

WENTRUP

Nevin Aladağ

Session

Opening reception: 26 April 2013, 6-9pm

Exhibition: 27 April – 08 June 2013

We are pleased to announce the exhibition „Session“ with Nevin Aladağ, which will open on 26 April at Wentrup as part of Gallery Weekend Berlin. The artist will show works in the media sculpture, photography, and film. All works address the social structure of society and the interpreting gaze of the beholder.

“Session”

The six-minute 3-channel video work *Session* was made for the Sharjah Biennial 2013. As a compositional piece, it deals with the interplay of instruments from the Emirates, all of which are made to sound by urban space. We hear dynamic rhythms and sounds of rattles, drums, tambourines, and bells, all of them percussive instruments that were found by the artist in the city. They reflect the countries of origin – like Pakistan, India, Iraq, etc. – of the people living in Sharjah.

Elements of nature like water and sand, as well as urban circumstances make these instruments sound. The film shows different areas of the city: the industrial district, the desert, but also the park of “heritage city” – the small old city centre. In this way, the instruments symbolically traverse different levels and thus also different hierarchies in the city’s social structure. Within the rigorous filmic composition, the instruments come together and then part again, they roll in different directions, are silent, or are made to sound as if by an invisible hand. There is no narration. The city and urban space are the only points of reference and relation for instruments and beholder alike. Just as in a musical jam session, the artist provides in her films a framework for the instruments, and within this frame the individual elements can move freely about.

In *Session*, just as in her earlier films *Raise the Roof* (2007), *Voice Over* (2006) and *City Language* (2009), Nevin Aladağ has created a musical city portrait that shows society in its sociality.

“Paravent / Social Fabric #3”

Pieces of tapestry and carpets from various parts of the world stand in the room as a wall. We see different forms and motifs from Persia or from eastern Azerbaijan. Monochrome segments with triangles and circles are reminiscent of constructivist attempts to negotiate colour, line, and space. Nevin Aladağ combines and arranges figurative carpets with abstraction. The Persian carpet tells a story and makes it literally accessible or indeed walkable. The discourse of constructivist abstraction on the other hand wanted to make art

usable and pull it back into life. Ornaments, cats of prey, birds from the Iranian regions of Tabriz, Nain, and Balochistan with their symbolism (fertility, power, and happiness) are contrasted with monochromatic colour fields; craftsmanship going back hundreds of years encounters the efficiency and perfection of industrial production.

The subject of borders and transgressing borders is here not just addressed in terms of content, but also formally. Aladağ here runs through the various connotations of ‘social fabric’: social spaces are constituted by social fabrics, i.e., the demographic, historical, and cultural segments that constitute the structure of a society. This form of social fabric manifests itself simultaneously in Aladağ’s objects in the very concrete fabric, the individual fibres from which the narratives are spun in every single carpet. All segments of Aladağ’s object have a contemporary origin, even though formal references suggest various temporalities – questions about the concrete conditions of production, globalised trade, and postcolonial perspectives are thus introduced into the work as well.

“Best Friends”

Photographs of good friends – what we notice is how they are connected: body language, a shared smile, an intimate touch. In the photographs Nevin Aladağ took of best friends, the friendship is also underlined by a very similar style in clothes. In line with current fashion trends, but especially outside them, a specific shared dress code emerges that confirms the identity of the friendship, indeed creates it. The styles don’t in any way match one to one, but rather, we see complex processes of imitation that symbolise – whether consciously or unconsciously – an identification with one another. Between the desire for individuality and the yearning for companionship and belonging, the pairs and groups of friends negotiate their own shared identity. This is particularly pronounced with teenagers, but it can be observed with all ages and in all social strata. With her “fieldwork” on individual and collective identity formation, Nevin Aladağ creates a portrait of a city – a documentary on best friends and the signalling power of external attributes. Affection produces (also collective) identity and strength.

Nevin Aladağ was born in Van, Turkey in 1972 and studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and lives and works in Berlin since 2002. She has gained international attention for her installations, video works and performances. Her works have been widely shown internationally, in various solo- and group exhibitions at institutions including Sharjah Biennial, MOT-Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Hayward Gallery, London; The XIV Biennale Internazionale di Scultura, Carrara; The 11th Istanbul Biennial; The 8th Taipei Biennial, Taiwan; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland; Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel; Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt; ARTER Vehbi Koc Foundation Istanbul and Museo Tamayo in Mexico City among others.