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2011



Orient and Occident-1st İzmir Biennial, İzmir

This work was an installation of İzmir raisins on plastic sheeting with the dimensions of 3.2 x 3.2 mt. made for the I. İzmir Biennial.

When thinking of İzmir and its vegetation which had and still has an influence on the local people of İzmir, Maria Sezer thought of grapes.

When passing through the hinterland of İzmir

during summer, one will see seemingly endless fields of grapes lying on plastic sheeting drying in the sun. The grapes obtain different shades of green, yellow and brown colour, according to their state of dry-ness and type of grape.

In the past, the gardens of the rich people trading grapes, were often decorated with geometric and floral designs made with black and white pebbles known as "Rhodes-made". Painted patterns of grapes were surely used as well in order to decorate the walls of their rich houses. The need to surround oneself with beauty and the overlap of using patterns of material by which one earns one's money is fascinating. The sense of beauty and pictorial representation is a consequence of cultural identity and is connected with local factors.

Many of the people trading in agricultural products, of which dried grapes or raisins were a major part, were the so-called Levantines. The word Levantine in French means "settled in the East", but in Turkey is used more often as a designation for people of foreign extraction engaged in trade. The connection of all the different peoples that have for many generations lived and still live together in İzmir can well be seen through grapes. If art can create a collective sensibility, the particular local knowledge of the dependence on the natural surrounding can create awareness of environmental factors along with it, like this maybe fulfilling our need to live in harmony with planet Earth.



Tides, Wind-Interdisciplinary Workshop, Gazimagosa, Cyprus

The island Cyprus has been a strategic point on sea routes, all for humans, animals and plants. Through time, living beings have arrived at the island by the power of wind and water. The work "Tides" consists of two pieces placed in the area around MAGEM, The Magosa Youth Centre.

One of the works is stable and symbolizes waves, the other part symbolizes the wind. Wind is kinetic, its colourful pieces move and tumble when the wind blows or when children move its parts by hand.



Kollarım Yastık, Saçlarım Yorgan Yorgan- Diyarbakır Hapishanesi Ne Yana Düşer?, Karşı Sanat Çalışmaları, İstanbul-Diyarbakır

"Kollarım Yastık, Saçlarım Yorgan", a Turkish saying, means as much as "My arms form a pillow, my hair a blanket". One could experience one's own body as a prison. In Turkey, many

women are belittled and suppressed because of their sex. Not to be seen but constantly serving, being ready to love and give love any moment, fulfilling the role of being a woman always, even believing to be happy like this can possibly be seen as a form of passive resistance.

2010



Kaçak-Hasköy Park, Golden Horn, İstanbul

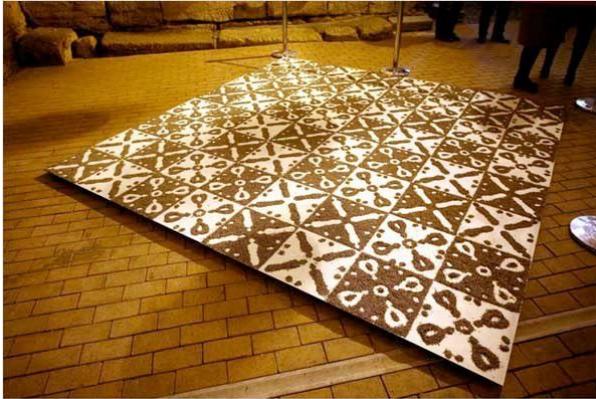
Kaçak is a statue made in the Hasköy Park on the shore of the Golden Horn in İstanbul. Measurements are ca. 4x9 mt width and length and 80cm high.

Sezer was asked to make a project with the riverbed stones that were excavated from the Theodosius Harbor which was found during the

making of the Marmaray Project in İstanbul. The aim was to create public awareness to the people of İstanbul about its archeology and history and donate the city with an artwork. Also to provide a model for the preservation of ancient material and make a connection between these materials and current art.

When visiting the site of the excavations she was able to see some of the shipwrecks and the riverbed stones. The black long parts of the ancient boats and the white, round-shaped pebbles inspired her to make Kaçak. By making a 'broken-up' structure, she wanted to express the dramas that may have taken place in and around that harbour.

The name Kaçak is derived from an infamous wind typical for the Marmara Sea, which has most probably sunken many ships in the Theodosius Harbour. By placing the river stones in a pattern of waves, she pointed at this feared storm.



Ador(n)ation-Maltepe, İstanbul

The need to see the beauty and adorn one's surrounding with beauty is present in man's genes. It is a force which guarantees the continuation of the human species. Almost any form of adornment is derived from nature. This installation called Ador(n)ation (3.20m.x 3.20mt.) consists of a patterned floor made up of dried lavender flowers. The pattern has 2

designs, each of which is used inverted as well. These designs make up new designs because of the way they are put together. One can find floors like this in old houses and this is where the idea of making this work started from. Each of the two designs is based on the drawing of an existing seed. When stylized to use for the pattern, one design looks like the (human) male organ of reproduction and the other reminds of the (human) female organ of reproduction. To have them locked together in a pattern made up of natural materials mirrors man's relation to nature.

2009

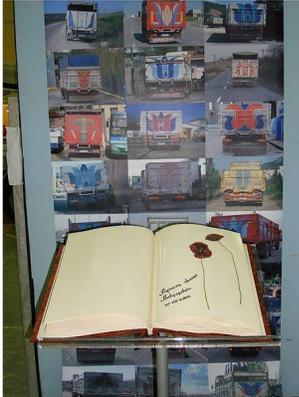


Awaiting-Gallery Apel, İstanbul

In the exhibition Awaiting, Sezer drew a parallel to the beauty of women's hair and colors and shapes found in nature like the branches of a tree or the colours of petals of flowers. The branches of the helix willow looked like curly hair to her. In the fairy tale, Rapunzel had thrown her hair down in order to let her lover climb up to the place where she was locked away from him. The artist made a ladder from the curly willow branches to express the need for beauty in order for the survival of the species. Maria Sezer keeps bees and when she observed how pollination takes place by means of attraction through smell and colour she became convinced that beauty is a necessity for survival. The Works were all inspired on beauty

in nature as a need for the survival of all species.

2008



Kartal-Terkos 2002-2008, TÜYAP Art Fair, İstanbul

Kartal-Terkos 2002-2008 is a work made over 6 years. It is a comment on the very rapid expansion of the city of Istanbul and the consequent loss of wild nature where ever the expansion takes place.

The work consists of a book and a strip with photographs. The strip of photographs is those of tulips painted on the back of trucks that the artist saw and photographed on the Kartal-Terkos road between 2002

and 2008.

The book contains real dried flowers with information on their finding dates and places with their Latin names written next to them. These flowers were found next to the roads between Kartal and Terkos over which the artist drove regularly. By now, most of the real flowers have disappeared and only the painted tulips on the back of trucks are to be found.



What's In A Name?-The French Cultural Centre, İstanbul

Salix caprea

This work dwells on the spiritual and material importance for man of the tree (nature in general) by carving a physical aide from it, as well as pointing to its beauty and the different guises which the materials of the tree pass through as a road to spiritual health. It also reminds us of the different timespans of its different materials. The change of material from one form to another means a change of task at a

different time in their lifespan and can be seen as a parallel to the changes in the human body. Branches are walking aids. Catkins are food for the bees and food for our soul and later will become earth, the tree is a willow, but what's in a name?

The work is made up of three parts: One is a soundless, continuously looped video film projected on the wall, of the willow tree when it is flowering with catkins and swaying in the wind as if breathing. Each year it is the earliest tree that flowers and is an early announcer of spring, the yellow of the flowers remind one of the sun and lifts our spirits. Bees also have their first chance in the season of collecting pollen from this tree when there is no other pollen around yet and their queen will start to produce brood, a clear sign that nature is awakening.

The second part is three Giant "walking/leaning sticks", partly carved out from branches of this very tree, just after the saps of the tree have risen. They are another aspect of the tree. These sticks are needed to man in order to find his way. A symbol for how we need nature to guide us and lean on when journeying through life. Their big seize signifies the importance of this aide. The sticks are leaning to the wall in front of the projection.

The third part of the installation are dried catkins strewn onto the floor at the bottom of the film and under the "walking/leaning sticks", these resemble earth and dust and symbolize the cycle of life. Like this also pointing to the different life spans of the several parts of the tree.



Kitab-ı Zokak-Gallery Kent, İstanbul, Turkey / Vienna,Austria

The making of the Kitab-ı Zokak (Ottoman for the book about the zokak) followed the making of a work called Zokak Maria Sezer made in 2008. Zokak is the name given for the tent-wall that the Ottoman armies erected around their tent-city while on the campaign, doing so in order to hide their activities from anyone who would

be interested to see what they were undertaking.

For this reason, the book is made in the Leporello shape; like that it can be stood up and exhibited in a spiral-form or in any other form for that matter.

The material of the original Ottoman zokak was decorated in the applique manner and embroidered in a colourful way, with motives in the Ottoman (Islamic) traditional art form that consisted mainly of stylized plants. For the artist, the zokak symbolizes everything that is connected to the creating of distance between people. At the time of the making of the artwork Zokak, in Turkey, there was an intensive discussion on the women's right to cover their head. On the other hand, for people of many nationalities, it is almost impossible to travel or to enter

into a European country. Walls that run through all around cities still exist in our world. Hence there is a connection with the zokak which represents everything or everyone that possibly should not be seen or kept at a distance and therefore should be separated.

This book has pictures that mostly talk about the separating of (young) women from society. There are pictures of physical barriers, of which we are very aware like water, walls, bars, wild animals (snakes and lions), headscarves, keys and buttons that do not give us access to that what we desire or would like to see like hair, breasts and vulvas, of which there are also pictures in this book.

On the other hand, there are also pictures that represent the sub-conscious, that through the use of admiration of spiritual or creative power of the main character, create a more psychological distance. The power of these persons is indeed mostly more mystical than physical. The female characters are chosen from and inspired by myths, fairy-tales and stories, secular as well as religious ones, many of them have taken place in Anatolia and are thousands of years old. One thinks of Daphne, Saint Thecla, Shahmaran, Rapunzel and Hathor. In many of these stories, women can alter their appearance (becoming half-human/half-plant or animal), tame wild animals, keep the fire in their hands, seduce men and bring an end life. The Kitabı Zokak is a visual memory to the often more, sometimes less but never-ending schism between men and women.



Broom Streams-Su=Pırılı! / Water=Bright!, The Dutch Pavillion, The 3rd International Contemporary Art Festival Cappadocia, Nevşehir

This installation was made for the Dutch pavilion at the III. MustafaPaşa Contemporary Art Festival in Cappadocia. The theme of the exhibition was WATER=BRIGHT. The installation was made of branches of the Broom-bush and blue pigment. It used the wavelike shapes the broom has naturally. These waves hint both at

the past when the broom was alive and the future when these woods will disintegrate. In the past, during their lives the broom kept water in its body, after dying the wood will disintegrate and finally become part of the water of the world again.

2007



Trade Winds, Orange Blossom-Cyprus International Interdisciplinary Art Workshop, Cyprus

For the workshop at Lefkoşa, Maria Sezer made 2 works. Both were exhibited in the Haydar Paşa Gallery. Each of the works reaches back to a time when the building was used as either a church or as a mosque.

“Trade-winds” was the second work Maria Sezer was inspired to make when she saw the “mihrab” in the Haydar Paşa Gallery.

For this installation, the artist reproduced the mihrab, which is a left-over from the time that the building was converted to be used as a mosque. The mihrab has the shape of an arrow and the artist laid this shape on the floor of the gallery, in the exact opposite direction to the mihrab, connected to it. Two connected arrows, each pointing in opposite directions symbolizing the coming and going of the trade ships, carrying produce from the island, an important one of them being oranges.

The mihrab was drawn with pieces of dried orange peels, symbolizing the cargo of the ships, orange pigment, which can be interpreted as the sun or possibly a big orange and blue pigment, symbolizing the sea and the journeys made over it.

In this way indicating the importance of the directions of the winds for the ancient sailors and the rising and setting of the sun for the growing of the rich produce. The rich produce of the island, in this case, the oranges, and its position in the Mediterranean Sea, secured trade and connections between cultures.

“Orange Blossom” was a ca. 2,50 mt. wide orange tree flower laid down on the floor of the former St. Catherine’s Church under its apse. In many Gothic churches, big round windows called “rose-windows” are found above the entrance door, often they are made up of stained glass. Here the rose-window was an ‘orange-window and laid out on the floor.

Since Cyprus is an island which has abundant orange trees the artist wanted to make a connection with one of the island's more important parts of the vegetation which has shaped much of the island's culture.

The big orange blossom on the floor was made up of many small orange blossoms cut out of orange peels. 150 kg of oranges were cut, pressed for juice with the juice handed out to anyone who passed by, cleaned of the fruit's flesh, each one separately cut by hand into a flower shaped like Orange blossom and then dried. Like this, Maria Sezer intended to pay homage to the orange by bringing back the flower as it was before it came to be a fruit, intending to connect past, present and future both in an organic but also in a cultural way.



Overloed / Abundance-Het Kruithuis, Den Bosch, Holland

With my Great-Uncle in the Attic

The exhibition 'Overloed' (Abundance) took place in an ancient armoury in Den Bosch / Holland. The top floor of the building was built of Oakwood. The attic actually looked like a wood that had lost its small branches and its leaves. Often we forget which materials our buildings are made from and in this case Maria Sezer wanted to point out this by recreating the wood these trees had come from. With red clay, she finger-painted oakleaves and acorns on the grey, wooden floor. The exhibition took place in the autumn and while she was working she heard acorns that dropped onto the roof out of the oak trees surrounding the armoury. The work thus mixed up the passing of time and the cycle of life.



Visible result within 7 days

The work 'Visible result guaranteed in 7 days' was made by Sezer as a comment on consumer society and the constant pressure by means of advertisement directed at women in order to stay young and beautiful forever. By cutting orange flowers out of the peel of oranges with the navel of the peel as the hart of the flower and laying them onto the floor into a pattern of flowers, Sezer used

the passing of time and the natural change of material over time as a subject. Sezer collected orange peels and cut flowers of them for 2 years, so some of the cut-out peels started to disintegrate and become earth again. Like that the cycle was almost closed!



What's The Time?-TÜYAP, İstanbul

What's the time? is a work on the irrelevance of time. It consists of two weavings of organic, relevantly quickly disintegrating materials, suggesting shifting layers of earth, dating from different periods, which are momentarily visible. The weavings are exhibited in a slanted way and juxtaposed in relation to each other as to give a feeling of movement of cut-out hill which exposed its layers of earth.



1969-Işık University, İstanbul

The work called 1969 is an ecology-minded work. Maria Sezer wove the shape of the three places on the earth that we are used to as having perpetual snow: Greenland, The North Pole and Antarctica. She took their shapes from an atlas of 1969, hence the name. At that time mankind was not as aware of the world heating up as we are present. Sezer wove the shapes of these places with organic materials and made them hang in the sky like clouds. The warp hanging down as if they were

raining empty. The fact that these places are warming up and losing their perpetual snow is of major concern for ecologists and she often imagines the rain we have here may come from evaporated water from one or all of these places.



Timeless Tide-44th International Troia Festival, Çanakkale

Timeless Tide, an anti-war manifesto, is a video film that was made when the Iraq war was threatening. Originally it was shown in combination with the names of the fallen in the Gallipoli war. For this exhibition, the film is used together with names of the fallen both of the Gallipoli war and names of civilians that died

during the Iraq war, for by then, that war was a fact. Each perished person is written down in relation to a family member such as Yasser, my uncle, father, husband and so forth.

2006



Balance, Gölyazı, Bursa

Balance is a mobile statue made the shore of the Uluabat Lake. The sculpture is made from scrap metal found in the village of Gölyazı situated on the shore of this lake. The statue was made during the artist's residency program for the social transformation of this village, organised and coordinated by artist Gül Ilgaz.

The statue is a comment on the ecological difficulties the lake experiences because of overfishing and overuse of its water for the benefit of agriculture.

Balance hangs at 4 mt. high, is ca. 3 mt. long and 90 cm. wide and made of metal but light enough to be moved by the wind so it can “swim” in the air. The blue and red colours point to the fishseller's display-trays that are always painted in those colours to remind one of the commercial roles of the fish of this lake.



Tenses Of The Tulip-Darphane-i Amire, İstanbul

For the exhibition Senses of the Tulip, Maria Sezer made three works.

the visual decoration is used in order to share a common cultural identity. The ironic thing is that the trucks which destroy so much of nature have their back panels decorated with something that is getting lost along the roads. Whereas 10-15 years

ago one could still find a wide variety of wild flowers along the road, including the wild Tulip, nowadays one can often find the favourite Tulip just painted on the back of many trucks and see

no real flowers anymore. The pride of the driver of his truck shows by the care taken to decorate the truck with such an unlikely symbol of beauty for a truck. Is it a decoy to attract the evil eye? Because many of the trucks have writings like "Kıskanan Çatlasın" under their flower decorations, meaning as much as "Let the jealous one burst".

The installation called " These are not Tulips" was a pun on the painting "This is not a pipe" by Magritte. The municipality of Istanbul had promised to donate a load of Tulip bulbs in order to make the installation. At the last moment, this was not realized. Maria Sezer decided to use onions for the installation instead, hence the name. A pleasant surprise was that the onions started sprouting in the dark and damp room where they were laid out during the exhibition. Like this, it became process art!

The expectation was an installation that consisted of real tulip bulbs laid out in the form of a tulip drawing on a velvet cloth suggesting wealth and luxury. In the 17th century Holland the tulip bulb was an object of desire and wealth. The work related to the difference of what we see in reality and what we see in our imagination because of our strong longing for beauty or pleasure.