

PAST

seeing the black panther

ELMAS DENİZ

9 MAY 2014 - 28 JUNE 2014

Elmas Deniz Solo Exhibition

09.05.2014 - 28.06.2014

Opening: 09.05.2014 - 18:30-20:30

Elmas Deniz, at Pilot with “seeing the black panther”!

Pilot Gallery will be hosting Elmas Deniz’s exhibition titled “seeing the black panther” between May 9th and June 14th. Elmas Deniz is an artist who contemplates global power structures, state control, urbanism, the economy and globalization. The exhibition features videos, drawings, writings, and installations she produced during the Iaspis artist residency program in Stockholm, which will be shown for the first time.

‘Nature’ and ‘the economy’, which are issues the artist has been preoccupied with for a long time, had constituted the foundation of her solo exhibition at Maçka Art Gallery in 2012. The issue of “poverty” that she tackles through the individual is opened up to discussion via the questioning of a more global system of values in this exhibition with a focus on money as an instrument of change and the act of monetary valuation itself. Particularly the commodification of nature and the normalization of this commercializing, and works on humans’ perception and consumption of nature (and even natural beauties) are among the issues explored in the exhibition.

A series of works the artist developed around a five centuries old oak tree in Stockholm constitute the basis of the exhibition. The artist wanting to buy a tree as a symbolic gesture, regardless of her own economic situation, comprises both the starting point of the work and the cipher for her video. Alluding to that which was formerly not for sale and/or inconceivable that could be sold, the work also contemplates buying land and (being able to) buy everything on the land alongside it. Human beings wanting to buy things they love and consider useful reinforces their conception of ownership as the only way as another layer. In this absurd



Elmas Deniz, Seeing the Black Panther, Detail from the installation (Detail from the found object, photographer unknown), 2014

position she puts herself in, the artist questions where nature, wedged between private property and commercial goods, is.

Shaped around the desire to buy a tree, the exhibition consists of videos, writings and drawings. The value system—especially monetary valuation of something—is scrutinized through a series of drawings based on certain parameters the artist speculates. These calculations, which at first glance seem to be logical, in effect remain inadequate in terms of naming the price for nature.

What does it mean to want to buy a tree?

In consumer society along the axis of neo-liberal capitalist habits, perception of nature as a consumable can be shaped not only by purchasing with money, but also through clean air, scenery, or touristic attraction, since now for the urban human being nature encompasses “humanless” spaces. The installation composed of photographs taken in such spaces, both underscores this state of consumerism, and also tackles our callousness to images of nature. The installation pertaining to how dearth and abundance affect value highlights our growing insensitivity to images of nature, just like our insensitivity to war or other images. Trying to buy a tree and banknotes made of trees cannot coalesce in our minds. Elmas Deniz frames banknotes of different dimensions, makes them invisible.

Everything pertaining to the necessity of preserving nature is bound to a paradox. Since the sustainability of the capitalist system depends upon constant growth, the depletion of natural resources also falls within the sphere of consumption with a capitalist approach. The preservation of nature reduced to saving symbols in turn leads to excess of information and the rapidly growing invisibility of images of nature. The image of a small found object—a framed image—depicts a black panther on black background, which also lends its name to the exhibition. This time, the artist uses this found object in her installation as means to render the invisible visible.

The exhibition aims to open up to discussion a values system through the questions of nature, money, and purchasing.

Elmas Deniz (1981), born in İzmir, lives and works in İstanbul. She graduated from Dokuz Eylül University Department of Painting and was one of the founders and co-director of the artists’ initiative K2 between 2004 and 2007. She is currently the editor of the Mental Space supplement of the Sanat Dünyamız journal. In addition to her solo exhibition (2012) at Maçka Art Gallery under her own name, she also realized solo exhibitions titled Para Mevzuu / Money Issues, (with Özgür Demirci, 2012); On Volatility / Despre Volatilitate, (with Pilvi Takala), Galeria Noua, Bucharest (2007); Nothing Can Happen to Us, Altı Aylık Project Space (2006); All About Lies (Apartment Project, 2006). The group exhibitions the artist has participated in include Askıdaki Şarkı / Suspended Song (Co-Pilot, 2013); Unrest of Form (Secession, Vienna, 2013); İstanbullaşmak / Becoming Istanbul (SALT, İstanbul, 2011); Emploi Saisonnier (Galerie de la Friche Belle de Mai, Marseilles, 2010); Floating Volumes (Frise Künstlerhaus, Hamburg, 2010), 5th Gyumri Biennial, The Sea: Dreams and Illusions

(Yerevan, 2006); Normalizasyon 3-Uzaktan Sineęe Benzeyenler / Normalization 3, that from a long way off look like flies... (Platform Garanti GSM, 2005); Plajın Altında: Kaldırım Taşları /Under the Beach: The Pavement (Proje 4L, 2002). The artist has also been awarded the Berlin Goethe Institute Culture Grant in 2007, and been an artist in residence in numerous prominent programs such as Pistoletto Foundation, Italy; Sextant e Plus La Friche Belle de Mai, Marseilles; DIVA Copenhagen; Vassl, Karachi, and Aiwa, Beirut.

All the artworks in the exhibition have been realized with the support of Pilot Gallery and Iaspis Sweden International Artist Exchange Program.