarded, the rejected, the abandoned of everyday life, which has become irrelevant because it is seen everyday or because it has genuinely been othered. *Hafriyat* describes this gaze as a look at the street and subculture. *Hafriyat* has also developed the concept of the ecology of the image, based on definitions such as “the urban gaze” and “becoming an urban dweller”. *Hafriyat* is not a scientist; however it has always, from the beginning, assumed the sensitivity of a sociologist.

The *Hafriyat* environment has not generated a hierarchical power structure among its members; opinions have always been openly expressed and discussed. With its limited means, *Hafriyat* has created a censor-free environment, where thoughts left on the margins have found a platform of expression, where works accumulating in heaps in studio corners have been brought out to be exhibited and where the content of expression has been the priority.

The first anniversary of *Hafriyat Karaköy* was on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

Since *Hafriyat* has a venue, it works as an off-space that hosts alternative visibilities for new artists and groups especially on sinister topics. It also runs as an independent artist initiative, provides a communication network and a place for minority voices, which are located out of the art centre in the city.

*Hafriyat* has realised 15 group exhibitions including one exhibition abroad, has published texts to accompany these exhibitions, has taken part in talks and panels on these exhibitions and on the experience of being an independent artist initiative in general, for a year published illustrations in *Birgün* newspaper and has also published two books.

Space: Hafriyat-Karaköy

*The Realm of Manifold Arts*

*Hafriyat Karaköy* is a multi-purpose space looking out onto one of Karaköy’s busiest streets. The space has an entry level floor, a mezzanine and a basement. *Hafriyat Karaköy* will host activities such as exhibitions, workshops, interviews, film screenings and archives, and will also strive to expand its activities beyond these.

*Hafriyat Karaköy* aims to create an independent, non-profit art environment where artists come together and new projects are both produced and realised through the sharing of artistic and cultural experiences.

*Hafriyat Karaköy* will feature, in addition to solo and group exhibitions of *Hafriyat* artists, solo and group exhibitions by young artists and will also offer its space to group activities, international artists and groups. The exhibitions will be open to all disciplines and curatorial activities. *Hafriyat*’s international artistic links will be developed and realised with reciprocal exhibition projects in this space and be shared with others. *Hafriyat Karaköy* invites all applications.

*Hafriyat Karaköy* opened its doors on May 1, 2007 and realised 21 exhibitions, four workshops, joined four art fairs abroad and in Turkey and welcomed several artist meetings and panels up to now. The preparation workshops of the Istanbul map project were also held in *Hafriyat Karaköy*.

Exhibited Project: FEAR OF GOD POSTER EXHIBITION AT HAFRIYAT KARAKÖY

**With (51 artists): Ahmet Basar, Ahmet Güntan, Aren Selvioğlu, Aybeniz Esen, Bahar Onan, Barış Akbaş, Baysan Yüksel, Burçak Beşlioğlu, Bülent Erkmen, Cem Akar, Defne Önen, Deniz Örneç, Duygu Beykal, Elif Yalçinkaya, Emre Senan, Erkin Gören, Esmâ Suna Erdoğan, Evrensel Belgin, Extramücadele, Ferhat Özgür, Fethi İzan, Bürkan Özkan, Genço Gülan, Gökhan Burhan, Gözen, Hazavuzu, Hakan Akçura, Hakan Gürsoytrak, Haluk Tuncay, Hüsnüye İzan, Isil Döneryay, İç Mihrak, İrfan Önürmen, Juan Botella Lucas, Kaan Tanman, Linda Herzog, Mehmet Ali Türkmen, Murat Basol, Murat Lafçı, Murat Turan, Ömer Ozan Erdoğan, Özlem Ölçer, Gülay Evrenos, Salih Bora, Sadık Karamustafa, Seda Sirem, Serkan Tunç, Seyran Deniz, Tunç Topçuoğlu, Uğurcan Ataoğlu, Ulaş Eryavuz, Zeynep Özatalay**

THE FEAR OF GOD POSTER EXHIBITION opened on November 10, 2007 at *Hafriyat Karaköy*. The exhibition brings together posters that deal with various centres of power throughout the ages and with fear as an essential instrument of obedience, created and cultivated by these centres through the use of various communication techniques.

Numerous graphic artists, designers, painters, illustrators and writers that took part in this exhibition approach fear of God from various different angles, such as: the voice of individual conscience; fear of God in the sense of the fear of man creature from his Creator; fear of God in societies that are rapidly getting more and more conservative and nationalist; fear of God in the context of a shrinking world and global economy; and mechanisms of resisting the fear of God.

Kurye

www.couriervideo.blogspot.com  
www.kuryevideo.org

Kurye Video Organization

**Members:** Irmak Arkman<sup>B</sup>, Ceren Arkman<sup>B</sup>, Mert Şahbaz<sup>B</sup>. — *Kurye Video Organization* is the sole independent, international organisation operating in the field of video art in Turkey. Through the concept of “Kurye” (Courier in Turkish), the organisation takes the side of the image, which is ever circulating and accessible in our day, and develops a stance against the system of curators and galleries that separates the art world into those who choose and those who are chosen. *Kurye Video Organization* operates as an archive, meaning that rather than using theme specific works for one event only, it opens its doors to videos of every style and content, archiving videos coming from various countries and organises events suitable to the works it has in its archive. Currently, the archive includes more than 620 videos by 250 artists from 32 countries and the numbers are increasing by the day. *Kurye* also works as an agency in representing some of the artists and works in its archive. *Kurye* organises international festivals, film screenings, exhibitions, web exhibitions, visual events in live music venues and audio-visual performances.

*Kurye Video Organization* has been organising Kargart International Video Festival for the past three years; *Kurye* will continue organising its international festival, starting with its fourth edition this year, under its own name in Akbank Sanat and Bilgi University Santral Campus. The main aim of *Kurye International Video Festival* is to promote the rising stars of the contemporary art scene, video art and new media, and to turn Istanbul into an attraction centre as an international festival location.

The festival will focus on specific genres every year and also host certain countries and acclaimed international festivals. Extended by the inclusion of numerous side events, the program of the festival this year includes Stelarc as the guest of honor; Mulleras as performance guest; a conference entitled “Body and Technologies” and workshops on Czech animation.

\* en: table

The other plans of *Kurye* for the years 2009—10 include: the organisation of international video exchange festivals; the organisation of periodic seminars on video, new media, performance, archiving and art management; the creation of a public access archive venue; and the development of the Taking Action exhibition coterminous with the Istanbul Biennial in public space.

Exhibited Project — *Video screenings everyday 12 p.m. through 7 p.m.*

**With Bengisu Bayrak, Candaş Şişman, Deniz Kader, Denizcan Yüzgöl, GERGER, Digimind, Ece Kalabak, Gözde İlkin, Gökhan Okur, Mert Öztekin, Neriman Polat, Onur Sentürk, Mert Kızılay, Ozan Adam, Sena Basöz, Ali İbrahim Öcal, Şinaşi Güneş, Neşe Dijlay Akbaş, Lokman Dogmus, Erkan Esenoğlu, Swamm, Kinki Texas, Thorsten Fleisch, Funda Özgünaydin, Astrid Rieger**

*Kurye* will present works by Turkish and German artists in its archive at the Istanbul Off exhibition and realise special screenings at the exhibition venue.

Masa\* Project

www.masabout.blogspot.com

**Members:** Önder Özengi<sup>B</sup>, Vahit Tuna<sup>B</sup>, Sinem Kurultay<sup>B</sup> — *Masa\* Project* uses a special table as exhibition space and defines itself as: “As an extension that excludes art created for the system, as an environment that aims to compose an area with no boundaries for the Artist, *Masa* welcomes everyone!”

Önder Özengi and Vahit Tuna talking about *Masa Project*

Önder Özengi: Vahit, *Maza* entered our art scene in the year 2006 with the exhibition of Eriç Seymen. Can we go a little further back? How did you come up with this idea and with whom did you co-operate in realising it?

Vahit Tuna: *Masa*’s priority was taking personal initiative. This project emerged at the conjunction of the me-office-art production triangle and the sharing-new space-independence triangle. Then it needed to become organic and integrated into a natural process. We can also interpret this project as an attempt to break down the homogeneous definition of art and to bring art down from its place on an ivory tower. An action that led to new cracks and to leakages from these new cracks and the formation of little lakes from these leakages... An act of creating new narratives and exhibition opportunities open to experimentation and allegory that aim at breaking down the existing and widely taught meta-narratives of art. A process of taking initiative to support a need for creating art for no reason. *Masa* was created as a wholly independent formation that would have problems with integrating into the system right to the very end.

ÖÖ: *Masa* has realised 16 exhibitions so far. Let’s talk about unrealised projects and interesting proposals. I remember Şener Özmen’s raki-drinking proposal. What other interesting project proposals did you receive aside from those that were realised?

VT: All serious proposals were realised. All those works that aimed at participating in the *Masa* project with commitment were exhibited; but there were several projects that were intended just to make conversation... Of course, the initiative to realise an exhibition lies with the artist; we are only trying to help. For this reason, we sometimes encounter problems when it comes to opening up to public space.

ÖÖ: I was included in *Masa Project* in April 2008. What was the reason for this invitation? Was it a bottleneck or an opportunity for opening up?

VT: The fact that I designed and produced *Masa* doesn’t mean that I own it. Just like it is the case with the exhibitions: *Masa*’s exhibitions develop as natural processes, just like an organic structure. Hence, it is more appropriate and functional for it to develop and expand through integration. We need this kind of expansions to learn public space practices more thoroughly and to

open up our space. Because what we call public space is also an organic structure that grows and develops in time. It is obvious that there are certain bottlenecks but these are not of a kind that we are familiar with—for instance, like it was the case in the 80s, with overproduction. It is more like a jam between state-public space-art audience; it is actually more like a fact of life than a bottleneck.

ÖÖ: Let’s talk about future projects. *Masa* book, Berlin *Masa* and another *Masa* planned in Spain. What do you think these mean? Aside from being the foreign replicas of an alternative exhibition space...

VT: We tried to document every exhibition—with all the talks, all the texts written on the works, etc. This activity was aimed at producing a book in the end. I hope we can find the necessary resources to realise this book. It is exciting for us to see that *Masa Project* is being replicated in other art centres. It stands proof to the fact that small scale actions can also have big impacts. Humble tolerance will expand its space by increasing its functionality at the face of gigantic institutionalism.

VT: What’s missing in contemporary art today, Önder?

ÖÖ: I think there is no criticism. This allows the energy around to express itself in an uncontrolled manner, which is good in terms of increasing the production. But on the other hand, it causes the content of production to dry out and the possible relations that ideas and concepts form or might form with other disciplines to be impoverished from the start.

VT: How modern is it to take initiative on the local level?

ÖÖ: I think that this emphasis on the local has lost its dominant role in the process of understanding what is here and now. In the blurring of the difference between inside and outside that moves back and forth between local and universal, the scale of the initiative that we take also becomes vague. When we think about *Masa* as an initiative, it is hard to say whether it is operating on the local level or on a larger geographical scale. It tours in between Istanbul’s spaces but the artists and their concerns are not merely local.

*Masa, June 2009*

Exhibited Project: POLIS – Isabel Schmiga

Isabel Schmiga is fascinated by the potential for an object or idea to change state, which she then examines and puts in-



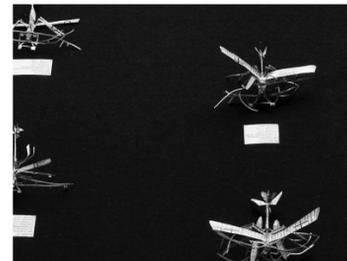
daralan, exhibition view



Hakan Akçura. Poster (detail). Isimsiz 2007 (from the exhibition FEAR OF GOD). A project of Extrastuggle issued in Hafriyat-Karaköy.



Logo of Kurye Video Organisation



*Masa Project*, Isabel Schmiga, BANDITS. Installation View

to process either literally or figuratively. In many of her works existing objects such as ties, leaves, marbles and forks, or printed images and diagrams are transformed into new, more conceptually complex versions of themselves. But in her work *POLIS*, her starting point is an extremely specific emblem – it is the Turkish Police badge, a designed composition of imagery that is already a socially and politically charged effigy.

Schmiga's version of this badge in her work *POLIS* presents an extremely uncanny proposal. Through a layering of a carved relief of the emblem atop the original design, Schmiga draws attention to the badge's eerie skull-like shape: the outline of the skull is already marked out by the symmetrical, aerial view of a police cap that creates the shape of the badge; the double eagle insignia forms a moustache; the crescent moon and star motif an ominous third eye. As in Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors, 1533*, the layered representation is rendered as if in anamorphic perspective and only becomes clear when viewed from an angle. As the cut outs appear and their depth gives a slight shadow, a perfect skull appears. In this camouflaged state, the badge, like the police it adorns, amalgamates an aura of protection with an implication of fear.

Schmiga became obsessed by this authoritarian ornament after spending several months living opposite a police guard in Istanbul, Turkey.

For her, the feature of the skull was always present in the shape and detailing of the badge and her double-relief print was made as a response to the image she was seeing all around her. This badge is omnipresent in Turkey, seen on the police uniform, as well as the forces' cars, buses and stations, so its appearance in Schmiga's work is in part due to its being an everyday encounter. For her this badge, as with any other object, was available to be taken and morphed by her personal reflection. So while Schmiga's work *POLIS* of course refers to a media acknowledged concern about Turkey's police presence, attitude and occasional use of disproportionate force, as well as to a general atmosphere of contradiction and awkwardness that is caused by tensions of group mentality and nationalism, it is also a simple response to a visual slippage created by the shape and design of the badge.

This slippage is then pushed by Schmiga, so that other signs and symbols become more obviously integrated into her interpretation of this emblem. By placing the mouth of the skull in line with the double-eagle motif, she visually replicates a different statement of nationalism, the preference for males to don a moustache. The third-eye is formed by Turkey's flag, suggesting the overriding presence of National authority, but at the same time it is a reference to Islam and the rule of the former Ottoman empire; a combination of associations that can be read as the eye of knowledge, a control of will, or a system of belief, all issues that are very pertinent to the political situation in Turkey today.

When exhibited *POLIS* consists of a repetitive series of Schmiga's photographic reliefs snugly butted up against one another filling the length of an entire wall. There are never less than five of the framed images presented at one time, a reference to the group presence of the police in Istanbul especially in the central entertainment zone of İstiklal Caddesi. Here police are nearly always present in groups of at least three, and often usually five or more. During public demonstrations or pre-publicised events when the police anticipate their necessity, they often outnumber those they are supposedly protecting, but are in fact waiting to control. In Basel for Schmiga's exhibition in von Bartha Garage, 60 of the badges were positioned in a slightly uneven line hinting at the meagre allowance of individuality given to each member of the formation, as well as the tension felt in numbers and in the expectancy of friction. The skull seen in such prevalence and force also replicates the gas masks often worn prematurely by the police before the potential, or actual release of tear gas, a practice that is not uncommon in the current climate of the city.

Hence for a variety of reasons and on many levels Schmiga's work creates a sense of déjà vu for those who live in the vicinity of this badge. As the skull was always there for Schmiga, it is now also always there for those who have experienced her work. Through a simple visual act she has marked a new relationship between the public and their encounter with this particular sign of the police. More importantly her work encourages a more general moment of reflection

for us all on society's level of acceptance of forms of power and control in our every day environment.

(Text by November Paynter, Director, Artist Pension Trust, Dubai.)

#### Nomad & upgrade! Istanbul

www.nomad-tv.net  
www.nomad-tv.net/upgradeistanbul

**Members: Basak Şenova<sup>B</sup>, Emre Erkal, Erhan Muratoğlu, Hakan Guleryuz, Funda Şenova.** — *Nomad* is an Istanbul based foundation that aims to examine experimental formations developing in the field of digital art from various disciplinary viewpoints and to develop new forms in this field. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, *Nomad* includes artists, designers, curators, architects and engineers in its core cadre and provides a technical and theoretical infrastructure for artists from various platforms and different geographies. The production network formed by *Nomad* through its ongoing projects in the field of digital art is geared towards developing bonds within Turkey as well as with people from other geographies. The main aim of these projects is the formation of a productive production network that makes possible access to new sources of knowledge. *Nomad* has organised numerous international and local festivals, exhibitions, performances, multimedia events, experimental film screenings, talks and panels as well as undertaking publications.

Network: upgrade!

The *upgrade! Istanbul* network comprises monthly meetings that aim to bring together new media artists, scholars, curators and the other actors of the digital culture. The *upgrade! Istanbul* meetings and events organised by *Nomad* take place at santralistanbul. This series of meetings allow new projects to be advertised and explained and provide opportunities for dialogue and cooperation within the digital culture.

Exhibited Project: *MYPOCKET, Installation*, by **Burak Arıkan**  
www.turbulence.org/Works/mypocket/  
www.burak-arikan.com

The *upgrade! Istanbul* presents Burak Arıkan's *MYPOCKET* project in Berlin. This project traces the daily bank movements of the artist to reveal the major patterns in his finances and opens up the personal financial records of the artist to the world. Normally, people keep these records secret. Yet financial institutions keep analyzing this data to measure our credibility. The expenditure history of the artist for the past two years is analyzed with the help of a special software to predict his expenses in the future; these predictions sometimes affect the future choices of the artist, thus forming a system where both the artist and the software harmonize with each other. *MYPOCKET* sets off from the techno-cultural environment of our time and develops a hybrid interface for a living physical/digital transaction.

Living in New York and Istanbul, artist and researcher Burak Arıkan (Turkey/USA) creates internet-based systems that develop through the interaction of men and machines. His works examine various issues ranging from cultural sustainability on the internet to the issues of finance, politics and labor. He utilizes various media like print, animation, software, electronic and physical materials and shows snapshots derived from these systems on the internet or live in a venue. Arıkan completed his masters degree in the Physical Language Workshop led by John Maeda in MIT Media Laboratory. In MIT, he worked on developing infrastructures that will support artists and designers in digital and electronic network based environments. Before his time in MIT, he worked as an information architect and visual designer in USA and Turkey. He received his MA in Visual Communication Design from Bilgi University in 2004 and BA in Civil Engineering from Yıldız Technical University in 2001. Arıkan has seats in the advisory boards of Prix Ars Electronica Dig-

ital Communities (Linz) and Amber Generative Arts Foundation (Istanbul).

Oda Projesi  
(Oda Projesi & Nadin Reschke)

www.odaprojesi.org

Oda Projesi

*Oda Projesi* is an artist collective based in Istanbul, composed of three members, Seçil Yersel, Özge Açıkkol and Güneş Savaş, who turned their collaboration into an art project in 2000. The project members met in 1997 and decided to rent and share an apartment as a studio. Although not intended, the apartment they rented in Galata eventually evolved into a multi-purpose, private and public place. Between 2000-2005 the group worked in the neighbourhood and was invited to many events and projects abroad in the meantime. Due to the gentrification process in the region, the group had to leave their place, so they are now mobile and thinking about the possibilities concerning new places. On each project, *Oda Projesi* works with different tools and strategies; working with neighbours and with people from different disciplines, producing posters, advertisements, stories, postcards, newspapers, broadcasting on a local radio channel, working in a minibus... Istanbul as a city has a great effect on the project and on the tactics the group produces.

Nadin Reschke  
(www.nadinreschke.de)

(\*1975, Bernburg an der Saale) works on participative projects concerning questions of social affiliation and structure within our society. Devising processes and situations for communication plays a central role in her work. In doing so she knits together drawings and handicraft techniques such as embroidery with video and audio works, thereby creating a working method based on direct exchange and often amounting to multiple authorship.

*Oda Projesi* and Nadin Reschke have worked together on several projects since 2004. In 2004, „so far so good“ took place in Istanbul. For 18 months, Nadin Reschke traveled through 14 countries with a tent, continually enhancing and refining it with the help of a whole range of different people whom she met during her journey. In Istanbul, *Oda Projesi* invited people from their neighbourhood to do embroidery and discuss questions concerning their life together in Galata, their quarter. In 2008, *Oda Projesi* and Nadin Reschke carried out a collaborative project in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg. A wall was the starting point for „15x75 Hingucken Weggucken“ and gave rise to questions concerning public space and communal life in their quarter. In direct contact with the public and the people on site, they worked in four central locations in Hamburg Wilhelmsdorf and Kirchdorf to find answers to these and other questions. As in the previous projects, the artists aimed at initiating communication processes and conducting growing and shriveling relationships in certain spaces. Micro-phenomena such as neighbourhood disputes came up as well as global topics such as gentrification and its consequences. (For further information, cf. www.15x75m-hinguckenweggucken.blogspot.com)

Exhibited Project: *TONGUE*

*TONGUE*, a project of *Oda Projesi* and Nadin Reschke in Public Space, will start during istanbul-off-spaces and go on within the scope of *beyond belonging:translokal*. 1 through 21 November 2009.

*TONGUE* is a project about language. What happens if the ordinary form of a language course is borrowed to look at the way language is being used in daily life? *TONGUE* aims to establish diverse tableaux for us and all Participants to discuss the use of language and to teach and to learn from each other. The roles of teachers and students will switch at any time through the period of teaching and learning from the Participants' hybrid languages. How does

language structure our daily interactions? What is the dominant use of language, which kind of words do we choose to use? Language has a power to define spaces of inclusion and exclusion in society.

The focal space of the project is Kreuzberg, an area that we define as a “speech bubble”. This “bubble” form can be considered as a meeting point of diverse languages. Instead of taking as a starting point the cliché of a “Tower of Babel”—a place where all languages exists, only separately - Tongue goes beyond this and asks: How can one try to create a new language by taking the daily language of individuals, rather than the language of groups, as a starting point?

Kreuzberg is a mixture of different spaces, it is a space created by its inhabitants. It can be a bricolage or also a possible spatial bubble in the middle of the city. Can we find an equivalent to this created space—Kreuzberg—in the field of language? William S. Burroughs said that “language is a virus from outer space”; in 1986, Laurie Anderson added, “That's why I'd rather hear your name than see your face.”

xurban\_collective

http://www.xurban.net/

Functioning as an international collective since 2000, *xurban\_collective* has members located in Izmir, Istanbul, Linz and New York City. Core members of the Group are Guven İncirlioğlu and Hakan Topal, whose transatlantic collaborations take the form of media projects and installations. *xurban\_collective*'s mission is to instigate the questioning, examination, and discussion of contemporary politics, theory, and ideology, and their unique intercontinental perspective is well served to provoke a consideration of these issues. Documentary photography, video, and text are often combined in an effort to render visible the multiplicity of informative layers inherent in the subjects or situations explored.

PROPOSED, BUT NOT ENGAGED  
(xurban\_collective, 2009)

In February 2009, *xurban\_collective* made a project proposal to Liam Gillick, the British artist to realise Germany's national participation at the International Venice Biennial this year. *xurban*'s proposed extension was to be realised at the periphery of the German Pavilion in Venice's Giardini during the biennial starting in June. The intention was to apply a landscaping project for the pavilion by temporarily transforming the immediate vicinity. Flowers and plants were to be carried over from Anatolia, and a scheme of fortification for the pavilion was to be augmented, referring to the long-standing issues of borders, exclusion and hybridization that involve the Turks and the EU. *xurban* team had personally carried out exchange of ideas and fruitful discussions with the artist himself, and even though it had no intention to intercept Liam's installation but only intended to act as his gardener, for various reasons not all clear to us, the proposal was not accepted. So, *xurban\_collective* set up a new classification for this piece in progress and its documentation as PROPOSED, BUT NOT ENGAGED.

An exhibition Project by the  
**Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien**

Concept and organization by  
**Stéphane Bauer and Sencer Vardarman**

sponsored by  
**Hauptstadtkulturfonds**, in media partnership with the daily newspaper **die taz**, the art hubs **berlinerpool** and **mondaysnews**, the **Nafas Art Magazine** and the internet radio **multicult2.o**.

Das Projekt **TONGUE** is sponsored by the **Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa)**

The project **SEI EIN TRAUM / BE A DREAM! / BİR RÜYA OL!** is sponsored by the **Projektfonds Kulturelle Bildung Berlin** and is taking place in the context of the **PwC-Stiftung funded Zoom** partnership of **Kunstraum Kreuzberg / Bethanien** and the **Kurt-Löwenstein-School**, supported by the **Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH**.

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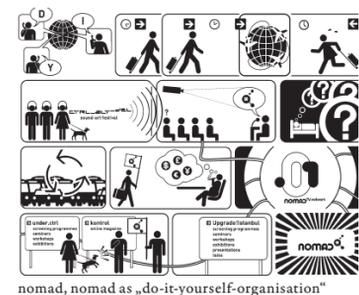
Editorial Information

Published by Art Space Kreuzberg / Bethanien,  
Edited by Sencer Vardarman and Stéphane Bauer (V.i.S.d.P.)  
Translations by Tuncay Kulaoglu (tr-de), Stefanie Bush Savior (de-en), Ceren Arkman (tr-en)

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print: form und sinn

w berlinerpool.de/istanbul-off-spaces



Oda Projesi & Nadin Reschke, Untitled (detail)