

ARTNESIA IN COLLABORATION WITH PHILLIPS de PURY & COMPANY ANNOUNCE CONFESSIONS OF DANGEROUS MINDS CONTEMPORARY ART FROM TURKEY

A SELLING EXHIBITION FEATURING WORKS BY ANSEN, KUTLUG ATAMAN, RAMAZAN BAYRAKOGLU, CANAN, TANER CEYLAN, HUSSEIN CHALAYAN, LEYLA GEDIZ, YESIM AKDENIZ GRAF, SITKI KÖSEMEN, SUKRAN MORAL, ARDAN OZMENOGLU, YASAM ŞAŞMAZER, ERINC SEYMEN, ERKUT TERLIKSIZ, CANAN TOLON, NAZIF TOPÇUOĞLU, DENİZ USTER, EBRU UYGUN & EKREM YALCINDAG

VIEWING: APRIL 16 – APRIL 30, 2011

LOCATION: Phillips de Pury & Company, Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York's Square, London, SW3 4SQ

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London - In collaboration with Phillips de Pury & Company, the London based curators Jason Lee and Carlo Berardi (Artnesia), have put together a sensational group show of some of the most interesting artistic talent emerging from Turkey. Confessions of Dangerous Minds, showing at the Phillips de Pury & Company galleries at the Saatchi Gallery in London, will feature 19 established and exciting up and coming artists. The show will explore the breadth, depth and diversity of Turkey's visual arts.

"We are pleased to showcase exciting, new contemporary art from our series of world exhibitions and we are proud to continue the Phillips de Pury tradition of championing young emerging artists." Finn Dombernowsky, Managing Director Phillips de Pury & Company.

"It has taken us over two years to put together a selection of works that represents each artist at his or her best. We are certain that it will open the doors to a number of diverse international collectors who are keen to start looking at Turkish art." Jason Lee & Carlo Berardi, Curators.

As International art collectors and commentators increasingly look towards emerging markets, the quest for the "new" and "undiscovered" led the curators to research the contemporary art scene in Turkey and to put together an innovative exhibition of cutting-edge contemporary artists.

As a comprehensive survey of its current art scene the exhibition is, in effect, a journal recording the many complex stories which bind the artists with their primary subject matter: regarding nationalistic, political, gender and identity issues.

Turkey, at the crossroads of Asia and Europe with its millenary history, culture



Ansen,
Through Ya, 2005



Hussein Chalayan, *I am sad Leyla*,
2010



Taner Ceylan, *Je t'aime Peggy*, 2008



Sukran Moral, *Pero*, 2011



Yasam Sasmazer,
Treacherous Wolf, 2008

and influences, raises an important question for artists relating to their unique identity. Rather than being merely involved in aestheticism or stereotypes, the key to a better understanding of Contemporary Art from Turkey is to look at the state of mind of the artists in the present age; their doubts, their feelings, their passions, their hidden emotions as well as their fears.

Highlights from the exhibition include:

Ansen has developed a personal visual language which incorporates techniques and aesthetics from photography, sculpture and painting, achieving a unique digital image. For the exhibition, one of his most accomplished works has been chosen, a monumental triptych entitled *Through Ya* which is reminiscent of old master history paintings depicting scenes from famous battles.

The hyperrealism of **Taner Ceylan's** *Je t'aime Peggy*, 2008, reflects an interest in visual processes whilst his subject matter which is at the forefront reflects an interest in the visual culture of the marginal.

Hussein Chalayan's *I am sad Leyla*, 2010, is an example of the artist's belief that his works should never be hampered by fixed expectations of genre or discipline. This video centres on ideas which have continually fascinated the designer including cultural identity and performance as an art form.

Leyla Gediz's *Yengec (Crab)*, 2006, is a wonderful example of the artist's ability to discuss very personal subject matters in an objective visual form. A self-portrait in its own kind, the crab represents the artist's impossibility of being handled by one of her former lovers.

Sıtkı Kösemen's images of women also reflect a boundary between fantasy and reality. In *Semiha Berksoy*, 2010, the artist portrays one of the first Turkish opera singers, while standing on a stage in full costume at the age of 91. *Belly dancer* is reminiscent of the stereotypes that are often associated with Turkey.

Sukran Moral has long been an outspoken critic of women's place in Turkish society. The work *Pero*, 2010, features a self-portrait of the artist while breastfeeding a skeleton with a traditional view of Istanbul in the background. In *Despair*, a 2003 film of would-be immigrants floating on a skiff at sea, the artist's interest in the less advantaged social contexts becomes clear. Shot in black and white, the portraits of these men show a desperate and tragic sense of humanity while sharing a sense of sufferance.

Yaşam Şaşmazer's works feature figurative sculpture of children or 'little people'. Made to confess something seemingly naughty, there is something uncanny in the fantastic world the artist creates, a feeling that we all remember from our childhood.

In **Canan's** video *Fountain*, 2000, she takes concepts such as fruitfulness, nourishment and body into consideration with an aesthetical point of view. She paraphrases Duchamp and inverts his statement. The lifeless ceramic bowl (which becomes a fountain only through the male spurt) is opposed by Senol with a pair of plump, generously lactating breasts. The heavy breasts, hanging down like two udders, indicate woman's ambivalent double role as both fertility goddess and mother, weighed down by the heavy burden of bringing up children.

Eric Seymen has become one of the young rising stars of the Turkish art scene; his work is often full of references to obedience, dedication and social issues. The painting *Ikna Odasi (Persuasion Room)*, 2008, features an image of a girl who finds herself in front of an array of sexual toys. It suggests the constant



Canan, *Fountain*, 2000



Eric Seymen,
Untitled, 2009



Eric Seymen,
Ikna Odasi (Persuasion Room), 2008



Canan Tolon,
Waiting to happen, 2010

necessity for doubt and discretion as an antidote against promises of health, prosperity and happiness given by institutions such as schools, the army or hospitals. In another work by the artist, we find the body of a butterfly replaced by a hand grenade while retaining its wings. Executed in a large circular embroidery, this piece pays homage to a certain dichotomy between essence and appearance that we often find in the artist's production.

Canan Tolon's new work *Waiting To Happen*, 2010, commissioned specifically for this exhibition conveys the artist's inner struggle. Tolon's paintings and installations are influenced by her architectural background. As she explains 'It didn't take me long to realise that my attitude to architecture was more passionate than professional'. In her oil paintings her palette is sometimes monochromatic. The complexity of the composition is created with overlays of rigid and blurred geometric shapes, creating a sense of multiple layers of cross sections reminiscent of architectural plans. She describes her paintings as 'Landscapes stripped to their elementary state, which reveal, in their discreet struggle, an inherent self-consuming urge for subsistence. Something we all know already, but keep forgetting.'

In **Nazif Topçuoğlu's** painting-like photographs, one is faced with the question as to what captures the eye in today's visual culture: the story behind the image? Or the mechanics of the image itself? The artist has devised his use of *chiaroscuro* in photography, almost reminiscent of Caravaggio's painting technique.

Deniz Uster's work is often laden with contradiction and dichotomy of meaning. She is concerned with captivating the process of transmutation and hybridity and is influenced by the notions of anatomy and alchemy, rituals and Anatolian folklore. Uster's painting *Transmutation (after Titian)* from 2008, shows a methodical 'dissection' of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* from 1538. The painting appears to have been transformed into an anatomical diagram of Venus' body with precise Latin definitions of the various parts of her physique, including the dog sleeping beside her. Playing with the idea of the artwork being dissected not only by the viewers' eyes over the centuries but also the plethora of art historical references that the original painting has been subject to, Uster shows a kind of transmutation of the original and captures the contradiction between meanings that are derived through interpretation.

Kutlug Ataman, *Stefan's Room*, 2004. In the present installation, composed of five large screens, Ataman uses his favourite medium of video. The five screens arranged in a somewhat chaotic circle surround the viewer and echo the flight or dance of butterflies and moths which are the subjects of the films projected onto the screens. The installation is completed by the narrative of Stefan Naumann who explains in lengthy detail his passion or rather lifetime obsession with tropical moths; from his first encounter with the insects as a child, to how he bred them, and finally to how he killed them to store them in display cabinets in his tiny Berlin flat.

The installation forms a dynamic and colourful structure suggesting Stefan's psyche and transformation. Ataman sees the playful and eerie installation as a metaphor for the complexity of Stefan's obsession. The viewer becomes confined within the broken and tilted installation, as if walking into a man's head and thoughts. Ultimately, Ataman illustrates the imprisonment of obsession by creating a sense of claustrophobia. As is often the case with Ataman, his art is about people and their stories and more importantly their words.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

ARTNESIA is an arts projects initiative set up in August 2010 by Jason Lee and Carlo Berardi. Its main activities are curatorial projects around the globe, artists



Nazif Topçuoğlu, *Murder Mystery*, 2009-2010



Deniz Uster, *Transmutation (after Titian)*, 2008



Kutlug Ataman, *Stefan's Room*, 2004

residencies and representations as well as book publishing. Artnesia's most recent project is *Heavenly Creatures*, a group exhibition in partnership with Jack Wills at the Aubin Gallery.

Jason Lee studied at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore and at Central St Martins College of Art and Design before concentrating on collecting and curating. His recent primary interest has been in Middle Eastern and Asian contemporary works and he has established a reputation as a trusted expert in the field, fostering many new artists and promoting their work in the West. He was at the forefront of the surge of interest in Chinese contemporary art and has recently concentrated his work on emerging artists in both Turkey and Iran. Being the project creative consultant for the recently published *Unleashed; Contemporary art from Turkey* book. Not however restricted to the Middle East Jason's interests cover the whole of the contemporary art movement, but he is particularly keen on vibrant, little known emerging artists. He recently contributed to the Parasol Unit Foundation's 5th Anniversary as a member of the celebration committee.

Carlo Berardi studied at Gordonstoun School (Scotland) before obtaining a Bachelor of Science from the London School of Economics. He has had extensive experience in emerging art markets and he co-curated *Conference of the Birds*, an exhibition of Iranian Modern and Contemporary Art in London in September 2008 as well as the first solo show in the UK by the Lebanese artist Zena El Khalil. He was the nominator for the winning artist of the Magic Of Persia Contemporary Art Prize in 2009: Mahmoud Bakhshi. He is a board member of the Foundation Museo Pino Pascali in Bari (Italy) where he curated a solo show of Jake and Dinos Chapman for the Pino Pascali Prize 2010 as well as an exhibition by Jan Fabre. Carlo has extensive knowledge of Post-War Italian art due to the history of his family's collecting background.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with an essay written by Ahu Antmen, a leading Turkish scholar in the field of Visual Culture.

The exhibition will take place at the Phillips de Pury & Company galleries at the Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York Square, London, UK. Opening times are 10am-6pm, daily, last entry 5.30 pm.

The exhibition is scheduled to travel later in the year to Museo Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare (Bari) – ITALY.

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