

sympathie

MEHTAP **BAYDU** & PETER **ANDERS**

invited by **René Block**

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ZILBERMANGALLERY
I S T A N B U L | B E R L I N

Sympathie | Preface by Lotte Laub

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The double exhibition *Sympathie* brings together old and more recent works from two artists of different genders, different generations, various traditions, who both studied at the Kunsthochschule Kassel at different times, and through various connections later became acquainted with René Block, who was the artistic director of the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel from 1997 to 2006 and presented both artists in exhibitions. They both developed sympathy for the respective other artistic position, although the themes and methods remained completely different.

Mehtap Baydu, born in Bingöl/Eastern Anatolia in 1973, lives and works in Kassel and Berlin. Her work engages with the topics of gender, tradition, and identity, as well as the fear of being eaten alive by role clichés, and societal expectations, as depicted in her performance *Eat me, meet me* (2010). She challenges the viewer to come closer, fall under her unique spell, so to speak, and feel what gets under the artist's (or the person depicted or a woman) skin, what it means to be considered an object for consumption or mass of manipulation for the men's world. A miniature of her dress made of dried fruit mass—*Pestil Elbise* (*Pestil Dress*, 2010)—is the memory of the performance in which the artist wore such a dress and moved the audience to eat it. The miniature is displayed in the exhibition like a relic. The artist considers audience participation important to achieve sympathy for a woman's fate, especially as can still be encountered in East Anatolia, but also East Asia, where a long neck is considered an ideal of beauty for women, which is why already girls have old metal loop placed around their neck. Mehtap Baydu reacts to this ideal by wrapping cut-off collars from men's shirts around her neck like rings (*Long Neck*, 2015).

Mehtap Baydu created *birdirbir* (*Bockspringen*, 2017) specially for the *Sympathie* exhibition. Here there are two delicate paper sculptures, also in miniature, both showing the artist, one bent over in a yellow dress with yellow shoes, the other in a flowery suit with flowery shoes, jumping over herself. The dynamics of the leap is accentuated by the curve of her braid, an image of wished-for or wished self-optimization and the energy needed? Suit jumps over dress: it is the desire to free oneself from the feminine clichés without assuming the masculine role, where the flowery fabric and shoes wouldn't fit in?

Another piece, *Brot* (*Bread*, 2011), a suitcase baked out of dough and embellished with a leather handle, is reminiscent—like the artist's dress—of the Eat Art of the 1960s and 70s, but distances itself by not having the food depicted as such, but rather put into metaphorical contexts. The suitcase made of bread—more like a briefcase—makes reference to the necessity of accepting travel as part of earning one's daily bread. One is reminded of the guest workers and the current migration movements of people looking for a means of existence.

Peter Anders, born in the Bavarian town of Nördlingen in 1958, lives and works in Berlin. He works with medial reality, the reality of images, the manipulation of images and the manipulation through images. He engages with current political topics, with the circumstances of their reception, with the relationship between picture and caption.

In his series entitled *News* (2006–ongoing), Peter Anders transforms the pictures from an entire newspaper into linear drawings, retaining the original placement of the images so that they overlap and partially merge into unrecognizability. *Türban* (*Headscarf*, 2008) is the title of a series

consisting of 18 drawings from 18 newspapers (including the dailies *Radikal*, *Vatan*, *Sözcü*, and *Milliyet*) that handled the topic of the headscarf controversy in April 2008 in Turkey with pictures. "When the images meet that aren't next to each other in the respective paper, a new way of reading the contents emerges," Peter Anders writes about the effect of his approach. The eye of the observer goes on an explorative journey and observes its own process at the same time: the gaze wanders from the strongly drawn to the weak, from large to small, although everything that is weak and small is received as backdrop. In this way, every constituent image, which is simultaneously a carrier of opinions, is preserved and put into a different relation to others, but is blurred by the overlap of the other pictures. The knot of lines is very difficult to pull apart. A polyphonic picture emerges in which observers are forced to find their own Ariadne thread.

In addition to his drawings, the wax pictures (*Kammerbilder*, 1998–ongoing) represent an emphasis in Peter Anders' work. When Anders subjects newspaper photographs to a treatment with wax, he causes a deceleration. Individual pictures are removed from the flood of images flowing by and made permanent—a method against forgetting.

Curiosity killed the cat (2013–2015), a tableau consisting of eighteen drawings, focuses on the topic of curiosity, the ambivalence of it, initiated by the saying 'curiosity killed the cat.' On the one hand, there are the formulaic drawings, for example a dialogue balloon or a black surface. On the other side, realistic depictions of simple or even complex objects. One drawing shows a camera—the camera of a war photographer—shot through by a bullet. Here shot and counter-shot have been preserved, the simultaneity of action and depiction of action, although the depiction is ultimately prevented by the war.

Both artists pick up on current topics: Mehtap Baydu questions of identity and gender, role clichés, the pressure of expectations and liberation; Peter Anders questions of the mediation of news and its reception, the manipulation through images and the preservation of images of historically significant events from going under in the floods of pictures, simultaneously unmasking imposed pictures of remembrance. Both artists use a wide variety of media and materials. Mehtap Baydu works with photos and videos as well as fabric, food and objects, like clothing and shoes she combines. Performances with the use of one's own body are frequent starting points for further developments. Peter Anders uses various drawing techniques and methods. He reworks and distorts media images, transposing newspaper photos into drawing or preserving them in wax pictures. The pieces on exhibit by Mehtap Baydu and Peter Anders deal with essential topics of our times and move an audience numbed and bombarded by images, towards critical attention and empathy.

First and foremost, particular thanks should be given to both two artists, Mehtap Baydu and Peter Anders as well as René Block. In addition, the two authors, Fiona McGovern and Göksu Kunak also deserve great thanks for their contributions to the catalogue.

Translation from the German by Bradley Schmidt

Lotte Laub, Program Manager at Zilberman Gallery Berlin, obtained her PhD at Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, Freie Universität Berlin with a dissertation entitled *Gestalten durch Verbergen. Ghassan Salhabs melancholischer Blick auf Beirut in Film, Video und Dichtung* (Revealing by Concealing. Ghassan Salhab's Melancholic Glance at Beirut in Film, Video and Poetry), published 2016 at Reichert Verlag. She subsequently received an Honors Postdoc Fellowship for her project on *The Voice in Lebanese Video Art* at the Dahlem Research School, Freie Universität Berlin. In 2010, she received a doctoral scholarship from the Orient-Institut Beirut, Lebanon. Previously, she worked at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin.



Mehtap Baydu
Sonntagsspaziergang, 2017
Fine art print
100 x 140 cm



Mehtap Baydu
Long Neck, 2015
Fine art print
100 x 100 cm



Mehtap Baydu
Cuma, 2010
Fine art print
70 x 50 cm



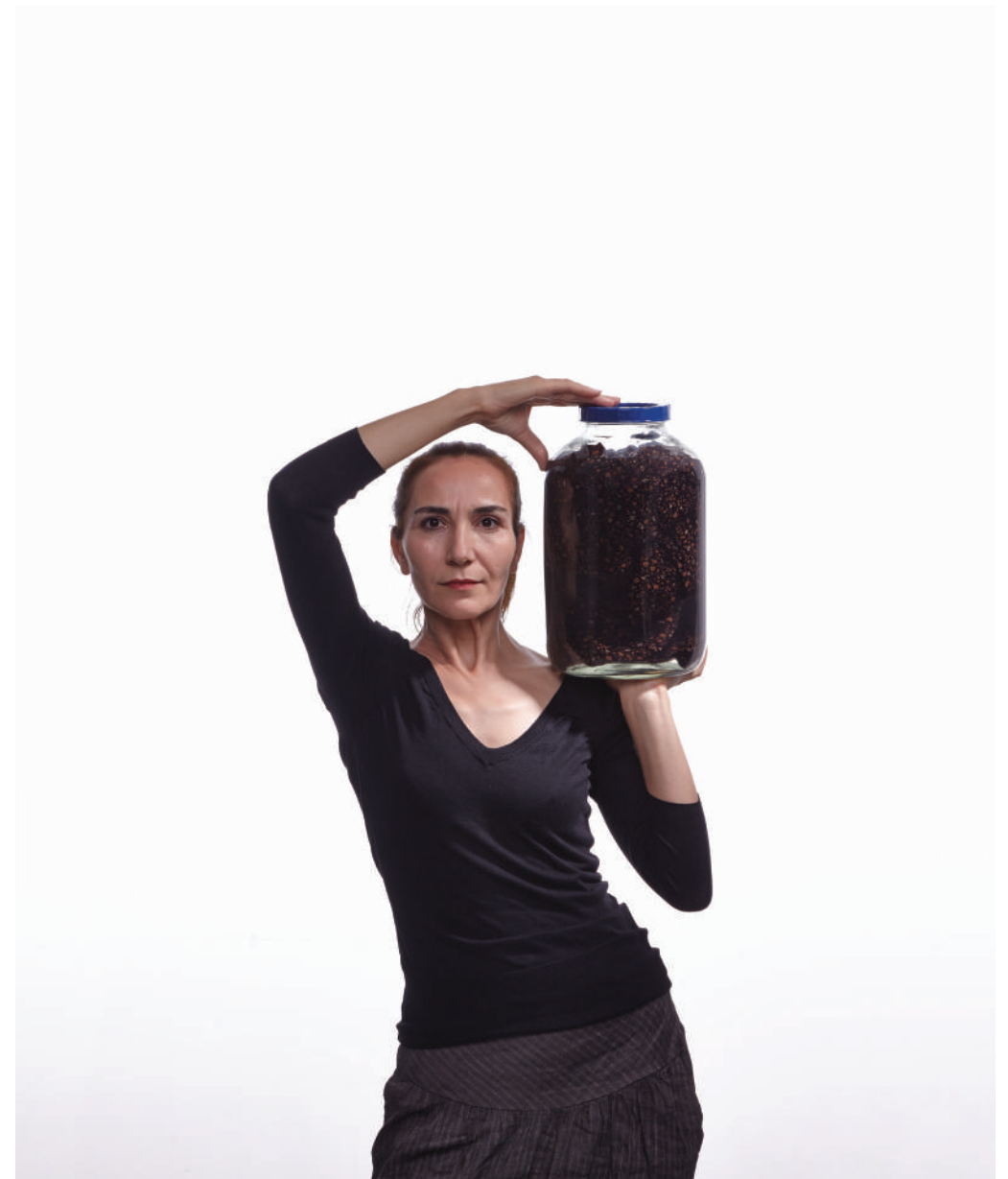
Mehtap Baydu
Brot, 2011
Baked dough, leather
47 x 34 x 16 cm



Mehtap Baydu
Pestil Elbise, 2010
Dried fruit, bell glass
40 x 24 x 24 cm
Courtesy: Private collection Uwe Kroll



Mehtap Baydu
Kıyafet, 2015
Flannel, autographed silk lining and buttons
Size 36



Mehtap Baydu
Biraz tuz, biraz sirke, biraz su /
A little salt, a little vinegar, a little water, 2017
Fine art print
140 x 100 cm

Everything (almost) completely normal | Fiona McGovern

Mehtap Baydu

A woman wearing a men's business suit with a pink flower pattern, along with perfectly paired shoes in an identical design. At the opening, she mingles amongst the guests, examining the pieces on display, does some small talk, drinks a glass of wine. She doesn't create much of an irritation, but does catch the eye. Some guests secretly watch her, others speak to her directly. Is she an extravagant friend of the artist? Is this even a piece of hers?

This, or some similar variation, is how I picture the performance by Mehtap Baydu that she will realize on the opening night of the *Sympathie* show at the Zilberman Gallery in Berlin. In its casualness, this performance is typical for Baydu's artistic approach. Through such works, the artist creates temporary interventions into an existing situation that initially gives the appearance of being completely normal for the respective event. However, the given situation respectively stands for a specific form of public, or put another way: the society in which we live. That is why even the most seemingly harmless moments of irritation, as created by Baydu in *Kıyafet* (costume or getup, 2015), are sufficient to reflect one's own norms and address cultural differences.

The fabric in question has a typical pattern from Anatolia that Baydu—coming from a Kurdish family and born in Bingöl—is personally familiar with. This pattern is exclusively the domain of feminine pieces of clothing, and for that reason would never be sown into a suit in this region. With *Kıyafet* the woman—in this case an actress hired by Baydu—would not only be literally 'wearing the pants,' but also femininely connotated through the fabric. What occurs is no simple swapping of roles, no 'performance' of gender in the bad sense, as Judith Butler would say,¹ but rather an overlaying of facets typically coded as feminine and masculine, tossing overboard a simple binary conception of feminine and masculine.

This is also tied to Baydu's own identity as artist, for what is hardly visible during the performance is very much so in the moment that *Kıyafet* becomes a piece on display: the inner lining of suit and shoes as well as the buttons are emblazoned with the artist's signature. Here her name also serves as the name of the brand she had created for herself. As the saying goes: "It's the clothes people wear."

Men's Shirts and Flower Dresses

Since leaving Turkey several years ago to study once again in Kassel, Baydu has made identity-related questions a central aspect of her work. The geographic distance to her home country as well as the daily experience of another culture made her look back on her culture, gender relations, regional traditions and customs. She often uses an approach full of (word-based) jokes and includes everyday objects, gestures, and materials—just like clothing and certain

¹ Liz Kotz: „The Body You Want. An Interview with Judith Butler,“ in: *Artforum*, November 1992, pp. 82–89, p. 83.

accessories. For Baydu they take the place of transmitters of memory and symbols of cultural as well as familial influence, but simultaneously serving as a way to engage with stereotypes that exist equally in Germany and Turkey.

The suitcase that Baydu baked out of dough (*Brot / Bread*, 2013), for example, corresponds exactly to the dimensions of the suitcase typical for the first generation of Turkish guest workers in Germany. Already by 2009, with *Osman*, she had created a fictitious character that continues to exist, corresponding to precisely this cliché. In a photograph from the year 2010, one can see the artist in classic 'drag': she is sitting on a chair in the middle of a snow-covered landscape, wearing a black suit and a white shirt as well as holding the obligatory prayer beads in her right hand. Whoever wanted to, was able to be photographed with *Osman* and thus symbolically create the social environment that he had been denied so long in Germany. In the context of another project, *Osman* went to the German authorities to be officially registered (*5451 Osman*, 2013). In contrast to the performance initially depicted, Baydu intentionally (re-)produces a stereotype, but simultaneously also reflects upon the procedure, in this or a similar manner, that her fellow countrymen and women had to go through for decades. The same is true for the conditions under which she lived.

Other works aim more generally at the relationship between men and women. The photograph *Sonntagsspaziergang* (*Sunday Stroll*, 2017), for instance, shows a snapshot of a performance that Baydu also staged without previous announcement in Kassel's Aue park. One Sunday afternoon she took a stroll through the park with a clothes rail full of men's shirts she had received previously from friends and acquaintances, walking as self-confidently as others were with their partners or dogs. Within the context of the performance, the shirts become symbolic vehicles for all those men who had accompanied Baydu in some way or another in her life.

In contrast, the performance and video piece *Cocoon-Koza* (2015) offers a somewhat more ambivalent view of the relationship between the sexes. In this piece, Baydu weaves herself entirely naked into a cocoon of men's shirts, which she closes completely in the end. What initially seems like a protective veil makes her disappear fully after a while. Despite all associated anxiety, it is the transformative element that the artist is aiming for in this piece, who slowly crawls out of the cocoon after ~~spending a remaining~~ a while in that position.

Something similar is true for the photograph *Long Neck* (2015) in which one can see the artist wearing countless collars from men's shirts layered over her naked upper body. The work refers to the Padaung women from Myanmar, who live in a traditionally matrilineal culture, and also refers to the heavy, shining brass coils, probably originally used to protect themselves against being stolen and enslaved. However, if the protective jewelry is removed, there is a danger of a broken neck because the muscles are too atrophied to support the weight of the head. When Baydu, who herself comes from a patrilineal culture, now replaces the valuable ornaments with collars, on the one hand she put the focus on the limited nature of the culture, but also the emancipatory potential contained within it.

The early performance *Karakter Bürünmek* (2012) can be understood as a counterpart. Here Baydu pulls over as many as possible of the colorfully designed dresses—previously on clothes hangers throughout the room—only to peel them off with some effort and place them on the floor as a whole. The focus is on this act of liberation—through the performative appropriation of a piece of her fellow countrywomen. The performance is accompanied by short texts on the wall from the women who donated the dresses, communicating a partial impression of their respective life situations.

It becomes somewhat more personal in the pieces in which the focus shifts to Baydu's relationship to her mother. The life-sized bust of herself, *Annesinin Kumaşından* (*From Her Mother's Fabric*, 2015), Baydu put on one of her mother's favorite dresses. As the daughter, she is—as a second interpretation of the title implies—from her mother's 'fabric.' A photograph that was taken somewhat later, *biraz tuz, biraz sirke, biraz su* (*a little salt, a little vinegar, a little water*, 2017), shows the artist with a simple preserving jar as if it was an antique vase. Preserved in the jar using vinegar, water, and salt, is once again one of her mother's dresses. Here it is not worn like a second skin, but rather conserved, and presented proudly in all its ambivalence.

All of the examples described can be seen as an engagement with the confrontation of various cultures that might be very clearly connected to Baydu biographically, but ultimately apply to many women of similar backgrounds. Baydu is able to avoid platitudes in favor of a constantly shifting, always newly reoriented view on genders—also related to generations—among and to each other.

An Invitation to Partake

As already became apparent in the description of the performances above where Baydu wears a suit, the direct interaction with interlocutors forms a second theme in Baydu's work. The most well-known example is her final student performance first presented in 2010 at the Documenta Hall in Kassel and which can be seen as a small model here in this exhibition (*Pestil Elbise / Pestil Dress*, 2010).

In the performance, Baydu wears nothing more than a dress made out of *pestil*, a southern Anatolian confection made out of dried fruit. Like a sculpture sitting on a pedestal, she begins to eat her dress, and gradually people from the audience follow her lead, tearing off pieces or even biting directly into the dress. Some converse casually with the artist all the while. Only after she is as good as denuded does Baydu leave her position and ultimately the room.

The work is reminiscent of Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964), which today is considered one of the incunabulum of early feminist performances. Viewers are encouraged to cut pieces out of Ono's dress with a pair of scissors. However, in contrast to Baydu, this continued until the artist put an end to the performance—usually because they had reached her limit. While in Ono's case the scissors were simultaneously moving with latent aggression and the transgressing of boundaries was also thematised, with Baydu the emphasis is on the intentional implementation of the feminine body as an object of desire, paired with a sensual component. Viewers can voluntarily share the meal with Baydu and simultaneously 'consume' her 'second skin'.²

This act receives a second meaning in light of the fact that parts of a woman's body are frequently associated with Turkish confections. *Dilber Dudağı* (2017) refers to a desert whose name can be translated as 'The Lips of Beautiful Women'. Baydu had six bronze replicas made of the lips of women of various backgrounds. They will be viewed as objects in a display case parallel to the exhibition in the cutlery collection of the Bröhan Museum in Berlin. Before this being put on display there, they will be used on one evening in a performance in which the artist will feed a

² Cf. also Stefan Majetschak: "Ästhetische Kontingenz und künstlerische Form. Überlegungen zu ihrem Verhältnis von Kunstwerken," in: *Konturen des Kunstwerks*, Frédéric Döhl, Daniel Martin Feige, Thomas Hilgers and Fiona McGovern, eds., Munich: Fink, 2013, pp. 17–30, here 17–18.

group of visitors with the corresponding confection. With this, Baydu not only creates a connection between the participants in the sense of *relational aesthetics*, as coined by Bourriaud,³ but also shifts the focus to a specific sexual-sensual experience. The ingestion takes place exclusively through the lips of the 'beautiful women', although the definition of 'beautiful' behooves the artist.

Leap over one's proverbial shadow

For the selection of pieces shown in the framework of this exhibition—and this can surely be generalized—it was important for Baydu that although all of the media and material used are represented, direct overlap of the content of individual works should be avoided. Correspondingly, there are an entire series of photographs, videos, and sculptures that has proceeded directly from a performative work, yet in the end, each one stands alone. Each piece was produced by Baydu using the media and material that appeared most suiting to her, whether bronze, *pestil*, photographic prints, or fabric. Over the past two years Baydu has been increasingly using *washi*, a kind of paper originating in Japan. The delicate sculptures, formed according to real models, seem like miniatures recording particularly poignant or, as Lessing called them, "fruitful" moments.⁴ For example, *Karakter Bürünmek* (2012) records the exact moment the dresses are pulled off in the performance of the same name. The most recent sculpture on display in the Zilberman Gallery, *birdirbir* (2017), shows two feminine figures playing leapfrog. The person giving a back is wearing a skirt and visible high heels. The one jumping over her is wearing a men's business suit with a floral pattern. Both of them were made according to the model offered by the artist. It appears as if Mehtap Baydu is leaping over her own shadow.

Translation from the German by Bradley Schmidt

Fiona McGovern is an art historian, writer, educator, and independent curator. She has frequently contributed to magazines like *Artforum*, *Texte zur Kunst*, and *frieze d/e*, and has taught at various universities and art schools in Germany and Austria. In 2016, she published her first monograph, *Die Kunst zu zeigen. Künstlerische Ausstellungsdisplays bei Joseph Beuys, Martin Kippenberger, Mike Kelley und Manfred Pernice*. The same year she has started the ongoing screening series *Sounding Images* at Kunsthau Acud in Berlin, and co-curated the exhibition *gelbe MUSIK. Works, Notes, and Photographs from the Archive of Ursula Block* at Mathew Gallery Berlin (which then moved to New York in 2017).

³ Nicholas Bourriaud: *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Les Presses Du Reel, 1998.

⁴ Gottfried Ephraim Lessing: *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001, p. 22–23.

Empathie für Anfänger—Empathy for the Beginners | Göksu Kunak

Peter Anders

Disaster architects have been working extensively to re-build the world. Every morning they brush their teeth, have breakfast and put their suits and the normative masculinity on. Ready to sign contracts and shake hands for producing weapons in the so-called undeveloped countries with cheaper currencies and package them back with their stamps to sell it to othered/colonized lands. Well, don't forget to use well-preserved moral words during the press conferences.

Once Democracy Now's Amy Goodman was interviewing journalist Lydia Wilson who conversed with the imprisoned ISIS fighters.¹ Shockingly, they were just teenagers, say, 14-16 years old. The journalist was stressing the fact that these teenagers have no idea about religion, but there is a rage in them as they grew up with drones and bombs. For the so-called terrorist prisoners, the idea of West is not a Proust book or crazy Berlin nightlife; West is the attackers.

In Peter Anders' drawing *Empathie für Anfänger* (2015), there is a run-down street—demolished balconies, concrete razed to the ground. Anders placed scratch marks on the painting, reminiscent of the tactic of prisoners to measure the dates left or passed. The surface of the drawing is about to be filled with such marks. What does each mark represent on the drawing? Is Anders counting the time since the beginning of the first bombing or is it the number of people left in Aleppo, or say, the kids who have died since the beginning? The ironic title, meaning 'empathy for the beginners,' pokes the ones who have been sleeping in their well-prepared white bed sheets.

As Roland Nachtigäller explained in his text "Too true to (just) be beautiful"² on Anders' *Kammerbilder* (1998—ongoing), media images from various newspapers or magazines collected by the artist plays a crucial role in Anders' oeuvre. How and why a certain image presented in a particular way, the politics behind it attracts Anders' attention. Furthermore, Anders deconstructs the given images either by using the wax painting technique³ or by drawing them on top of each other as in the series *News*. For *News*, the artist uses the images from local, national and international newspapers that he collected during his travels in Asia and Europe. The artist imbricates the lines with the precision of construction worker working with a roof material. Such an overlap either decreases the significance of the scene or quite the opposite. For instance, the drawings *Blättchen / Körperblätter (Hair, Box, Porn, Body, 2010)*, that were drawn with the

¹ Lydia Wilson: "What I Discovered from Interviewing Imprisoned Islamic State Fighters", on: *Youtube*, uploaded by Democracy Now!, 17 November 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Dk6RazkxB4>.

² Roland Nachtigäller: "Too true to (just) be beautiful", in: Peter Anders' Official Website, http://www.peteranders.de/texte/nachtigaeller_eng.html, accessed 10 July 2017.

³ Nachtigäller explains Anders' technique very clearly: "Peter Anders dissects these found images in an almost literal sense: By means of a photo-technical hardening which is calculated by the computer the artist decomposes them into up to ten different tonal values which he afterwards separately locks between thin layers of wax. The depths of the pictures are painted on the basis of a plywood board (mostly in acrylic), then the first layer of wax is casted over it and smoothened out with a scraper. Subsequently the next layer of the picture is painted in oil (colored or black and white), then another thin layer of wax follows until finally the brightest tonal values of the picture are covered by the final and polished layer of wax."

same technique of *News*, illustrate images from magazines on boxing, hairdressing, porn and bodybuilding. Despite the incomprehensible lines, each drawing carries the characteristics of the original magazine: for instance, the one with the hair models is, well, hairy! Absurdity grabs the gaze; various genitals or hair types and morphed limbs of bodybuilders, at the end, create a hybrid creature. The lines don't repeat, moreover, there is a phase shift. Therefore, in the drawings *Handshake with Putin* (2017) or *Handshake with Assad* (2017), various overlapped handshakes of politicians intensify the moment, the drawing looks trembling as if an earthquake is happening; almost creating the feeling of agony: what are their diabolical plans?

Amplifying the effect of an image by dealing with its size or repetition is a well-known method that Anders also plays with. In the portrait-diptych *Beauties* (2008) from the series *Kammerbilder* two kids from Gaza look into our eyes with their mutilated and reconstructed faces that were blown up by an explosion. The paintings recall the medical photos of World War I. Anders crops out these tiny photos from a newspaper, and in a way, zooms in to dredge up what was doomed to be left in the other day's news.

The feeling just after a disaster reveals itself in the *Kammerbilder* of Anders. In the wax paintings *Drei, Zwei, Eins...* (2013) or *Kollateral* (2016), we encounter a temporality that pulls us into a robbery in Mallawi Museum in Upper Egypt or the vandal attack to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. It's not anytime after vandalism; it's the exact moment when they've just left. What we have in our hands after Anders' intervention with the technique mentioned above using wax, creates a new time zone rather than what we were supposed to encounter. The layers of the image trapped in the layers of wax generate a time zone that could be a past, now, future, or say, another dimension. In that sense, Anders temporalizes vision, while engaging other senses such as empathy, sadness; shock and fear.

Imagine that you are carrying the empty plates to the kitchen and all of a sudden all fall down. The sound of breaking reverberates; you look at the pieces of plates. Or you are a teenager: with your coolest walk you pass by your peers, and suddenly, you don't see the small stone and... A moment that everyone holds their breaths. Now stretch that moment and imagine the piece on the floor is your city; your teenager pride is your loved one's existence. The collateral damage. The whole region is swiped away. The drawings *Green Zone* (2013) and *Fucking Zone* (2013) point out such inequality. As the U.S. embassy enjoys the pool in the Green Zone, whereas, in the counter vision *Fucking Zone*, the architecture slowly vanishes, red dots recall the bullet holes on the walls—reminiscent of the Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* that disappears slowly from its tail, yet the uncanny grin stays.

Absurdity and Nonsense

Aldous Huxley writes about his first mescaline experience in *The Doors of Perception*. While explaining what usually happens during the trip, Huxley says: "Visual impressions are greatly intensified and the eye recovers some of the perceptual innocence of childhood, when the sensum was not immediately and automatically subordinated to the concept. Interest in space is diminished and interest in time falls almost to zero."⁴ Huxley continues: "what the rest of us see only under the influence of mescaline, the artist is congenitally equipped to see all the time."⁵

⁴ Aldous Huxley: *The Doors of Perception*. 1954, Vintage Classics 2014, p. 12.

⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 18.

Nowadays, when the problematic idea of the (male) artist as the genius has already collapsed, not sure if I agree with Huxley. However, I must admit that in certain series of Anders such absurdity perplexes the viewer.

Curiosity killed the cat (2013–2015) consists of eighteen 63 x 88 cm sized drawings. At first glance, the objects presented have no connection with each other: what would a crochet cloth have to do with a speech bubble; a camera with a bullet hole belonging to a photo-journalist from 1970s; an awkward getaway vehicle with a car tire and a washing machine motor that was supposedly attempted to use escaping East Berlin; the first drone of Germany from 1985; the pattern of the screen of a confessional? Every object directs us to another story about the greediness or curiosity and the scenarios around such emotions. The cloth, an object of domesticity is placed near the camera where the original gaze was almost demolished—splicing material that in the first place has no link. The image of the pattern of a confessional screen—from a distance it looks just like a plain black page—attracts my attention. What appears as ‘the nothingness’ in the first sight, actually, refers to certain connections between religions and drones; the borders and the dichotomy of public-private; whispers and secrets. Like the Tarot cards, each of them has a meaning and (re)writes new stories by being matched with other cards. Despite the lack of a direct link, we would start tripping in front of the drawings and various ideas amalgamate.

Thought bubble n.1

When I was studying art history, our professor was making a comparison between a newspaper and the absurdity of Dada, a space of juxtaposed images of a cow and a half naked female model alongside hand-shaking politicians. From that perspective, what we take into account as the source of knowledge is an absurd and insane format per se.

Thought bubble n.2

Furthermore, the use of the title is crucial to Anders. Besides how the title “Curiosity killed the cat” strongly links the eighteen drawings as one composition, in the aforementioned painting *Drei, Zwei, Eins...*—depicting a museum after a robbery—is taken from the slogan of the company *e-bay*: “321-meins.” In Anders version, *meins*—meaning mine in English—is replaced with an ellipsis. Whose are the objects in a museum, especially after catastrophes? Who claims ownership?

What is it that lies beneath the surface?

The second time I visited Anders in his studio, he asked this appealing question, which made me think about the Humboldthain. Since I have a dog, I’m a regular of the park at Berlin’s Gesundbrunnen. After the World War II, what we know today was just a pile of the remains of war. Throughout the time, nature took over and with some care, it became a place to escape from daily life. However, every time I enter to “green zone,” inevitably, I feel the past. People died, a church demolished under the soil we sit on to enjoy the breeze.

For the series *LIEUX DE MÉMOIRES, 34.000 Jahre Grasnarbe* (2010), Anders asked his friends to bring him snap-shots from the places they went for vacation. The French title reminds the long walks in the nature that Proust talks about in his seven-volume book *In Search of Lost Time*—

the long European bourgeois tradition that Mehtap Baydu also alludes to in the performance *Spaziergang* (2015) that is also a part of the exhibition. Furthermore, with the influence of Dürer’s *The Great Piece of Turf* (1503), Anders inquired a certain capture of wild plants, a composition of vegetation that is rooted in a historically significant site from the zones that carry memories of deprivation. At first, what we encounter is just a turf—no reveal of a particular significance. However, the white numbers on each frame (33, 21, 60 or 34000) give us a hint by referring to the years when the incidents happened—such as where the Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević gave a famous speech or the murder of Siegfried Buback, Georg Wurster und Wolfgang Göbel took place in 1977. Anders got the influence from the anniversary celebrations, especially the ones that the city municipalities organize to attract more tourists. What if we ‘celebrate’ the unknown murders? In that sense, the feeling of an innocent vacation shifts to a Twin Peaks story. On the surface the plants flirt with our gaze, maybe sun light beams on them in such a way that reminds a Renoir painting. But when we begin to contemplate on what lies beneath the surface, we encounter blood and grief.

But meanwhile, Anders’ aforementioned question remained unuttered. Anders pointed out that in Berlin the remnants of war transformed into nature like Humboldthain or Teufelsberg and asked: “What will happen in Aleppo?” I wonder, will “they” allow those lands to breathe, take its own time to recover, and this time, nature to conquer or does such a privilege only belong to the white lands?

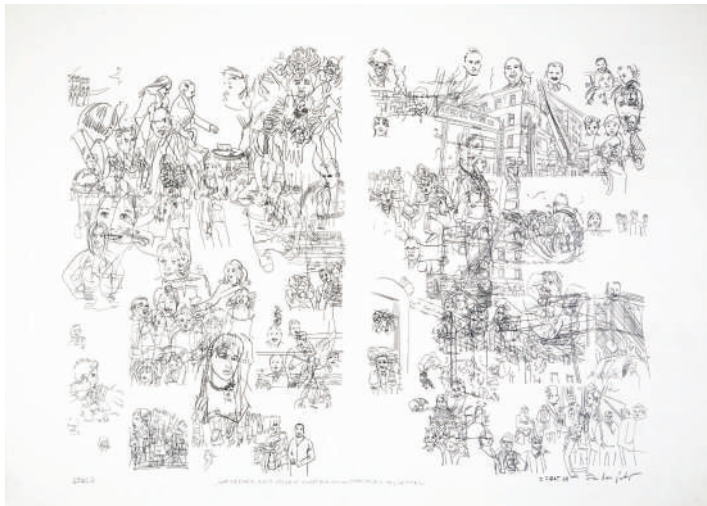
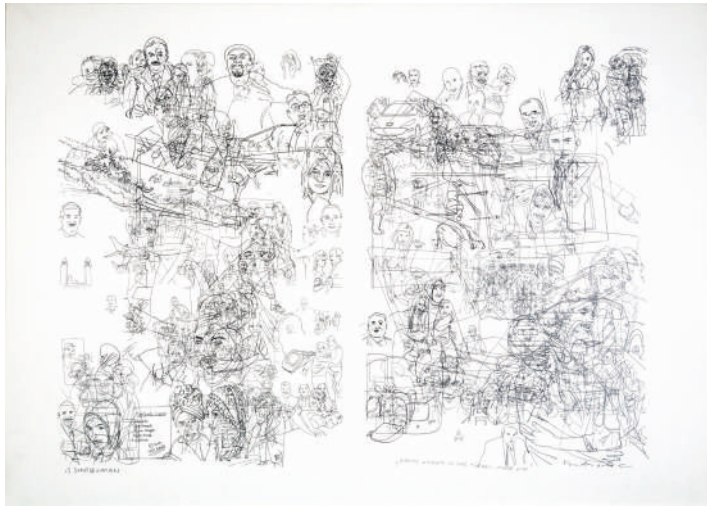
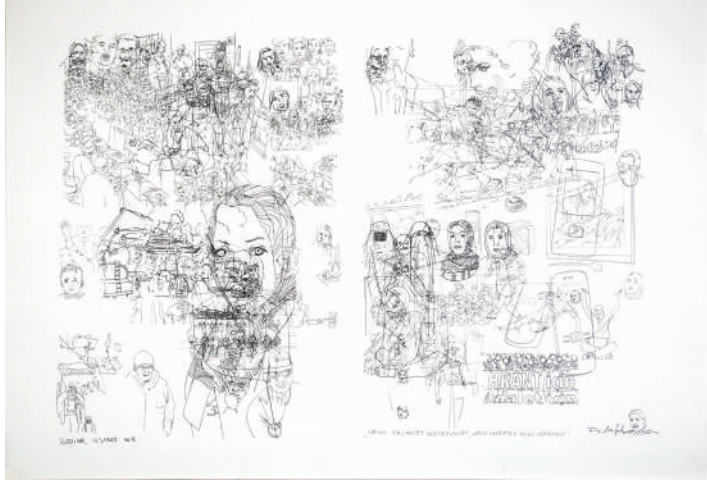
Göksu Kunak is a writer based in Berlin. Besides working as an editorial correspondent for *Ibraaz*, s/he has been writing for several magazines and blogs such as *frieze d/e*, *Berlin Art Link*, *sleek*, *e-skop*, *m-est*, *Paper Journal*, *Freunde von Freunden*. She was in the editorial team of the interview magazine *mono.kultur* (2012-2016) and worked as a writer and project developer of *Apartment Project Berlin* (2012-2014). Besides her lecture performances in *Batard Brussels* or *Kule Berlin*, she was invited to *Stadtsprachen Festival* and *Poesie Festival Berlin* for readings. She also performed as a part of *City Lights – a continuous gathering* at HAU1 Berlin, invited by Meg Stuart and Maria F. Scaroni. Göksu will start her Ph.D. soon on queer chronopolitics in relation to performance art and contemporary dance. Göksu’s flash fiction stories and poems can be read via guccichunk.bertha.me or goksukunak.tumblr.com.



Peter Anders
Curiosity Killed the Cat, 2013–2015
 Pencil and graphite on paper
 Each 63 x 88 cm



Peter Anders
Handshake with Assad, 2017
 Pencil on paper
 88 x 63 cm



Peter Anders
Türban, 2008, from the series News
(2006–ongoing)
Pencil on paper
Each 63 x 88 cm



Peter Anders
Drei, Zwei, Eins..., 2013
Oil and wax on multiplex
66 x 115 cm

Peter Anders, Empathie für Anfänger, 2015

Ink and pencil on paper

85 x 100 cm



MEHTAP BAYDU | curriculum vitæ

Born 1972, Bingöl, Turkey, lives and works in Berlin

Mehtap Baydu studied at the Department of Sculpture of the Hacettepe University and continued her postgraduate studies at the Kassel Fine Arts University graduating from the atelier of Professor Dorothee von Windheim. She was conferred the title of master student (Meisterschülerin), the UPK-Kassel Arts Prize, as well as the Otto Braun scholarship.

Baydu participated in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, a.o. **Kuss** at Bröhan-Museum, Berlin (2017), *This yearning is ours!* at Centre of Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu, Torun, Poland (2016), *Cocoon-Koza* at Galerie Nev, Ankara (2015), *Mythologies*, Mardin Biennial, Turkey (2015), *Silence* at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2014), *The Unanswered Question, Iskele 2 Schwanengesang / Swan Song*, Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin (2013), *A Tale of Shahmaran* at Berlin Art Projects, Berlin (2014), *Turkish Art New And Super B* at Tanas Gallery, Berlin (2012), *Meisterschüler Ausstellung* at Documenta-Halle, Kassel (2011) and *Spaziergang. Die Suppe der Braut Ezo – Ezo Gelin Soup* at Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel (2009).

<http://www.mehtapbaydu.com>

PETER ANDERS | curriculum vitæ

Born 1958, Nördlingen, Germany, lives and works in Berlin

Peter Anders studied Visual Communication and Fine Arts at the School of Art and Design at the University of Kassel and has been a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts and Department of Architecture at the University of Kassel.

Anders participated in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, a.o. *Curiosity killed the cat* at Galerie Coucou, Kassel (2016), *SPACELINER* at Arter, Istanbul (2015), *Lage Normal* at Kunstverein Nördlingen, Nördlingen (2014), *The Spring Exhibition 2011* at Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2011), *Selected by Patrick Huber/Ute Lindner* at Galerie Ebersperger, Berlin (2010), *Schönes Wetter heute, n'est-ce pas, Henning?* at Kunstforeningen 44 Moen, Denmark (2009), *MIX II* at COPYRIGHT Projektraum, Berlin (2008), *EMERGENCY ROOM* at Galerie Olaf Stüber, Berlin (2006), *Love it or leave it* at Cetinje Biennial V, Montenegro (2004), *Daimonion* at Staatliche Museen Kassel (2003) and *Kassel am Meer* at Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel (2001).

<http://www.peteranders.de>

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