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## After The Equinox-Lulea Summer Biennial, Sweden

This work was a form of ecological protest against air-travel and its pollution. The theme for the biennial was Industry and Nature and the effect industry had upon nature. All artists that were chosen to participate were invited to come and work there. Artists were to go by plane. Maria Sezer

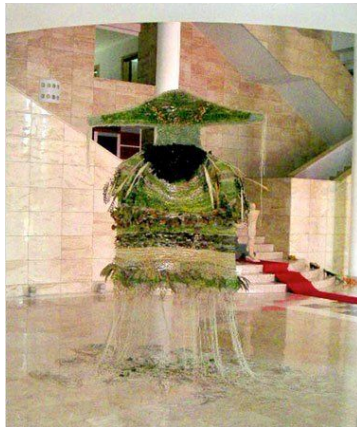
thought it was ironic to harm nature while making an observation about the relation between industry and nature. The timing of the biennial was such that everybody there would be able to experience the mid-summer. A very tempting thing and difficult to refuse but in order to consume less, she knew everybody will have to make sacrifices, she decided not to go and to make a work about that place without having to actually go there.

Nowadays many artists travel very much and the biennials are often a means to get many people to the place of the biennial, one could pose that they have become touristic events and because of the travel, they initiate are polluting. Hence Sezer made a “long-distance” work which she totally did over the internet with a local person, also an artist from Lulea, whom she asked to make daily walks, take photographs of the local vegetation and send them to her. She then asked her to collect material that she chose from the pictures which she felt were representative for the area. According to the plan of the gallery where she was to exhibit she designed a work with these materials. Her local partner made the work according to her plans. Next to the installation there was placed a computer on which all correspondence concerning the project from start to end could be followed. At the end of the exhibition, the materials were to be recycled. Because the event was around mid-summer, she called the work Equinox, referring to another timing of date in nature.

Most radical is Maria Sezer from Turkey, who in her After The Equinox is attacking the whole biennial culture as an expression of overconsumption and useless waste of resources. Sezer, for this reason, refrained from travelling to Lulea and instead she let a local assistant build an installation according to her directions.

It is a thought-provoking piece, which with its low-voiced severity sums up the ideas of the biennial about circulation and responsibility. On the flight home, I sit for a long time thinking about how global art will change when the oil one day will cease. I for one think that it can be quite interesting.

DN. Kultur / 09.08.2005, Dan Jönsson



## Nevin's Robe-ABA, Mersin

Nevin'in Entarisi means Nevin's Robe. Nevin, a girl's name, meaning "new", Entari being an old fashioned word for dress, thus making a connection to nature's donning of a new dress in spring. The work was woven in March. Maria Sezer used fresh plants she found locally, but at the same time, the dress had seedpods of the previous year in it, which are necessary for the continuation of new life. Like this, she tried to attract attention to the parallels between flora and woman as to the aspect of the capacity of the continuation of life. In this work, the geographical aspect also

played an important role by way of the local flora.

## 2004



## 7 Days Troyan-Troyan Art School Gallery, Troyan, Bulgaria

### Me and my Aunt

"When Maria Sezer came to Troyan, she did not know what she would find and what work she would make: It was an adventure for her. Walking around, the first thing that struck her was the vegetation.

Apple trees everywhere! Many of them had their apples laying on the ground, they looked abandoned. The apples had the most wonderful colours, ranging from green, yellow, orange and red. The first works she made were with these trees and apples. The ring of apples under the tree is a (wo-)man-made intervention to attract attention to a phenomenon otherwise unnoticed. The heap of ripe apples under the young apple tree has a more symbolical meaning. The ripe apples at the foot of the tree foretell the future of the apples still on the tree. The stem growing out of these apples points to the past of the tree as a seed. Future, past and present is mixed in this way."

## Stepping Out

The branch-men were made with the idea in mind that there is a promise of life in death. The disintegration of materials also means transformation and hope for new life. The branch-men are stepping out of clay, which itself was once a different material. Like this, the circle is closed. The artist liked the idea that one cannot easily see these branches are actually men. In nature, one can also only see different forms after looking closely.

## 7 days Troyan

While working with the apples she got to know the place more intimately. There was a great variety of organic materials at hand. Sezer collected materials of different colours, shapes and textures. She perceived this collecting as a very female occupation. For ages of time women have kept their families alive by way of collecting food and medicine like this. Her collection was not intended to be food for the body, but rather a food for the soul. With all the collected materials she made up a "landscape" of this Troyan surrounding. Like a painter chooses his colours and shapes, she chose hers. This statement about the surrounding was not a picture of one moment, rather a picture of all times. The work contained dry leaves, green leaves, fruits, seeds, dry branches etc., representing different times in the cycle of their lives. Pointing to the time before and after the time the work existed and to the idea that everything has a different lifespan.



## All Time, Orange Flower-MSGSÜ, Osman Hamdi Saloon, İstanbul

This exhibition consisted of three works, two of which are shown here. The first one was a work about local identity called “All Times”. This work used as material organic matter from the University’s garden, which exists for a long time, but is barely noticed. Often Maria Sezer’s intention is to attract attention to nature around

us that will not be noticed enough to her liking. She strongly believes that love for nature will raise awareness about ecological problems and reduce over-consumption. For this work, she gathered material from all the different trees and shrubs and designed a chain of interlocking circles. Like this, she pointed at the continuity and variety of natural life and its cycle of this garden. The materials were recycled after the exhibition.

The second work was called Orange Flower. It consisted of orange peels which were cut out into shapes of flowers around the “navel” in the peels. After that, they were dried. With these, the shape of a flower was created. The objective was to point at the commercial view we have of oranges; only good for consumption. Whereas the orange has such longer and also attractive life with many more aspects.

## 2003



## Practice Makes Perfect-Aesop’s Friends, Gallery Apel, İstanbul

The writing that accompanied the exhibition:  
In my garden live a number of different frogs. The Warty frog (*Bufo bufo*), the Tree frog (*Hyla arborea* savingy) and the Marsh frog (*Rana ridibunda ridibunda*) are the types I get to see most. These frogs “sing” a deafening song, especially during summer nights.

And if one listens carefully, one can distinguish their separate voices.

One morning early, when I was going around in my garden, I heard excited frog voices from the pond where a lot of *Rana ridibunda ridibunda* live. I quickly went there. Two male frogs were sparring. (I was sure they were males because I saw the little vocal balloons that only the males have).

I started to watch the frogs. They would not let go of each other, they were both attacking each other from a frontal position; face to face and also jumping on top of each other trying to hold on. The one at the bottom was trying to throw off the one on top with sudden movements or managing to escape by diving underwater. They were intimidating each other with their voices too. They seemed to be of the same strength, although the slightly darker one seemed a bit better at "getting on top".

When tired they rested a bit in the position they found themselves in, to continue as soon as they gathered their strength. Their movements were very sportive and elegant but I thought and the whole happening reminded me of the wrestlers at *Kırkpınar*.

My husband came and said; "Oh, they are mating, aren't they?", "No, it must be a territorial fight" I answered. Why would two frogs mate?

But after a while I did not feel so sure anymore, the subject was continuing to prod my mind, what were they doing really?

In order to find out, I decided to contact the Zoology Department of İstanbul University. There I met with Asst. Doc. Dr Cüneyt Kubanç, whom I asked for help. He agreed to see the film I had made of the incident. As soon as the film started he said; "Ahh, yes two *Rana ridibunda ridibunda*, both male". I was delighted, indeed it must have been a territorial fight!. "But," said Mr Cüneyt, "They are also taking up the mating position always means the frog on top must wrap his arms around the belly of the one at the bottom". He also told me a territorial fight is always fought face to face only. At the same time, homosexual (a strange word in this case) behaviour is seen a lot in the animal world. Since the strongest male animal is allowed to mate with all the females, the other males, for lack of better, seek solace with each other.

Then Mr Cüneyt said "Let's have a look at the inside of their thumbs. Frogs have three fingers at their front hands when the male is ready for mating, a small black almond shaped bump appears at the inside of the thumb". We started to look. It was not simple to get a view of the inside of their thumbs but finally, we managed. No black spot! This made us decide no real mating drive was the case.

As a conclusion, I decided that these two frogs were quarrelling and rehearsing. They were two boisterous youths in the process of how to both master a territory and a female. After all "Practice makes perfect"!



## Videoist 2003, Kargart, İstanbul

“Real Time” is an installation with video projection; the classical Dutch flower still-life of the 17th century, where the underlying concept was often ephemerality, was mostly anachronistic; the flowers depicted has actually bloomed at different dates from each other throughout the year.

Maria Sezer’s “Real Time” video-installation was a contemporary still-life that consisted of two parts. One of them was a video film, which depicted blooming flowers in an anachronistic way. The other, a book with dried flowers. That we are confronted with a dualism on the concept of time is apparent. And one wonders, which part of this virtual and which part is real. Like the Dutch flower still-lives, this work is a metaphor for the human condition.



## Families Only, Karşı Sanat Çalışmaları, İstanbul

“Timeless Tide” is a film that laments the premature loss of beloved family members due to war.

Compassion grows out of experienced fear. In order to ward off the threat of such a loss, by writing their names onto the beach of Morto Bay at the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula and watching the names be washed away by the tide, Maria Sezer went through the ritual of imaginary personal loss of men of

different nationalities that died during the Gallipoli war.



## Change-3rd International Terracotta Symposium of Eskişehir

When Maria Sezer participated in this symposium, she made a monument in the Ulu Önder Park, a park in one of the city's residential area. The monument consists of a half circle of higher and lower walls with a semi-circular cylindrical structure placed in the middle.

The walls are slightly leaning outward or inward of the circle. On some of them are silhouettes or parts of silhouettes of people. The silhouettes are made up by plants pressed into the clay of the bricks at the bisque stage. The semi-circular cylindrical structure, which is also leaning to one side, has a sundial on top.

Working with the clay and thinking about the power of earth as a life-giver and life storer too, she started to press natural materials into clay and fire these pieces. Instead of painting clay and motifs from nature onto bodies, clay was made into bricks, which made up parts of terracotta dwellings, either for the living or the dead. When asked to make a work in Eskişehir in 2003, this fitted very well into her state of mind at that time. Working in a different place invited her to make "place-specific" work. Work that dwells on local identity. Looking at the past and present of Eskişehir one finds out about the tradition of brick making and other terracotta factories will be chimneys and rounded oven doors. She decided to combine the passage of time with locality and made a structure which included a sundial. The structure exists of parts of brick structures which have human form outlines made up of natural materials pressed into the bricks. The structure is reminiscent of brick factories' building parts.



## What's Missing-Karşı Sanat Çalışmaları, İstanbul

"Let my last cover be like this"



This installation was made up of shrouds woven from fragile, organic, gradually disintegrating materials. Fragrant materials like lavender and sage were used.

The shrouds had the silhouette of a human being, one amorph and one regular pattern woven into them. The amorph representing organic life, the regular pattern and the weft, the continuity of life.

The installation was made up by hanging two shrouds on opposite walls. Between them, on the ground, was laying a rolled up shroud. On the floor, between the hung up and rolled up shrouds, the ground was covered with organic materials. When walked over these, the crushed material gave off its scent and disintegrates further. Where people walk a path slowly came into existence.

2001



## Voices of the Nation-Karşı Sanat Çalışmaları, İstanbul

For the exhibition called "Yurttan Sesler" (freely translated as "Voices from the Nation"), Maria Sezer covered the walls and the floor of the room with clay. On the walls, she painted silhouettes of people filled in with motifs of nature.

Except for a path, the floor was totally covered with a thick layer of clay. In the clay, there were human bodies, silhouettes outlined by means of a bump-line. Inside these silhouettes, names of the different people that through the ages have lived in Anatolia were written. Even if we can't hear the voices of these people anymore, they are still part of this nation.

2000

## Belonging-Elhamra Gallery, İstanbul

One of the first installations Sezer made. Its name was “Belonging”, or “Ait” in Turkish. After our death, where does our material go? What do we become part of? This was her question for the exhibition called “Local Produce” (in Turkish “Yerli Malı”). For this exhibition she carved one-word sentences in limestone rocks of between ca. 30 to 80 cm length. Each sentence meaning the equivalent of I am your son, grandfather, aunt and so forth. One stone for all the members one can think of as family. An example would be “oğlum”, which means “I am your son”. Although she is not religious, the religious term, “for you are dust, and to dust, you shall return” can easily be read in this work. The stones were arranged in such a way as to make a path through them in the room where they were exhibited. The path intended to symbolize the pathway through life and the inevitability of death.



## From Canvas to Earth-Bodrum Castle

For this exhibition, Maria Sezer has made structures that resemble parts of buildings. These structures might have been used for the living or the dead. The structures are made of familiar-looking clay bricks and look as if, because of age, are partly sinking into the ground and, like that, becoming part of the material they were originally made of again. On the walls of the structures, one can see imprints

resembling fossils of organic materials like seedpods, branches pine needles and flowers. The imprints make up outlines of parts of human bodies that are passively floating through the walls as if decomposing into the clay. Here we find clay, traces of plant and human life fused into one, like the blueprint for life. Made visible is the memory of the past and the promise of future life in clay, the flux of the state materials get in through time. At one time clay, another time plant, another time again human form, here all are pressed into one.

1999



## Nelli Sanat Evi, İstanbul

This exhibition consisted of etchings and an installation sculpture with the subject matter disintegration as a source of new life.



## CRR-Natura Non-Facit Saltus, İstanbul

At first glance, Maria Sezer's series of paintings resemble naturalistic "water landscapes". Upon closer inspection, these paintings reveal more than reproductions of nature. Nature has been observed and was the source of inspiration for this body of work. Elements of nature have been used to create new compositions. While these compositions may not exist as such, we would not be surprised to find them in nature one day; invisible but recognizable.

The artist has continued to use heaps of decomposing matter and rootlike shapes seen in her earlier works. In this series, the heaps and rootlike structures have disintegrated. They fall apart, change shape, regroup, flow, turn upside down to form cloudlike shapes in the water. Perhaps this can be seen as different stages in the process of the metamorphosis of matter.

Heaps, spirals, clusters and newly born have found specific places; water and air. Full organic-like material, the elements float, hang, lurk under and on top of the water's surface and in the air. Do water and air generate organic matter or is it the other way around?

The paintings are built up of many small, mostly horizontal and vertical brushstrokes. The small parts in the paintings are loosely organised to form a balance in new wholes. The horizontal and vertical shapes represent parts of organic matter in every stage of their life-cycle. They decompose (horizontally), grow (vertically) as they turn into another matter. Like the flow of the life-cycle, this is a balanced process that follows certain rules, this flow cannot be changed.

The dualism of change and permanence fascinates Maria Sezer. Nature's change is a slow, continuous, almost imperceptible process. Since the changes occur in a circular repetitive sequence and continually pass over stages of the same point, it is as if nothing actually changes. By focusing on different stages of the changing-process and different stages of organic life, Sezer reminds us of the passing of time. Likewise, she intends to show that everything happens simultaneously and repetitively, that nothing really changes, but only repeats itself.

Since there is no beginning and no end, but only continuation and repetition, Sezer wonders if because of the permanence of change that what we perceive as a dynamic process could be a static state. Does time really flow or is it only an illusion?