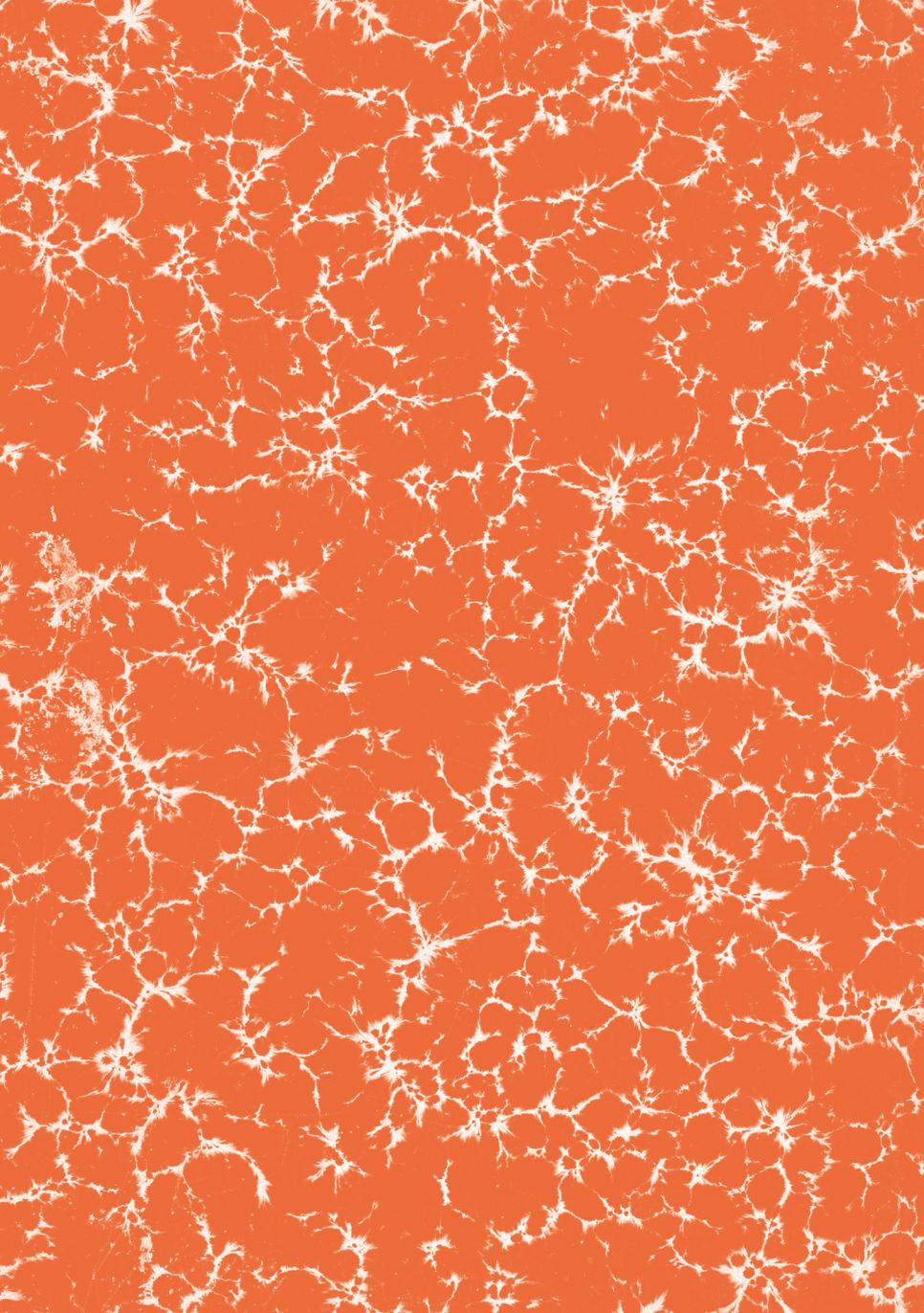


“To admit authorities,
however heavily
furred and gowned,
into our libraries
and let them tell us
how to read,
what to read,
what value to place
upon what we read,
— is to destroy the
spirit of freedom
which is the breath
of those sanctuaries.”



HOUSE OF WISDOM

Nottingham

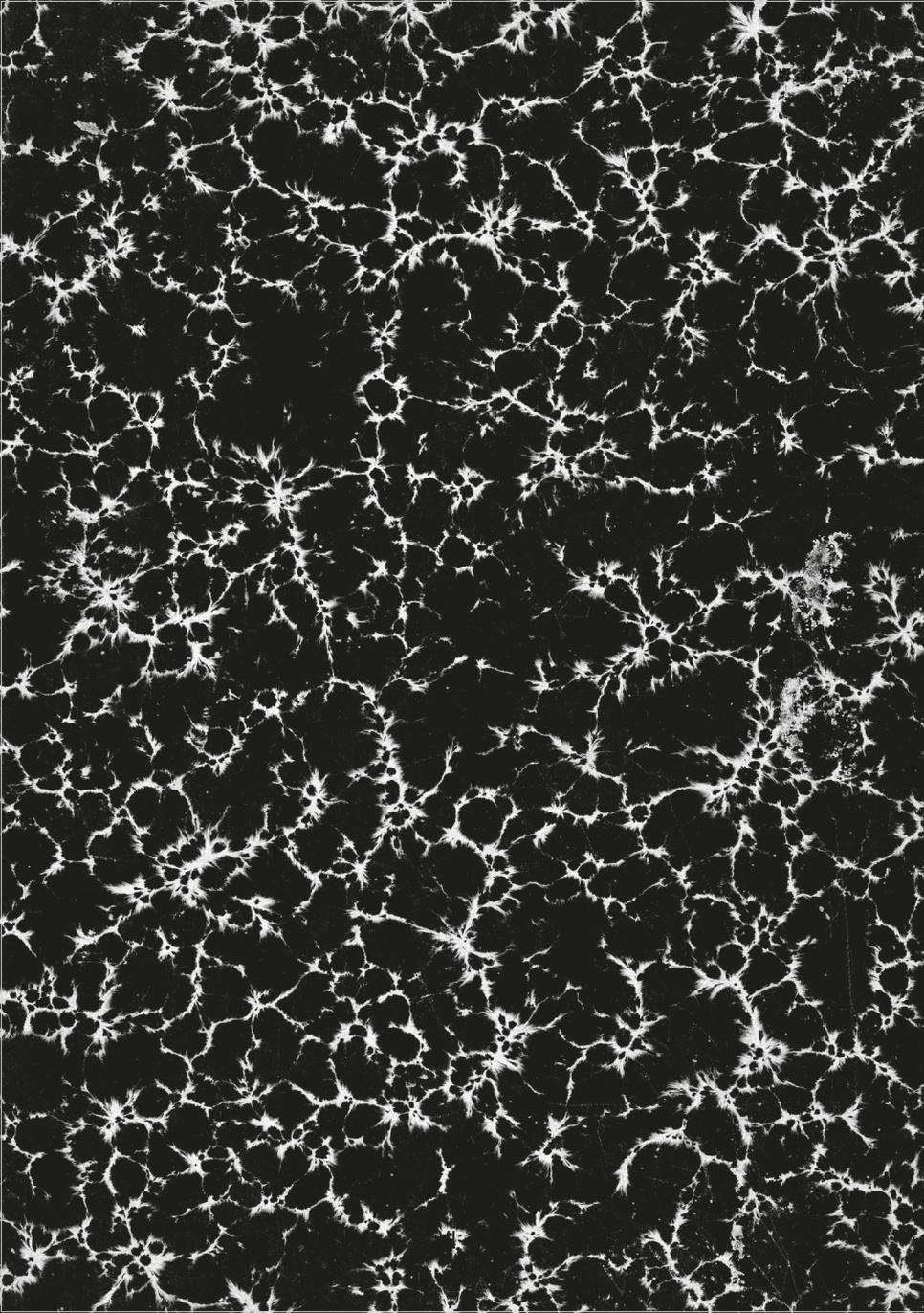
27.9–27.10 2018

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Throughout history, libraries have been perceived as places where information on life and space are organised, read, and interpreted. Their political significance, however, has at times been underestimated. As in the example of the original **House of Wisdom***, libraries are also known as centres of research, learning, and sharing. This concentration and exchange of knowledge makes them important symbols of political power and the formation of cultural identity. Based on the power of libraries, and Foucault's notion of the archive as 'the general system of the formation and transformation of statements', the curators followed their archival urge and decided to build their own archive-library. To shed light on the increasing levels of censorship on information, knowledge and the current sociopolitical situation in and around Turkey, they invited artists and researchers to take part in the project. The **House of Wisdom**, ever-evolving library-exhibition aims to rethink the political nature of books, whose mere existence is under threat, and ultimately asks the question: 'What could be the outcome of collectively rethinking the notion of the archive and knowledge production through art, particularly when issues such as censorship and suppression of information are involved?'

House of Wisdom is an open space, a gathering place. Visitors are invited to enter and discover the library-exhibition to read, discuss, collaborate, scheme, and exchange knowledge and ideas. And with its fourth location, the exhibition is expanding throughout the city of Nottingham. Inviting visitors to walk and discover the city with the exhibition map, House of Wisdom will utilise the vitrines of Bonington Gallery and the atrium of Nottingham Trent University's School of Art and Design.

Artworks and books will also be placed in other venues like local bookshops (The Five Leaves Bookshop) an old primary school that has been transformed into an art space (Primary) and a historical library (Bromley House Library). By expanding the exhibition space from one room to various spaces around the city, **House of Wisdom** is hoping to build an invisible relation between being a visitor and being a wanderer. And this year the exhibition's public program is curated by Dr. Cüneyt Çakırlar from Nottingham Trent University, who organised a series of events including performances, workshops, reading groups, talks and screenings.

*The House of Wisdom (Bayt-al Hikma) was a library founded in the beginning of the 8th century in Baghdad, where thousands of books in various languages from different regions, on philosophy, art, science, and history were housed. Researchers from different regions came together to make research, and work on techniques of translation, writing, and discussion.

**House of Wisdom is a mobile and ever-evolving library /exhibition curated by Collective Çukurcuma. It was previously shown at Dzialdov (Berlin, 2017), IKS Building (Public program of the 15th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, 2017) and Framer Framed (Amsterdam, 2017).

House of Wisdom Nottingham is produced and organised by Queer Art Projects and made possible by Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants with the support of Nottingham Trent University, Bonington Gallery, Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature, Bromley House Library, Primary and Five Leaves Bookshop.

Curators

Collective Çukurcuma (Naz Cuguoğlu and Mine Kaplangı)

Public Programme Curator

Cüneyt Çakırlar

Exhibition Dates

28.09–27.10 2018

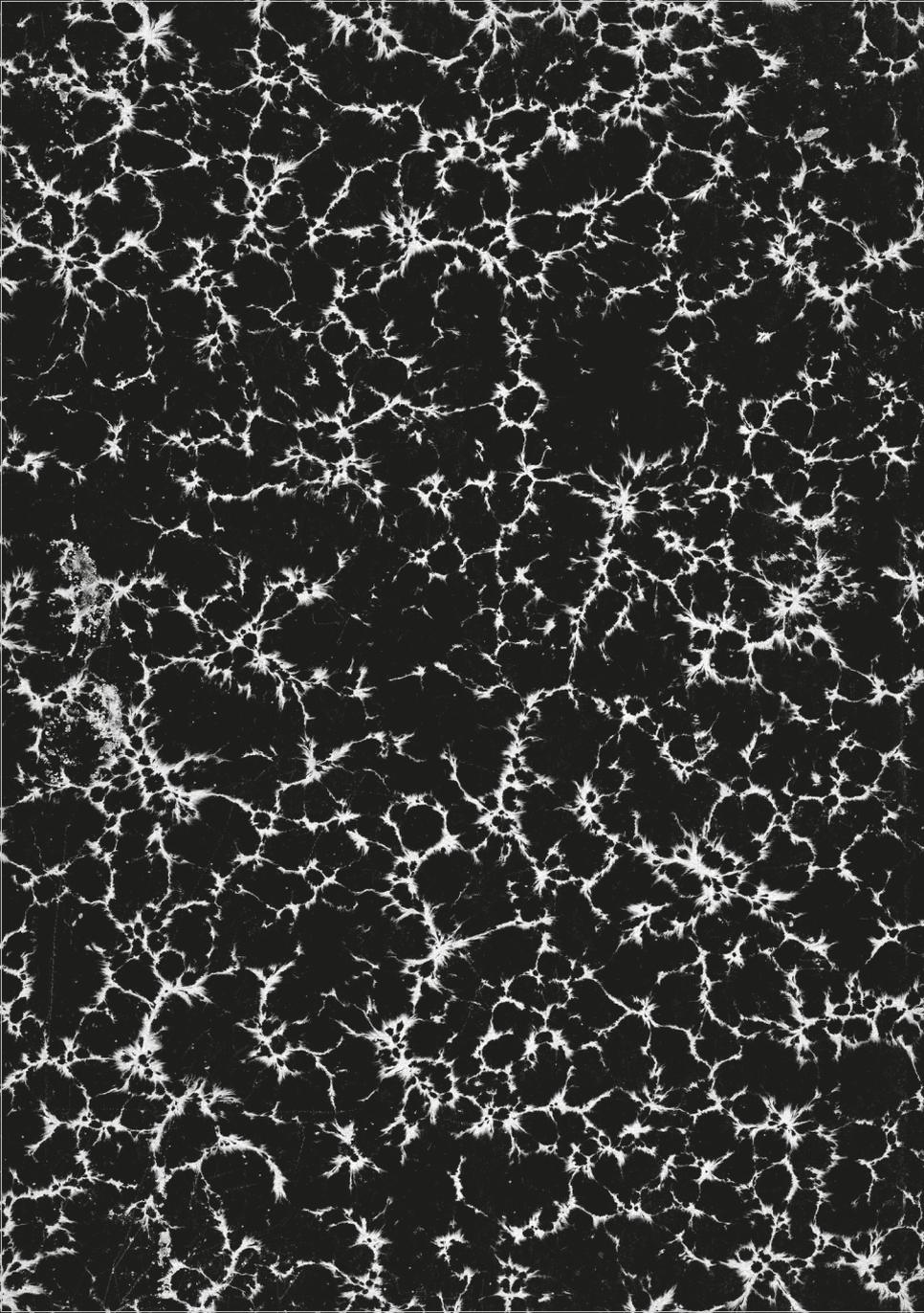
Venues

Bonington Gallery Vitrines
and Atrium of Nottingham Trent
University's School of Art and Design,
Bromley House Library,
Five Leaves Bookshop & Primary

Opening

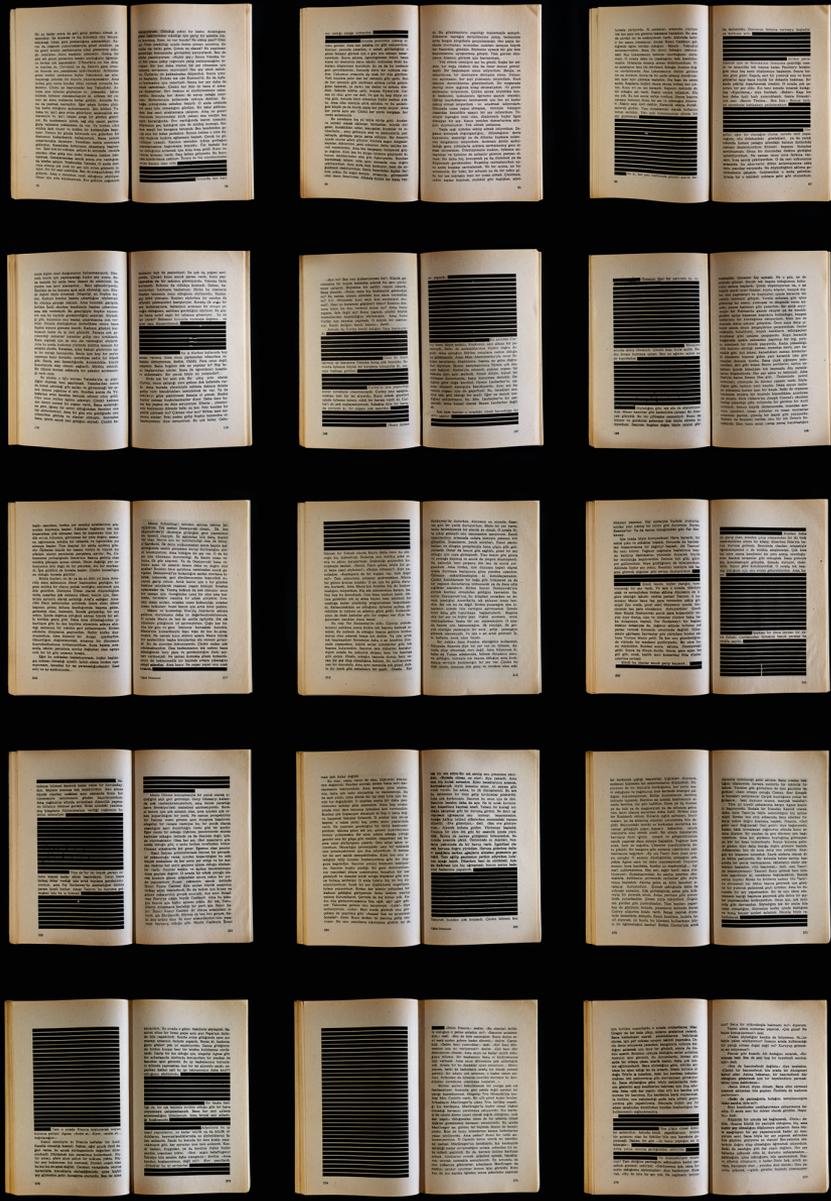
Thursday 27 September

5–8 pm at Bonington Vitrines and Atrium



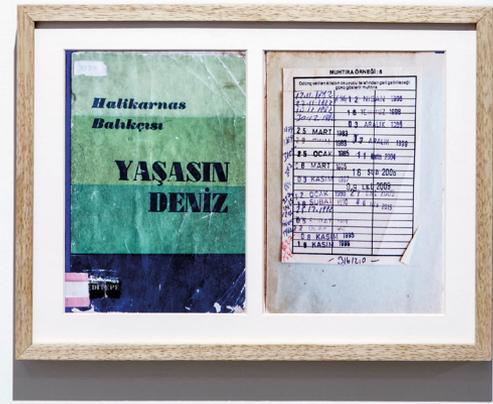
Istanbul Queer Art Collective (Tuna Erdem and Seda Ergül), *Just in Bookcase*
photo by Eva Broekema @Framer Framed, Amsterdam





Ali Tapık, *Meridians*, 2011, Courtesy of the artist

Beril Gür, *On Exile and Reading*, photo by Eva Broekema ©Framer Framed, Amsterdam





Eriř Seymen, Pages from a Fake Novel, 2017, photo by Eva Broekema @Framer Framed, Amsterdam



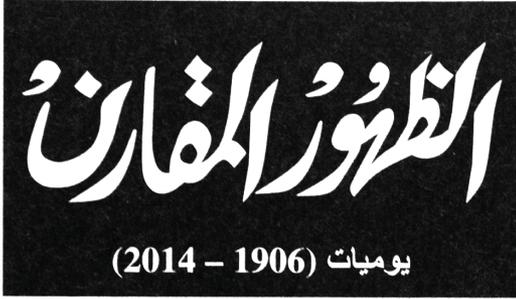
All Kazama, Photo from The Archive (ongoing series), courtesy of the artist



Yazan Khalili, *On Love and Other Landscapes*, 2011, courtesy of the artist

Walid Siti, *Dark Interludes* (detail), 2017, courtesy of the artist





محمد عبد الكريم

Mohamed Abdelkarim

mohamedabdelkarim.com

Story About the Rhino, 2013

book 20.5×15 cm

Comparison of Appearance, 2013

booklet, 10×15 cm

Comparison of Appearance circles around the controversial Egyptian ideologist, author, and intellectual Sayyid Qutb and his trip to the United States from 1948 to 1949, which changed his political convictions fundamentally. Qutb, best known today as the thinker who conceived jihadism, was also a writer and critic of capitalism in the age of the Cold War and the last phase of colonialism. To this day, his writings shape the discourse in Egypt (and elsewhere) on dealing with the West. Abdelkarim's interest is not in Qutb himself, but in the historical forces and patterns that congealed in his influence:

'Qutb's experiences with colonialism, connected with enormous changes in Egyptian society as a result of foreign rule, reflect the experiences of many in his generation. In my artistic work, I am not so much interested in the details of Qutb's personality ... but rather in Qutb as a sociological phenomenon that can be understood from various viewpoints.'

Burak Arıkan

burak-arikan.com

Turkey's Media Owners and their Other Investments, 2013

Digital print, 130×200 cm

Turkey's Media Owners and their Other Investments is part of **Networks of Dispossession**, a collective data mapping project on the relations of capital and power in Turkey. The first version of this project was published in September 2013 — right after the Gezi resistance. The network collectively compiled bits and pieces of data from resources that are open to public use. They created an archive and made a map with correlations of these data to see 'the big picture'. The network gathered in Gezi Park during the resistance and compiled public data in order to make visible the relations between capital and power in Turkey.

Created by Yaşar Adanalı, Ayça Aldatmaz, Burak Arıkan, Elif İnce, Esra Gürakar, Zeyno Üstün, Özlem Zıngıl and anonymous participants.

Mahmoud Bakhshi

Night, Blackness, and Other Stories, 2016

Book, 15×21 cm

Night, Blackness, and Other Stories is a book of short stories told without text. The artist withdraws the authorship and invites the audience to bring in their own stories through a reflection on a polished surface of black granite. Bakhshi examines the tension between image and text — the inherent conflict of conceptual art. Bakhshi started by choosing few rather clichéd terms often used by writers and intellectuals to indicate the situation of oppression and inevitable resistance. Words such as: 'winter' and 'night' have always had negative connotations in the Iranian culture. As opposites to light and warmth, that would come from a flame, 'fire' has been worshiped for centuries in Iran. Night, as an equivalent of dark times, a suggestion of an expectation of a change — is the strongest and the most banal poetic metaphor for the totalitarian austerity in politics.

Yael Bartana

yaelbartana.com

A Cookbook for Political Imagination, 2011

Published by Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw
and Sternberg Press

A Cookbook for Political Imagination was part of Yael Bartana's exhibition **And Europe Will Be Stunned** at the Polish Pavilion of the 54th Biennale of Art in Venice. It is not a traditional exhibition catalogue but rather a manual of political instructions and recipes, delivered by more than forty international authors. Covering a broad spectrum of themes, the cookbook comprises manifestos, artistic contributions, fictional stories to elements of visual identity, food recipes, social advice and guidance for members of the movement. It is the first book published under the supervision of the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland. The movement was founded in order to write new pages into history by a call for the return of 3,300,000 Jews to Poland. It is a way to symbolise the possibility of collective imagination — to right the wrongs history has imposed and to reclaim the promise of a utopian future that citizens deserve.

Contributions by Gish Amit, Yazid Anani, Ariella Azoulay, Marek Beylin, Achim Borchardt-Hume, Andrea Geyer, Anka Grupinska, Mika Hannula, Daniel Hendrickson, Rafal Jakubowicz, Wam Kat, Yuval Kremnitzer, Renzo Martens, Oliver Ressler, Sarah Rifky, Lia Perjovschi, Stefanie Peter & Phillipp Goll, Avi Pitchon, Chantal Pontbriand, Ila Ben Porat, Steven ten Thije, James Trainor, WHW, and others.

Mehtap Baydu

mehtapbaydu.com

Paragraph, 2009 — ongoing

Sketch book featuring drawings and collages,
charcoal colour, 21×15 cm

'A sketchbook to draw in, and a playground where I get together with this little character who lives the life together with otherworldly dreams.'

Kürşat Bayhan

kursadbayhan.blogspot.com.tr

Away From Home, 2013

Photobook, 21×15 cm

In *Away from Home*, Kürşat Bayhan photographed workers who live in bachelor houses in Turkey. The artist's focus was on the area of Eminönü, Küçükpazar; a neighbourhood in Istanbul largely populated by migrants. Thousands of young migrants coming from different parts of Turkey chasing their hopes and dreams are fighting to create a life for themselves under challenging conditions. This group of people — generally the 4th generation after the migration in the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s — have to work day-to-day jobs due to the lack of a professional education. The visual history of *Away from Home* uses the medium of photojournalism to question those ongoing circumstances and difficult conditions.

Ruth Beale

ruthbeale.net

Library of Future Societies: Nottingham, 2018

Installation

Ruth Beale's temporary library brings together books from Nottingham public library collections. An amalgamation of utopian, dystopian and speculative fiction, the library encourages readers to spend time contemplating visions of future societies. Alongside the books, furniture upholstered in hand-printed fabric spells out an encrypted text. In the typeface devised by Thomas More for his fictional, first, account of Utopia, it reads:

'seed becomes tree becomes forest'.

Ekin Bernay

Burn Like the Sun, 2017

Photo documentation of the House of Wisdom Berlin
opening performance, photos by Esen Küçüktütüncü

The performance by Ekin Bernay titled **Burn Like the Sun**, performed during a previous House of Wisdom instalment in Berlin, was inspired by the Jewish writer Else Ury, and the destruction she witnessed. Ury wrote many children's books, but as a Jewish woman was barred from publishing, stripped of her possessions, deported to Auschwitz, and gassed the day she arrived during the Holocaust. The children's books she wrote were burned during the war. With the **Burn Like the Sun** performance, Bernay's aim was to build a bridge between Dzialdov and Else-Ury Library in Berlin where the journey of House of Wisdom started in the first place.

This opening performance was an opportunity for Ekin Bernay to say: 'If you burn our books, we will burn like the Sun'. It was a way to remember Else and her art in a space that immortalises knowledge. Through the words that were brought from Dzialdov to the library, we collectively created a book of an audio-visual movement that could never be taken away from us.

It was about the idea of transforming the fire into 'a body' through movement — a fire inviting the audience to feel the pain, the loss and the war. While the audience embodied words or sentences from books, Bernay embodied Else's life, and the fire within her as a contrast to what took everything from her.

Burçak Bingöl

burcakbingol.com

Devshirme, 2017

Artist book 21×29,7 cm

Devshirme investigates the relics of previously inhabited civilisations in the ancient city walls of Istanbul. It traces the fragments of artefacts that once belonged to an entirely different context. The artefacts are camouflaged in the city-structure, as a silent witness of the past. The book seeks them to complete the memory loss by making those traces visible again and forming an archive to preserve them for the future.

Nicky Broekhuysen

nickybroekhuysen.com

The Stonebreakers, 2015

Single channel video loop 04:27, 16:9, black and white, sound

In collaboration with Maria Kamutzki (sound) & Martin Keane (programming)

The Stonebreakers depicts information in the form of binary code 1 and 0 as building blocks of a constructed world. Information is indeed a construction. When approaching information in today's age of fake news and both political and media propaganda it is important to ask, by whose hands has this information been moulded?

The Stonebreakers transforms information from a fixed form into a more fluid and dynamic state which is symbolised by a flock of birds. The flock of birds acts as a metaphor for a more open and free state of being and thought where individuals come together in critical mass; working together as a single unit. With power in numbers, the flock can adapt and evolve to shifting wind currents, moving with agility and unpredictability through perilous and uncertain times. Not only is this a metaphor for the library as a space of freedom of thought and information but it is also a metaphor for all that resides within it, the people and the information itself. A space where we feel safe to question and challenge the world around us, where we see information and the beliefs that are constructed from it as a temporal arrangement of parts, a collection of 1 and 0 where meaning and fact are forever shifting and evolving as we and history move through space and time.

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan

herabuyuktascian.blogspot.com.tr

Write Injuries on Sand and Kindness in Marble, 2017

Artist book

Ayp, Pen, Kim, 2015,

Artist book, Venice Biennale

Ayp, Pen, Kim was published for the occasion of the participation in the Armenian pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2015. The artist recounts her arrival as a child at the Pangaltı Mkhitaryan School, which was founded in 1825 and, through turbulence and extinction, served the Armenians of Istanbul. The title of the book refers to the first three letters of the Armenian alphabet.

Büyüktaşçıyan draws, in borrowed images and words, a vivid picture of her relationship to the Armenian language, living as a Greek-Armenian in Istanbul; a territory which is considered by both communities somehow void; or whose place in the hierarchy of meaning has been eroded.

Cansu Çakar

Green lizards on red rocks, 2017

illustrated poem, watercolour on paper

32.5×20×2cm, 8 pages

from *The Story of Black Snake* by Nazım Hikmet

Artist Cansu Çakar's handmade leather covered artist book includes selected parts of **The Story of Black Snake** poem by famous poet Nazım Hikmet from his **Epic of Independence War**.

The poem consists of a prologue and 8 parts, with each part telling a story about the war. Drawing inspiration from the part of the book titled **Green Lizards on the Red Rocks**, artist Cansu Çakar creates a visual story with her detailed miniature drawings and details of military clothing textiles accompanying the old poem, allowing us to rethink and re-read of the main themes of the poem.

Ramesch Daha

www.ramesch-daha.com

Unlimited History, 2017

Artist book, 24×30 cm

Ramesch Daha combines aspects of her family history with events of profound historical significance. Her latest research project **Unlimited History** is focused on the Tehran Conference - the first meeting of the Allied leaders, Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill, during World War II, as they committed to opening a second front against Nazi Germany.

With a diary research approach, Daha compiles complex historical interfaces combining diary material with original documents, stamps, letters, sketches, and maps excerpted from her research. This project examines the historical links between Iran and the three leaders. **The Unlimited History**, for the artist, has become unlimited histories of individual challenges and political mysteries in the sediment of facts. Here reversals of fortune, turmoil and dystopian visions gather in a different place of settling, a place where strangers and strangeness occupy multiple realities. A place where the cosmos is freed from the hands of abjection, a place of disavowed memories and the remains of subjectivities.

Işıl Eğrikavuk

isilegrikavuk.net

Infamous Library

Newspaper articles, diptych in *Radikal* and *Hürriyet Daily News*
on 12.09.2009, print, 40×60 cm (each)

Infamous Library is the first of Eğrikavuk's video series. It recounts the story of twelve people who were kidnapped in September 1980 in Turkey by unidentified people, and held captive in a library for two years, according to one of the abductees. **Infamous Library** starts out as a video-interview with March, one of the twelve kidnapped people, who answers questions directed at him from behind the camera. We hear the story of how these twelve people held in a library, were given the assignment to look for specific titles and erase them from books.

Eğrikavuk turned her video **Infamous Library** into a news article for the 11th Istanbul Biennial, which was published in the newspapers *Radikal* and *Hürriyet Daily News* on September 12, 2009, the opening date of the biennial. The newspapers could be bought at newsstands, but were also disseminated at the biennial venue. The artwork was also exhibited at Istanbul Rampa Gallery in 2014 as an installation where Eğrikavuk created a library of banned books, comprising an installation of 400 banned books in Turkey's history.

Didem Erk

www.didemerk.com

Black Thread

Mixed media installation, 2015

Black Thread is a selection of books that are burnt or censored throughout the history. The pages of the books are sewed word by word, sentence by sentence. This operation dramatically decreases the readability but connects the thread of writing and sewing. The needle operates as a tool for invisible violence, but at the same time gives voice to the words and sentences that have been censored by bringing them to the attention of the audience.

In **Black Thread** the act of sewing is used as a form of healing. The artist wishes to connect all the words (ideas) on the pages, and to heal them. The work invites the visitors to avoid the limitations of language, memory and body.

Fehras Publishing Practices

www.fehraspublishingpractices.org

When The Library was Stolen, 2015

Book, 15×21 cm

Call for Applications!, 2015

Survey, 8.5×21.5×1.5 cm; Arabic and English

Call for Applications! raises critical questions concerning the cultural production and methods of presentation during the Syrian crisis and how cultural practices become established within the local, regional and global context of arts and culture. Which role do intellectuals play in times of crisis? How do political and social changes affect cultural practices? And how does a situation of crisis emboss cultural identities? The present publication observes the relationship between politics and art, the challenge of dealing with archive materials and language, and funding through cultural institutions.

Call for Applications! collects 145 questions by eight artists and cultural producers, prepared for the format of 'an application' all in the framework of a collaborative artistic work entitled Syrian Association for Cultural Support. The application opens a space of self-reflection, through inviting the reader to answer the questions.

Foundland Collective

foundland.info

Simba, The Last Prince of The Ba'ath Country, 2012

Book, Arabic and English

Simba, The Last Prince of Ba'ath Country was developed from a carefully selected set of propaganda images gathered by Foundland from Facebook, but originally created and distributed by the anonymous Photoshop makers of the Syrian Electronic army between 2011 and 2012, a pivotal period in the Syrian uprising.

Foundland used the format of a publication to trace propaganda images and find their original Google image sources, using a simple image pixel search. By combining traced images, informational texts and a fictional interview with an 'image maker', the publication aims to formulate an impression, curiosity and understanding regarding the myth as formulated by pro-Assad regime supporters, and simultaneously uncovers the complex and surprising use and re-appropriation of found, digital imagery; speculating about what this might mean for the production of political imagination. We wanted to bring into question, what the meaning is of images, sometimes from a Western context, if their recognisable iconography is adopted for opposing ideologies.

Deniz Gül

denizgul.com

Loyelow, 2016

Artist book, Turkish, Norgunk Publishing, 20×13,5cm

Loyelow is a writing that exists between the performance of the language and the performance of things, between the edge and the edges. **Loyelow** is a narrative of those who fall into silence, those who have suffered the distress of the near and distant Turkey. The book was published by Norgunk Publishing House in Turkey and its cover was designed by Erinç Seymen, who is also taking part in the House of Wisdom exhibition.

Beril Gür

berilgur.com

On Exile and Reading, 2016

Diptych, 24×34 cm fine art print, wooden framed

The work **On Exile and Reading** originates from a visit to the public library. Beril Gür photographically documented two editions of a book by Turkish writer Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (1886-1973, Izmir). The writer's name has become almost synonymous with Bodrum, the town where he was exiled to in 1925. It explores the relationship between reading, writing and exile.

Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (his pen-name 'The Fisherman of Halicarnassus') wrote novels, short-stories and essays, as well as being a keen ethnographer and travelogue. He arrived in the isolated little town of Bodrum in 1925 as a prisoner, sentenced to three-year's exile, for an article he had written. The authorities intended to jail him in the Bodrum Castle, but as it was no longer used as a prison, the local commandant let him live in a small house on the beach. He became smitten with Bodrum's simple way of life and with the beauty of the area. After a year and a half, Kabaağaçlı was made to serve the remainder of his sentence in Istanbul, but he never forgot his love for the little village of Bodrum. After he was released, he moved back to his 'prison', this time by his own will, and stayed there for 25 years. The work by Beril Gür comments on these forced and voluntary exiles of our times, questioning what a prison really means.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan

lawrenceabuhamdan.com

A Politics of Listening in 4 Acts, 2016

Book, 10×16cm, edited by Fabian Schöneich

A Politics of Listening is an intervention into and a reorganisation of forms that listening takes, rather than a call for free speech or for a platform for voices to be heard. According to Lawrence Abu Hamdan listening is a political act, a pedagogical process, and an activity that can lead to the development of an organised protocol for engagement. In his art and research, the artist explores the perception of language, sound, and listening. National identity, human rights, and the administration of justice are recurring themes in his work. The techniques used in his audio-aesthetic practice have been used to conduct forensic audio analysis for several legal investigations. This monograph includes a series of transcripts of live speech from sermons, monologues, testimonies, and interviews made over the course of the last five years.

Contributions by Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Emily Apter, Giovanni Carmine, Omar Kholeif, Fabian Schöneich.

Istanbul Queer Art Collective

(Tuna Erdem and Seda Ergül)

istanbulqueerartcollective.co.uk

Just in Bookcase, 2017

Wooden suitcase filled with personalised library cards, memorabilia and photos

Psychic Bibliophiles: What the Cards Say

Video documentation of the performance

at the opening of House of Wisdom at Framer Framed, 2017

Just in Bookcase is a “fluxkit” containing a hand made card for each cherished book in the personal library of Erdem and Ergül. It was created “just in case” they had to leave their country, dismantle their bookcase and disperse their books. Now, this suitcase filled with cards, is all that is left of their library.

In connection to their work **Just in Bookcase**, Istanbul Queer Art Collective presented the opening performance of HoW Amsterdam: **Psychic Bibliophiles: What the Cards Say**. A new iteration of this intimate storytelling performance will be conducted for HoW Nottingham, which will involve visits to selected elderly citizens’ houses.

Ali Kazma

Photos from the Archive (ongoing series), 2011

Digital print, 40×60 cm (each)

Photos from the Archive shows a selection from the photography archive of the artist. The archive consists of more than eight thousand photographs taken at libraries, bookshops, print houses, book binderies and many other places that are related to books. Kazma's work can be seen as a comment on the fragile situation of books and libraries, whose mere existence is under threat due to the increasing levels of censorship.

Yazan Khalili

yazankhalili.com

On Love and Other Landscapes, 2011

Film/book, 91 images in sequence

On Love and Other Landscapes is a film made in the format of a book which does not exist as a film. The book follows a narrative of a failed love story, involving a woman who recently abandoned the narrator. The woman left him with landscape photographs lacking his presence and the presence of the notorious Israeli built Wall in the West Bank — an absence which echoes the atmosphere conjured by these images. This series emerged out of questions relating to the representation of the Wall. Depictions of this Wall have been used and consumed within the Palestinian and global shared visual economy to such an extent that it lost its power as an image.

Mona Kriegler

Pain and Memory, 2012-13

21×21 cm, digital print, sketch,
embroidered by hand on paper

Mona Kriegler's **Pain and Memory** is her response to a car bomb exploding on Al-Mutanabbi Street in Baghdad in 2007, killing 26 people and wreaking devastation. The street, named after a revered 10th-century Iraqi poet, had been home to bookshops, stationers and cafes where writers and artists gathered, and the bombing was widely seen as an attack on the country's literary and intellectual life. Kriegler uses gold thread to stitch together the 'scar' of Al-Mutanabbi Street on hand-drawn and aerial maps of Baghdad, an idea that draws on the Japanese wabi sabi tradition of repairing broken objects with a thin gold line along the cracks.

The book is largely made up of photo-graphic portraits of people who have been injured or broken in some way, with their scars (some of them invisible) traced in gold paint, thus drawing out relationships between the city and the body. The approach forms a different take on the aesthetics of destruction and repair, creating beauty out of the tracks of repair.

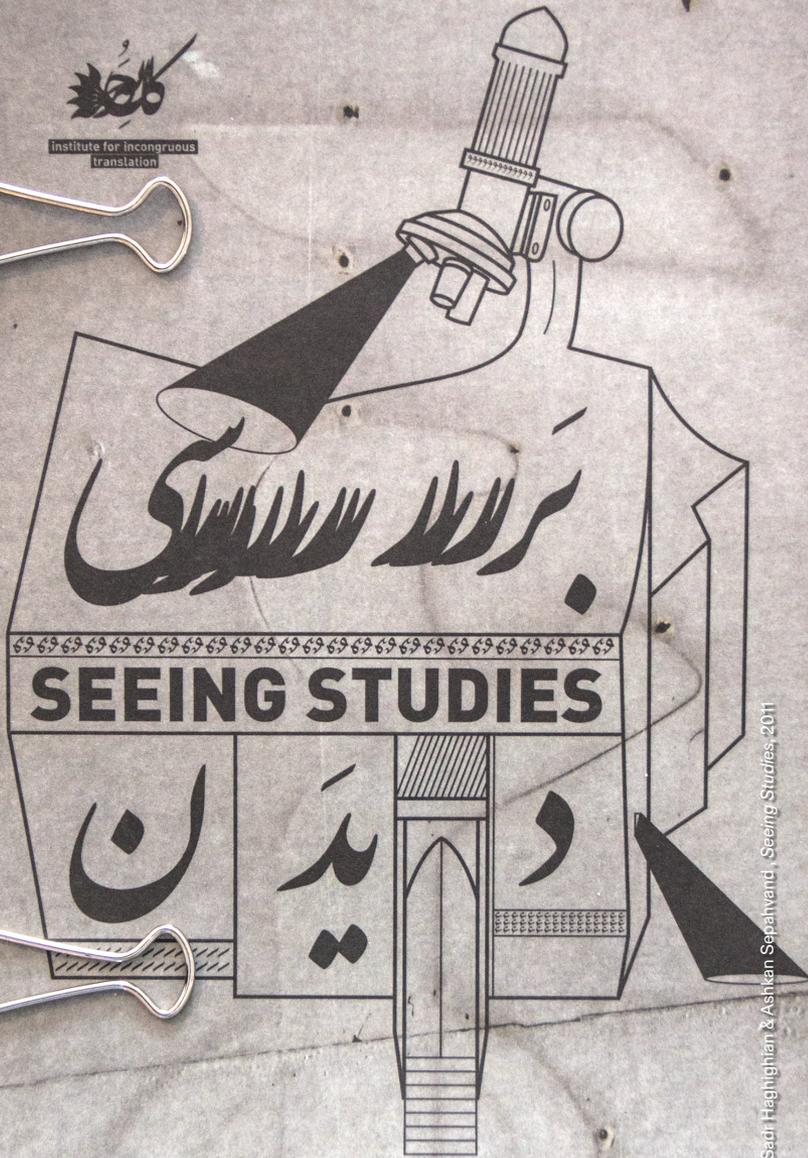
Mona Kriegler, *Pain and Memory*, photo by Dafne Louzioti





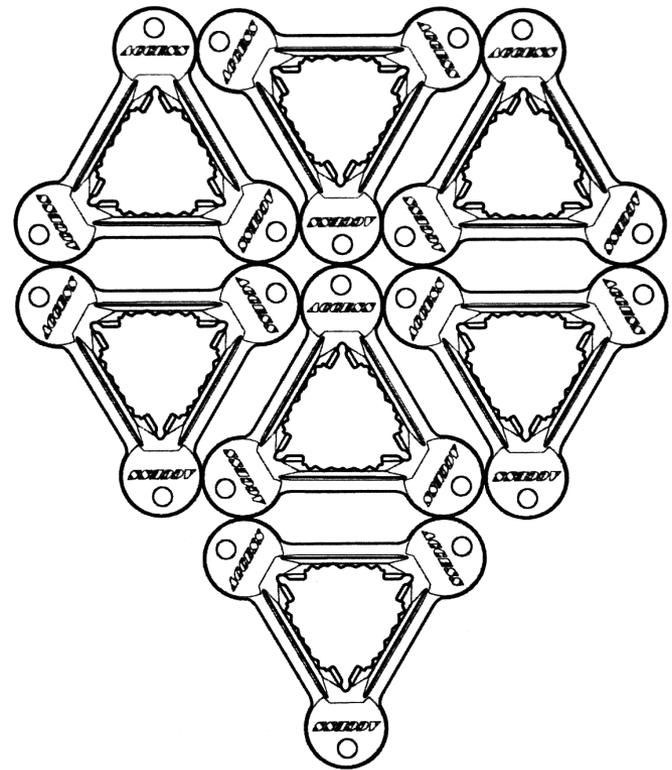


Institute for incongruous translation



Natascha Sadi Haghghiam & Ashkan Sepahvand, 'Seeing Studies', 2011

Sümer Sayın, Access, 2017



ACCESS
Your personal key

Ssshhhhsshhhhshhhhhh

Göksu Kunak

Heavy as frost and deep almost as life!, 2018

Installation with audio

The vigour of words reveals itself in the banned words throughout the history. Looking at the last period of the Ottoman Empire, travelling through Nazi Germany as well as the 20th and 21st century of Turkey and USA, the installation **Heavy as frost and deep almost as life!** — originally a line from a John Ashbery poem — reminds us the absurdity and power of prohibiting words, and even languages. Such bans, are they purported or real?

Elham Rokni

www.elhamrokni.com

Dear _____ Salam, 2016

Artist book, Yousef-Abad Project

Dear _____ Salam is an artist book produced in the context of The Yousef Abad project, dedicated to the exploration of the relationship between memories, space and movement. Rokni asked an Iranian-born, US-resident artist (pseudonym A) to film her childhood neighbourhood in Tehran, while she was remotely directing from a distance (Rokni herself is prohibited from returning there). The artist gave the directing instructions and chose most of the locations. When the filming was over, A decided to quit the project, fearing the association with an Israeli citizen. The breaking of contact gave rise to a new work, the book **Dear _____ Salam**, in which a third of the total email correspondence between the two artists appears, censoring any detail that might expose A's identity. The erasure marks enhance her disappearance, as well as exposing the dialogues' fragility and subverting its authenticity.

Natascha Sadr Haghghighian & Ashkan Sepahvand

Seeing Studies, 2011

Artist book 21.7×26.5 cm

Seeing Studies investigates the ways in which we learn to see. Based on a school-book published by the Iranian Ministry of Education to teach art in the first year of Iranian public middle school, this bilingual publication (English/Farsi) embarks on a collaborative journey, visiting different 'schools of seeing'. The institute for incongruous translation invited contributors and interlocutors to propose solutions to the problems posed by dissonant visual languages.

These proposals take shape as words, pictures, numbers, objects, practices, and concepts; in sum, 'things' coexisting in multiple configurations. Tenuous relations are drawn up between things as they take up positions in relation to a problem. Throughout this voyage, seeing is understood as a radical and expanded process of translation. How to look, read, and depict come together to form systems of 'agreements' within which their meanings are constantly extended, transformed, and reassigned.

Sümer Sayın

sumersayin.com

Access, 2017

Catalog of keys, Artist book

Access consists of a catalog of ironically designed keys, which can provide access to a variety of problematic situations. Each key can be produced as a 3D object, and can be ordered to satisfy specific needs. **Access** refers to the power mechanisms that manipulate knowledge. To be able to sustain their position through systematic confusion and censorship, people are left alone with personal efforts and solutions to exist in a society that is becoming increasingly individualised. Therefore, Sayın takes the initiative to provide 'easy' solutions for the ones who are in need to deal with their increasing negative feelings such as hopelessness, confusion, depression at a time of political turmoil.

Erinç Seymen

Pages from a Fake Novel, 2017

Book pages, drawing and text by Erinç Seymen, mixed media

Presented as two pages ripped out of an old novel, Erinç Seymen's work — actually designed and written by the artist himself — titled **Pages from a Fake Novel** questions the thin line between the fiction and the reality in House of Wisdom library.

The story of is about an unknown person, who could be living in anywhere at anytime, but more we read, more we face ourselves if that person could be one of us? Is it from 2000s or from a forgotten old book? The text was originally written in Turkish and translated into German. By creating an illusion of an old novel, artist Erinç Seymen also plays with the notions of 'hidden', 'unapparent', 'secret' and 'fake' when it comes to searching for the truth.

Bahia Shehab

A Thousand Times No, 2015

Book, limited edition

A Thousand Times No: The Visual History of Lam-Alif is based on a historical linguistic research project into different types of 'no' in Arabic throughout history. It is dedicated to the lost Arabic letter Lam-Alif - the Arabic character for 'no'. Lam-Alifs were buried in the sand, blown away by the careless wind, drowned in rivers and seas, and burnt by ruthless fires. Shehab began spraying the word on walls around the streets of Cairo, in conjunction with political statements such as 'No to dictatorship', 'No to violence' and 'No to military rule' during the revolution in Egypt. Her protest campaign became known across the world via the internet and attracted plenty of attention and recognition.

In her book, Shehab attempts to illustrate the journey of a single letter in time, space and across diverse cultures. She wishes to inspire young designers and readers, to encourage them in a sense of inventive playfulness and freedom in creation. Shehab wants you to receive this book as ammunition for refusal in the face of all powers that try to impose on you that which you cannot accept.

Walid Siti

www.walidsiti.com

Dark Interludes, 2017

Limited edition Artist book, 30×42 cm

Dark Interludes responds to the Iran-Iraq war with thirteen etchings that accompany a text, written by Kanaan Makia (Iraq, 1949). Makia wrote about fictitious nationalist and religious goals of the 1980s, whose cost is to this day still being paid for by the people of Iraq. Siti combined broken symbols in stark, fiercely energetic black and white compositions — twentieth century warfare is the literal subject matter of these thirteen images. The transfigured symbols of power, tradition and death, are set against a backdrop of eerie stillness, or caught up in a torrent of swirling black and white lines depicting the turbulence and motion of war.

This series originated in a cycle of drawings which Siti produced between 1986 and 1990, the peak of the protracted Iran-Iraq war, culminating in the attack with chemical weapons on the Kurdish town of Halabja. Although the work was partly created in light of those events and as a response to them, it is not a documentation. The artist's interest lay in an attempt to work through his thought processes and ideas and in registering his sense of despair, hopelessness and complete bewilderment as an artist faced with events of such magnitude. This set is an important commentary on a war which affected the lives of many, especially those political refugees from this region who now live in the UK.

Ali Taptık

alitaptik.com

Meridians

Originals, 1988

Meridians — Mirror, 2017

Edition of 3+1 AP

Meridians is an inverted version of Henry Miller's **Tropic of Capricorn** book, which was banned until 1961 in the United States, as well as in Turkey. The Turkish translation of **Tropic of Capricorn** was first published by CAN in 1985. The publication was found sexually offensive and banned from distribution; all available copies were destroyed. In 1988 forty publishers from Turkey reprinted **Tropic of Capricorn**. In order to be able to reprint it, the forty publishers censored the offensive content with black tape — however, to reestablish its integrity, they included the court decision of 1985 publication at the beginning of the book including the censored parts — allowing the reader to read behind the black tape.

The artist book **Meridians** can be seen as an homage to the publishers and CAN Publishing House, for their poetic resistance in 1988. Taptık's **Atlas** from the **Meridians** series inverts the ban making explicit sections available to the reader — while censoring the 'harmless' content.

Erdem Taşdelen

erdemtasdelen.com

Convictions, 2012

Installation, pages 12.7×17.9 cm (each)

Convictions contains 47 short and concise anecdotes, written by the artist over the span of a number of years. The anecdotes describe the artist's experience of coming face to face with situations in which he became aware of his queerness. They provide an intimate look into his position as a queer person, and serve to remind that one is only queer in relation to others.

Özge Topçu

ozgetopcu.com

Alteration Museum, 2017

40×32cm, handmade book

Alteration Museum holds a mirror to the stunning examples of architecture and visual culture that emerged during the establishment of the Turkish Republic, through the execution of the modernist style in the capital city of Ankara (Turkey). The collected works in this book come from a range of the artist's previous books, drawings, paper works and installations.

Through these different mediums, the artist sought to explore the synchronicity between the change in the facades of buildings and appearances of the people during the early revolutionary period of 1923-43. The 'artefacts of alteration' explore parallels between the morphological properties of modernist architecture and the restructuring of the Turkish society.

Viron Erol Vert

vironerolvert.com

Notebook of Mesopotamia, 2015

ongoing research book, one edition mixed media

Notebook of Mesopotamia is a book of motives and patterns which Viron Erol Vert started in 2005, and still goes back to at times. This book on Mesopotamian and surrounding cultures, exists as a bridge between art and design, and combines the forms of past and present cultures, catching the similarities and the differences.

Acknowledging the forgotten and lost histories of the geographical area he is from, Vert invites the readers / visitors to think about these neglected narratives. Questioning the tendency of political powers to erase different elements of cultures such as rituals, languages and dressing habits to implement their methodologies for cultural formation, this work focuses on what could happen if there was a more eclectic approach in the history of civilisations.

Ali Yass

Destination II, 2017

Chinese rice paper book, calligraphy ink (Gakusyo), 21×410 cm

Ali Yass describes his work **Destination II** as follows:

'I draw my personal and public past in this book, where personal desires morph into gigantic monuments, similar to those scattered around the city of my childhood, Baghdad. Now, all these monuments are tall and abstract trees; totally abstract. What's the past if not a film without colours?'

The work makes use of the colour black to highlight the feeling of darkness experienced by individuals settled in fragile places, by commenting on the landscape of the cities and on the effect of wars and political turmoil.

Eşref Yıldırım

esrefyildirim.blogspot.com.tr

Well, 2014

Artist book, 21×14.8×1.2 cm

Well deals with the issues of suspicious deaths and forced disappearances, focusing on the deaths of soldiers, mandatory military service, and forced disappearances in Turkey during the 1990s.

Printed in limited edition, **Well** is based on a theatre text by Pelin Temur, which tells the stories of those men from the perspective of their wives, whose husbands suddenly 'disappeared'. At those times, people were taken to the police offices, and thrown into wells to die. Yıldırım recreated this text in the form of a well/book, making use of transparent pages, as a response to crimes that do not get investigated.

Ala Younis

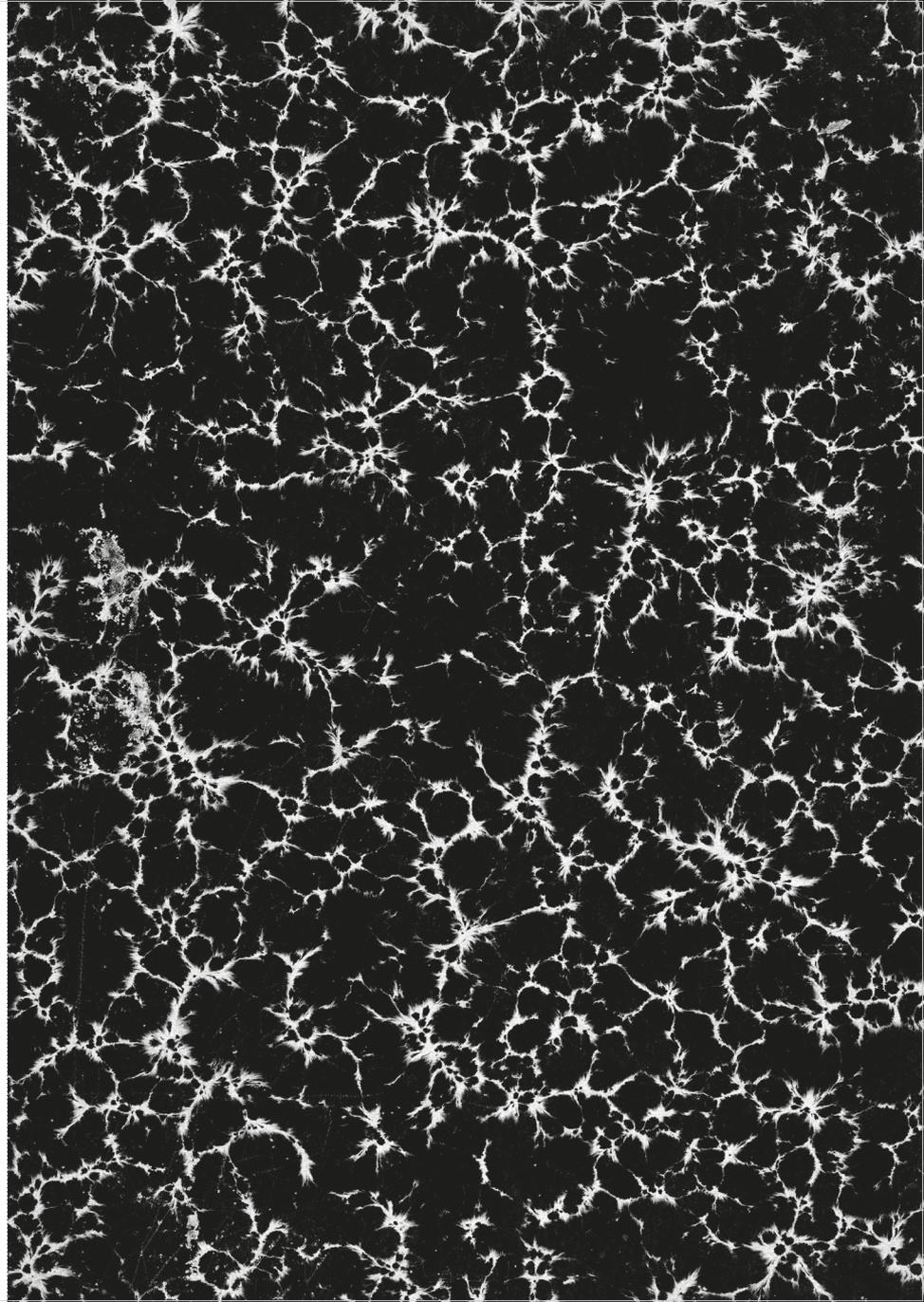
alayounis.tumblr.com

Tin Soldiers, 2012

Artist book, the 9th Gwangju Biennial

Tin Soldiers explores persistent realities of formal and informal fighters. It appeared as an installation of metal figures, as an exhibition project, and, as shown here, as a publication.

Tin Soldiers is a depiction of nine armies that were implicated in, or subject to, acts of war in today's Middle East. It attempts to look at the fragility of individuals, and the continuing allure of notions of nationalism and agency. It shares stories of individuals who have the mind-set, upbringing, context, or readiness to become a fighter and stories of others' escape to and from soldiery. The publication project of **Tin Soldiers** shows this political struggle of individuals by collecting it and making it transparent.



HOUSE OF WISDOM – BERLIN



Exhibition dates: 30 April – 4 June 2017
Venue: Dzialdov, Berlin

Together with artists; Mohamed Abdelkarim, Burak Arıkan, Mahmoud Bakhshi, Yael Bartana, Mehtap Baydu, Kürşat Bayhan, Ekin Bernay, Burçak Bingöl, Nicky Broekhuysen, Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, Cansu Çakar, Ramesch Daha, Didem Erk, Viron Erol Vert, Işıl Eğrikavuk, Deniz Gül, Beril Gür, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Ali Kazma, Yazan Khalili, Göksu Kunak, Fehras Publishing Practises, İstanbul Queer Art Collective, Mona Kriegler, Elham Rokni, Natascha Sadr Haghghian & Ashkan Sepahvand, Sümer Sayın, Erinç Seymen, Bahia Shehab, Walid Siti, Ali Taptık, Erdem Taşdelen, Özge Topçu, Ali Yass, Ala Younis, Eşref Yıldırım.

House of Wisdom Berlin was supported by The Art Department, IFA (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) and STEP Travel Grants of European Cultural Foundation.

HOUSE OF WISDOM – ISTANBUL



Exhibition dates: September 12 – November 12, 2017
Venue: Nejat Eczacıbaşı Building, IKSV Ground Floor

Together with artists; Mohamed Abdelkarim, Burak Arıkan, Mahmoud Bakhshi, Yael Bartana, Mehtap Baydu, Kürşat Bayhan, Ekin Bernay, Burçak Bingöl, Nicky Broekhuysen, Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, İstanbul Queer Art Collective, Cansu Çakar, Ramesch Daha, Işıl Eğrikavuk, Didem Erk, Viron Erol Vert, Deniz Gül, Beril Gür, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Ali Kazma, Yazan Khalili, Göksu Kunak, Mona R. Kriegler, Fehras Publishing Practises, Elham Rokni, Natascha Sadr Haghghian & Ashkan Sepahvand, Sümer Sayın, Erinç Seymen, Bahia Shehab, Walid Siti, Ali Taptık, Erdem Taşdelen, Özge Topçu, Ali Yass, Eşref Yıldırım, Ala Younis.

House of Wisdom Istanbul was realised within the scope of the 15th Istanbul Biennial's Public Programme.

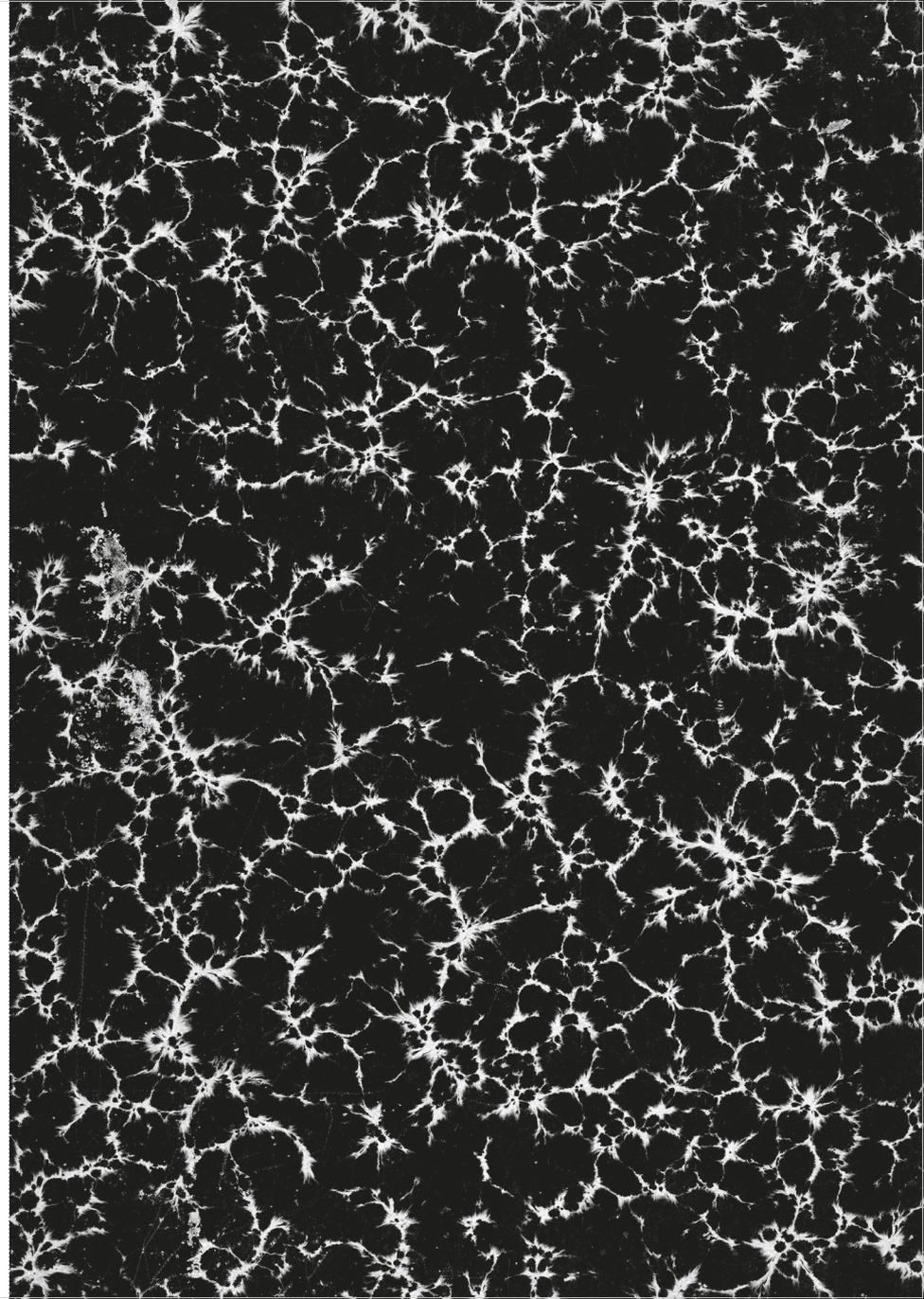
HOUSE OF WISDOM – AMSTERDAM



Exhibition dates: Nov 24, 2017 – Jan 8, 2018
Venue: Framer Framed, Amsterdam

Together with artists; Mohamed Abdelkarim, Burak Arıkan, Mahmoud Bakhshi, Yael Bartana, Mehtap Baydu, Kürşat Bayhan, Ekin Bernay, Burçak Bingöl, Nicky Broekhuysen, Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, Cansu Çakar, Ramesch Daha, Işıl Eğrikavuk, Didem Erk, Foundland Collective, Deniz Gül, Beril Gür, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, İstanbul Queer Art Collective (Tuna Erdem and Seda Ergül), Ali Kazma, Yazan Khalili, Göksu Kunak, Mona Kriegler, Fehras Publishing Practices, Elham Rokni, Natascha Sadr Haghighian & Ashkan Sepahvand, Sümer Sayın, Erinç Seymen, Bahia Shehab, Walid Siti, Ali Taptık, Erdem Taşdelen, Özge Topçu, Viron Erol Vert, Ali Yass, Eşref Yıldırım, Ala Younis.

House of Wisdom Amsterdam was made possible with the support of Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, Tolhuistuin and Stichting Democratie en Media.





Public Programme

I saw the House of Wisdom exhibition during the 15th Istanbul Biennial in 2017. Rather than mediating an urge to inform its audiences about the political drama of a particular geography, the project was prioritising its formal concerns and its post-gallery relational aesthetic expanding institutionalised spaces of art. There was a curatorial rigor in creating a fictive library that facilitates a platform for artists, curators, academics, cultural practitioners and art enthusiasts to exchange knowledge. Despite its regional political focus, the show was not serving for a spectacular drama of oppression or victimhood to appeal to a liberal humanitarian optic of the international art market.

While the show was effectively engaging with the geopolitical intricacies of censorship and knowledge production, its formal flexibility and curatorial openness to the site-specific interventions was turning it into an experiment on cross-cultural mobility of arts. As an academic who teaches and produces research on the politics of intelligibility, interpretation and translation in film and contemporary arts, I wanted this experiment to take place in Nottingham too.

While curating the public programme for House of Wisdom Nottingham, I wanted each event to be loyal to the curators' passionate investments in their 'mobile library/exhibition' and its conceptual flexibility. All practitioners I invited to this public programme engage critically with alternative spaces of knowledge production, political locations of memory, identity and affect in their practices of 'documentation', and most importantly, a relational, transnational aesthetics that expands its regional/national specificities. I am grateful to be part of this inspiring collaboration, the collective spirit of which managed to move beyond institutional and professional boundaries.

Dr Cüneyt Çakırlar

Curator of the Public Programme (Nottingham Trent University, UK)

The public programme events for House of Wisdom Nottingham are sponsored by School of Arts and Humanities, Nottingham Trent University.

The programme is also supported by Bonington Gallery, Primary, Five Leaves Bookshop, Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature, and Bromley House Library.

Istanbul Queer Art Collective

Performance

Visiting Bibliophiles: Fellowship of Books

Tuna Erdem and Seda Ergul will visit Emeritus Professor of Gay and Lesbian Studies, Gregory Woods.

Presenting their **Just in Bookcase**, they will have a conversation on book loving, queer archiving and memory. The video documentation of this event will be available after the performance.

Wednesday 3 October

19:00–21:00

Prof. Wendy Shaw

Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany – TALK

Islam in the River of Wisdoms

Five Leaves Bookshop

14a Long Row, Nottingham NG1 2DH

Modern celebrations of the 8th century library House of Wisdom in Baghdad often paint it as the symbol of an Islamic golden age: a shining light of the East against the dark ages of the medieval West; and a shining light of the past against the dark ages of modern associations between Islam and terror. But history is much more complex. More than a single institution, the House of Wisdom was a practice of transcultural transition and layered translation, where antique philosophy rejected by Christian Rome persisted through the funnel of Sassanian Iran and informed a nascent Islam hungry for knowledge, regardless of origin. It calls on us to imagine not a golden age of Islam as distinct from its surroundings, but as part and parcel of late antique cultures whose overwhelming interest in discovering truth is all too often erased in our modern concern for authenticity. Situating the House of Wisdom not as a golden age of Islam but as a transcultural inheritance, this talk explores how the early Islamic state enriched its coffers of wisdom through recognizing the value of knowledge regardless of nation or creed. Focusing on music, epics, and fables, it looks at practices of internalisation at the heart of early Islam that modernity has all too often forgotten.

Wednesday 10 October

18:00–20:00

Misal Adnan Yıldız

ASA Berlin, Germany – TALK

A Feeling of Loss: Mutterzunge

Primary, Reading Room, 33 Seely Road

Nottingham NG7 3FZ

Misal Adnan Yıldız will present a lecture, which is based on his curatorial project entitled **Mutterzunge**. The project is composed of seven chapters and it engages in conversations with the book of the same name by Berlin-based author Emine Sevgi Özdamar. Yıldız's research draws upon mostly primary sources including studio visits and interviews with the author and participating artists, research and production notes, as well as everyday life anecdotes focusing on politics of silence, feeling of loss and biographies of transition.

Presenting several new productions from **Mutterzunge's** Berlin programme, the lecture will look at recent works of Şener Özmen, Mehtap Baydu, Mohammad Salemy among others with critical questions about the close connections between the global memory, transnational dynamics and how to narrate social changes within personal traumas.

Wednesday 17 October

18:00–20:00

Gürcan Keltek's
Colony, 2015

FILM SCREENING

introduced by Cüneyt Çakırlar, NTU

BON143, Bonington, Nottingham Trent University,

Dryden Street, Nottingham NG1 4GG

The sun rises at the Beşparmak Mountains. The autonomous Missing Persons Committee is conducting excavations at these mountains along with scientists and undercover witnesses. Skeletons will be exhumed and delivered to the families. The ghosts of unopened mass graves wander in evacuated villages, valleys. **Colony** is a film about psychogeography, the memory of landscape, trauma and remembrance.

Monday 22 October

18:00–20:00

Dr Aylin Kuryel

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

UPLEFTER: Workshop on Political Depression

BON146, Bonington, Nottingham Trent University, Dryden Street

Nottingham NG1 4GG

Over the years, we have witnessed, across cities and groups, a decrease in the motivation to act together and the belief in the possibility of influencing change, especially after right-wing victories and internal conflicts within the left. Political depression might induce feeling of anxiety and hopelessness and can lead to nostalgia, sarcasm and eventually cynicism. It is a less personal but more collective experience, which is not adequately and collectively addressed.

The aim of this workshop is helping contextualise political depression, rather than isolating it as a personal and negative feeling that should be gotten rid of. It will provide a platform on which we will contemplate on the diverse but related reasons behind political depression and attempt to find various ways to deal with it and act upon it. With the participation of people from diverse backgrounds, following a set of questions prepared in advance, it will allow a debate on political depression as an affective condition that influences the ways in which we relate to ourselves and others.



Wednesday 24 October

13:00–15:00

EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH

with Mine Kaplangı & Cüneyt Çakırlar

Meeting Point: Bonington Gallery (entrance),
NTU, Dryden Street, Nottingham NG1 4GG

Wednesday 24 October

18:00–20:00

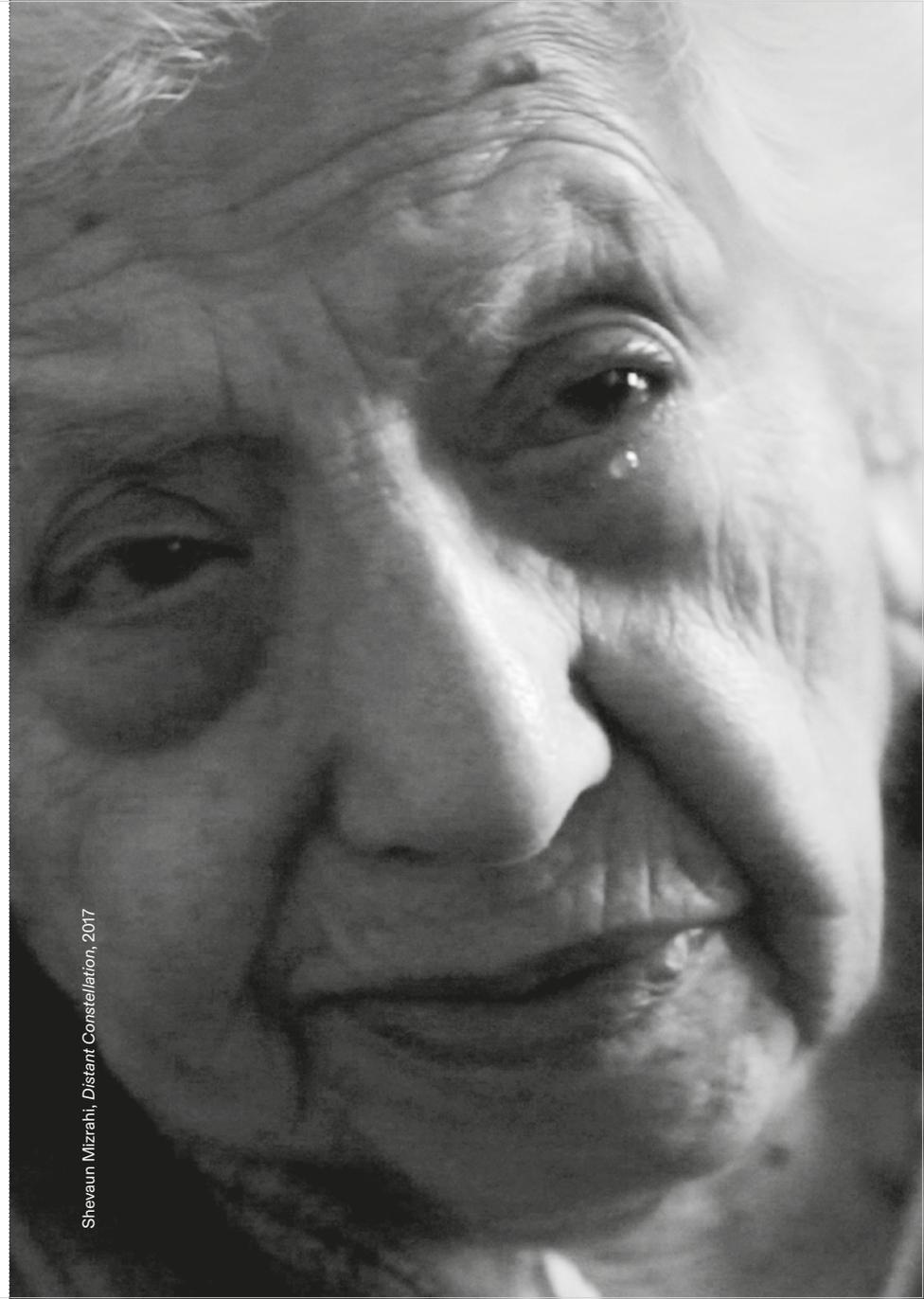
Shevaun Mizrahi's
Distant Constellation, 2017

FILM SCREENING

introduced by Cüneyt Çakırlar, NTU

BON143, Bonington, Nottingham Trent University, Dryden Street
Nottingham NG1 4GG

This haunted reverie drops us inside an Istanbul retirement home, where the battle-scarred residents bask in the camera's attention. A creaky-voiced woman confides her personal account of the Armenian genocide. A sweetly deluded pianist performs a composition before confessing his love. A blind photographer fiddles with his flash as he points his own camera back at us. Shevaun Mizrahi's playful, immaculately controlled film finds hypnotizing rhythms in the residents' limbo-like state. Meanwhile, outside, ominous construction equipment transforms the land.



Shevaun Mizrahi, *Distant Constellation*, 2017

Collective Çukurcuma

(Mine Kaplangı & Naz Cuguoğlu)

Collective Çukurcuma is a non-profit curatorial collective from Istanbul, Turkey. It was founded by Naz Cuguoğlu and Mine Kaplangı in 2015, and joined by Serhat Cacekli in 2017. The collective mainly focuses on collaborative thinking and creating processes through its reading group meetings and cross-national collaborative exhibitions, and highlights the potential of transdisciplinary collaborations within contemporary art, process-based rather than outcome-based research with an experimental laboratory approach through their curatorial and editorial projects. Founded in response to a need for building a platform generating progressive dialogues and discussions on contemporary art, it aims to rebuild the nearly-forgotten 'neighbour' experience among artists, curators, researchers and collectives through forming collaborations locally and internationally. Collective Çukurcuma organises periodical seminars, exhibitions, talks and performances, and also with their reading group project (co-organised by Gökcan Demirkazık, founded in 2015) the research processes of their exhibitions are shared with artists and other participants. The reading group's archive is open to all and can be accessed from the collective's website.

Naz Cuguoğlu (1989) is a curator and art writer, based in Istanbul. She received her BA in Psychology and MA in Social Psychology focusing on cultural studies. Her writings have been published in various online and published art magazines, including **Art Asia Pacific**, **Art South Africa**, and **Istanbul Art News**. She is the co-founder of Collective Çukurcuma and artistic research project "IdentityLab" (SE & TR). Recently, she took part in ICI New Orleans Curatorial Intensive funded by SAHA, and TATE Intensive (London) funded by Roberto Cimetta fund. She has curated various exhibitions such as; **Restless Monuments** (Zilberman Gallery, Istanbul, 2018), **House of Wisdom** (Public program of the 15th Istanbul Biennial, 2017), **Asymmetric Kin** (Coop Gallery, Nashville, 2016) and **After Alexandria The Flood** (5533, Istanbul, 2015).

Mine Kaplangı (1987) is the co-founder of Collective Çukurcuma. She received her bachelor degree in Philosophy in Istanbul University and MA (Certificate Program) in Philosophy of Arts & Aesthetics in Bologna University/ DAMS Faculty. She is also working as a freelance editor for contemporary art platforms like Artunlimited and Artfridge. She has curated various exhibition such as; **House of Wisdom** (Public program of the 15th Istanbul Biennial and Framer Framed, Amsterdam, 2017), **Asymmetric Kin** (Coop Gallery, Nashville, 2016) and **Detail** (BLOK art space, 2016).

Cüneyt Çakırlar

Dr Cüneyt Çakırlar is a senior lecturer in Communications, Culture and Media Studies at Nottingham Trent University. His current research practice focuses on transnational sexuality studies and cross-cultural mobility of contemporary art practices. Awarded a PhD degree in Gender Studies, followed by an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship award at University College London with his project on cultural translation in arts (2008-09), Çakırlar has taught on queer aesthetics and film theory at UCL, Boğaziçi University, and Istanbul Bilgi University. His articles appeared in various peer-reviewed journals including **Critical Arts**, **Paragraph**, **Cineaction** and **Screen**. He has co-edited a volume about cultures of sexual dissidence in contemporary Turkey, namely **Cinsellik Muamması** (2012), and co-translated Judith Butler's **Bodies That Matter** (1993) into Turkish (2014). Çakırlar has also authored exhibition catalogues for the solo shows of various internationally acclaimed artists including Taner Ceylan (Paul Kasmin Gallery NYC, 2013), Jake and Dinos Chapman (ARTER Istanbul, 2017), and Erinc Seymen (Zilberman Gallery, 2017).

Queer Art Projects

Queer Art Projects is a London based company, which specialises in producing and organising art events like exhibitions, performances, screenings and conferences as well as providing all the related services to art event organisation. Queer Art Projects was founded by Tuna Erdem and Seda Ergul, who have been partners for more than a decade. Both have a dual educational background of business and art. Ergul received her BA degree in Business Administration (Bosphorus University) and her MA in Music (Istanbul Bilgi University) while Erdem received her BA in Economics (Marmara University), MA in Film and Art Theory (University of Kent) and PhD in Film and Theatre (Reading University). Both taught art at a university level and held administrative positions in their respective departments. Together they have produced numerous conferences, exhibitions and performances both in Turkey and the UK, they have written for exhibition catalogues and art journals and edited a book (**Fetis Ikame**, 2014). They have also delivered talks on art in various institutions like CRISAP, London College of Communication and Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

Erdem and Ergul are also artists and the founding members of Istanbul Queer Art Collective, which has been a part of all the iterations of House of Wisdom Exhibition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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