

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan

Destroy your house, build up a boat, save life!, 2014-2015

"Destroy your house, build up a boat, save life" is a quotation taken from the "Story of the Flood" found on "The Epic of Atrahasis," a Babylonian cuneiform tablet. According to the inscription, the God Enlil (ruler of earth) plans to destroy humans by sending a devastating flood. Yet the God Enki (ruler of water) sends warning of this impending catastrophe to Atrahasis (a mortal) and instructs him to build a boat in order to protect and save life from the rising waters.

The description of this imaginary boat, also known as "Noah's Ark," becomes an instrument for Hera Büyüktaşçıyan to connect land and sea, life and death, loss and perseverance, past and future, known and unknown. The boat also acts as a metaphor for the rescue and preservation of belongings, as well as fragments of memory, that are gathered up and taken from one context to another in the event of traumatic upheaval, exile, deportation and other forms of societal breakdown.

When Enki asks Atrahasis to pack up his life, Atrahasis does not know where the journey and his boat will end up, so he sails towards the unknown. Büyüktaşçıyan nods to this uncertain future by appropriating a ceiling painting originally made for the domestic dwellings of the Siniossoglou Apartment (now SALT Beyoğlu). Her recent work *Docks* leads into this suggestive landscape, which is collated across rolled carpets, which refer to the act of packing up and to the suggestion that with only a carpet one can lay the foundations for a home. The local area, then known commonly as Pera, was witness to a massive forced exodus of minority populations in the mid-20th century. The sudden departure of the original dwellers of the Siniossoglou Apartment, which occurred around the mid-1950s, adds another layer of narrative to the list of ruptures evoked by Büyüktaşçıyan's installation. All traces of this traumatic period have disappeared from the building, but the impact can still be imagined by contemplating the trajectory of our current timeline and the uncertainty of our shared future.

Büyüktaşçıyan undertook research for this project while on residency at the Delfina Foundation in 2014.

Chto Delat?

The Excluded. In a Moment of Danger, 2014

57'31", four channel film-performance installation

Chto Delat?'s film-performance installation attempts to seek out a new language, adequate at least in part, to help express the current climate of politics and of life in general. The artist collective state that "we now stand on the threshold of a senseless and despicable war; what remains of public space is disappearing before our eyes; and we have no levers of political influence. The Russian government brazenly declares a state of emergency, and society answers with full support. Meanwhile there are practically no forces capable of even reflecting upon this danger, let alone resisting it. The situation recalls a nightmare in which one's habitual reality begins unraveling at the seams. What we thought impossible yesterday is met with enthusiasm today. What kind of art is possible now? Or is it altogether impossible?"

The initial inspiration for the film was the fate of Ippolit Myshkin, a militant Russian *narodnik* and tragic figure of the Russian Revolution. Although his undertakings invariably ended in failure, the speeches he made while on trial changed the consciousness of Russian society. Myshkin is an ideal Unlucky Hero, and his image is extraordinarily relevant today, when all of us, whatever our personal successes or joys of self-realization, feel like failures.

Chto Delat? invited friends and students to participate in the making of the work and asked them to describe how they could function in a collective situation today. Not to suggest that collectivity is necessary in order to be strong, but to accept that now it is necessary simply in order to maintain one's sanity.

The film was realized in collaboration with graduates of the Chto Delat School of Engaged Art.

Film concept, set and edit: Chto Delat? [What is to be done?]

Vilensky Dmitry & Tsaplya Olga Egorova

Directed by: Tsaplya Olga Egorov

Shilpa Gupta

Untitled, 2013-2014

Locally known as *chhitmahal*,* where *chhit* means a fragment—that which is part of a whole, but not integrated into it—the enclaves are pockets of India within Bangladesh, and pockets of Bangladesh within India. During interviews with the artist, enclave/*chhit*-dwellers retell how their predicament is the result of their highly fertile lands becoming pawns in a chess game between the neighboring rulers of the princely states of Cooch Behar and Rangpur, where the former integrated into India and the latter into Bangladesh. Historians, on the other hand, say that the reason for the creation of the enclaves was more likely a case of feudal state systems that prevailed pre-partition.

Intercepting interviews, photographs, and historical records with incisions and markings, as well as drawings made from a prohibited cough syrup, and phantasmic engravings on a stone post, the artist deals with the sense of ambiguity, perpetual statelessness, and entrapment experienced by the individuals who live in the enclaves, upon the formation of national boundaries.

For those who live in one country surrounded by another country, walking in a straight line over a few kilometers, or sometimes even a few hundred meters, over invisible borders in any direction makes them illegal. The absence of any identity card (the fate of those born in the enclaves) means the denial of basic civic rights and services, making subterfuge a way of life in the enclaves, as it is for many others, who live on the edge of nationally determined borders.

* There are 111 Indian *chhitmahals* and 51 Bangladeshi *chhitmahals*. There have been several contradictory population estimates, of which the latest is 51,000.

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Courtesy the artist and Gallery Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai

Kapwani Kiwanga

...rumours Maji was a lie, 2014

...rumours Maji was a lie is based on accounts of the largest uprising on the African continent during the Maji Maji War of 1905 - 1907. During this period several tribes living in German-occupied East Africa revolted against the colonial forces. Possessed by the spirit Hongo, the revolt was initiated by spiritual medium Kinjeketile, who galvanized the insurgents by distributing sacred *maji* (water in Swahili), a combination of water, castor oil and millet seeds, which he claimed would transform the German's bullets into water.

Kapwani Kiwanga's response to these events focuses on the voids present in living memory of the Maji Maji War and the way material traces have fed into a series of shared mythologies that now help to contextualise it. The installation opens with a video of reworked extracts from the first feature length 3D color film based on the Tsavo man-eaters — legendary lions which entered local legend for their attacks on people during the construction of a colonial railway.

A pillar of shelving anchors this film along with a compendium of objects and references that revolve around notions of belief and explore how history is extrapolated and mediated over time. Included are inter-related items such as: Kanga, an adaptable fabric used in East Africa; a road map of Tanzania; a castor oil plant; a poster of Julius Nyerere, first president of Tanzania (1961-1985); and slides of fossil drawings found during the Tendenguru expedition (1909-1911).

This work was first presented at Jeu de Paume, Paris as part of the seventh Satellite Program curated by Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez.

Maha Maamoun

Like Milking a Stone

Like Milking a Stone is an installation of three video works by Maha Maamoun that interrogate participation in and results of an activity she has termed "domestic tourism." The first work opens with a study into the revisiting and rewriting of history and its icons to serve upon the present's changing needs and ambitions.

Domestic Tourism II (2009) is composed from a broad selection of scenes from Egyptian cinema, spanning a period of around 60 years, in which the pyramids appear as a backdrop. The film looks at the various ways the pyramids have been reappropriated from the timelessness of the touristic postcard, and re-inscribed into the complex and dynamic narratives of the city they bear witness to.

2026 (2010) considers the pyramids' setting sixteen years into the future. Based on a passage from the Egyptian novel *The Revolution of 2053: The Beginning* by Mahmoud Uthman, and referencing a scene from Chris Marker's iconic 1962 film *La Jetée*, *2026* presents a vision of the pyramids' plateau, and by extension of Egypt in the year 2026. Like the character in *La Jetée*, the protagonist of *2026* has the ability to mentally travel backward and forward through time. What he recounts is a dystopian environment that speaks more of the present's real and imaginative constraints than of a feasible future.

The third video installation, *Night Visitor: The Night of Counting the Years* (2011) revisits footage recorded and uploaded on YouTube by the many men and women who broke into Egyptian State Security buildings on March 5, 2011. This site, of what it was hoped would be past injustices, stands bare for a brief moment before the searching eyes of those it has afflicted and continues to affect.

Domestic Tourism II, 61'

2026, 9'

Night Visitor: The Night of Counting the Years, 8'30"

Jumana Manna & Sille Storihle

The Goodness Regime, 2013

21'

The Goodness Regime is a film written and directed collaboratively by artists Jumana Manna and Sille Storihle. With the help of a cast of children, the film investigates the foundations of the ideology and self-image of modern Norway – from the Crusades, via the adventures of Fridtjof Nansen and the trauma of wartime occupation, to the diplomatic theater of the Oslo Peace Accords.

Shot in Norway and Palestine, the film combines the children's performances with archive sound recordings (including US President Bill Clinton speaking at the signing of the Oslo Accords, and Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik's New Year address to the Norwegian people in 2000) and new documentary footage filmed on location.

In the course of their research, Manna and Storihle interviewed Ron Pundak, one of the Israeli architects of the Oslo back-channel talks, and Hanan Ashrawi, the former Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) spokeswoman; the film premiered at Kunsthall Oslo exactly twenty years after the conclusion and signing of the Oslo Agreement by Israel and the PLO in August and September 1993.

Yasemin Özcan

threehundredone, 2008

3'30"

Among other regulations, Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which took effect in 2005 with moderate amendments since, makes it a crime to insult the Turkish Nation or Government Institutions. The article restricts freedom of thought and expression and has been applied frequently with several high profile court cases of note. These include the prosecution of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink in 2007 who was subsequently assassinated.

Yasemin Özcan responded to this tragic event by producing a necklace, adorned with the numbers 301, crafted at one of the jewelry ateliers at the Grand Bazaar. This paradoxical statement, of creating a symbol of beauty, value and durability from within one of the historical commercial centers of Istanbul, amplifies her tone of dispute with Article 301. The accompanying video work expands upon her perspective to contemplate notions of justice and freedom in their broadest sense. Özcan specifically worked with Armenian craftsmen to form the necklace. The male-dominated dynamic of its production contrasts with the female model's role as a canvas to advertise the pendant's beauty.

The video is tightly composed, exposing the bare minimum of visual references, sharing on the left screen scenes of the production process and on the right hinting at the speed of commodification and normalization in today's society. Within these sequences the necklace makes a striking, yet contentious statement — one that carries with it not only questions that persist until today regarding Article 301 and its impact, but also our relationship to issues of freedom of expression in general.

Director of photography: Ebru Karaca

Editing: Yasemin Özcan, Ebru Karaca

Hair and make up: Erol Tinmaz, Paşa Tinmaz

Necklace production: Yetvart Tomasyan

Prototype: Aret Boğosyan

Craftsman: Arslan Demirel

Casting: Kevork Yanyan

Setting: Şahin Mıhlama

Cast: Mürüvvet Kurt, Ersoy Alap, Mustafa Özmen, Seyhan Kaya, Birol Akbaba

Thanks to DOT, Cem Yurtsever, Lara Sayılğan, Melis Ağazat, Miran Kından, Nathalie Ozin, Vartkes Daldal

Didem Pekün

Of dice and men, 2011 ongoing

29'

A throw of the dice acts as a metaphor through which to think of individual existence, where the patterns of everyday life are indeterminable. The action also affirms a sense of urgency and an awareness of how history is a perpetual repetition but with paradoxical variations.

Working with the fluctuating rhythms of everyday life *Of dice and men* traces an essayistic video diary punctuated by significant moments — some of purely subjective consequence and others which became markers in shared and mediated history. The work presented here is a selection of 26 of these video entries. It includes footage of the Occupy movements that began in London in 2011 and Istanbul's Gezi protests in 2013. Such major disturbances of daily existence are interlaced with more joyful and elusive experiences such as boys diving into the Bosphorus and a first encounter with a feat of nature.

Presented in dialogue, Didem Pekün's records are mainly sourced from London and Istanbul, two cities with very different neoliberal conditions, which her life straddles, and at the same time is constantly torn between. Acutely aware of the political dynamics and pressures that surround her, Pekün captures moments of rupture in day-to-day life and highlights the nature of violent occurrences in both contexts. Through its cyclical composition, Pekün's video diary deftly expresses the repetition and unceasing flow of history. Furthermore, Pekün's approach to subjectivity in her visual essay resonates with the wider society within which we find ourselves.

Her location at the time of each diary entry provokes very different verbal reactions and often amplifies the trauma of not being present at definitive moments, reinstating the way that history too easily accumulates with or without us.

Digital compositing: Barış Doğrusöz

Sound design and mix: Fatih Rağbet

Music:

All of them are memories since now

Written, performed and produced by Reverie Falls On All,
Nihan Devocioğlu (mezzo-soprano), Eri Hidaka (soprano)

Les jeux sont faits

Composed, recorded and mixed by Tommaso Perego,
Eloisa Manera (violin), Tommaso Perego (Max MSP)

With the support of Tony Dowmunt & Nicole Wolf at Goldsmiths,
Metin Bozkurt for sound installation, and Delfina Foundation.

Judith Raum

eser, 2014-2015

Inspired by infrastructural and agricultural projects mentioned in old letters dug out from the Historical Archive of Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, Judith Raum made several trips across Anatolia from 2010-2012 to look for traces of the diverse activities undertaken by German businessmen before World War One. Her inquiry deals with the involvement of Deutsche Bank and the policies of the German Reich in the semi-colonialist opening up of Anatolia during that period. Hidden underneath those rather "official" narratives she looked for stories of alternative economics and local resistance to modernization, stories of a kind that tend to rarely reach the surface level of documentation and publication.

Raum developed this research through diverse ways of dealing artistically with archival material. Along with found photographs and documents, *eser* comprises textiles, sculptures and paintings produced following observations made on location in Turkey. In this space, these components are composed around four strands of interest: the conditions and the effects of German railway construction on the local environment; German engagement in cotton production in Anatolia and the existing trade connections between the Ottoman and German Empires; German efforts to modernize Anatolian agriculture and the introduction of machinery and skills to a local context; and lastly the working conditions and the role the Railway workers' Union played in an arising socialist movement in the Ottoman Empire and the workers' strike of 1908. In working with historical material that dates back to the first German engagement in Anatolia in 1889, Raum's work suggests that the gestures and rhetorics of power and domination are the consequence of an economic principle that did not end with the colonial era and in fact persists today.

eser is contextualised by audio-material that recounts historical letters by German diplomats, bankers and businessmen; originally written in German, the audio has been translated to Turkish for this installation (an English version is available as audio-guide from the Forum). A publication in Turkish, English and German contains detailed caption information for the works, documents and historical photographs on show here. A copy is accessible at the rear of the installation for reference, and the book is also available at Robinson Crusoe 389.

The title *eser* comes from its use both as a term for a work of art in Turkish, and also from the way it was used in a conversation Raum shared with a gardener along the railway tracks in Vezirhan, Anatolia, in which he described a tree as "eser."

Realized with the support of the Graduate School of the Arts and Sciences at the Berlin University of the Arts and in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Istanbul.

Dilek Winchester

as if nothing has ever been said before us, 2007-2015

The title of this composition of works by Dilek Winchester is an abbreviation of a sentence from Oğuz Atay's novel, *Tutunamayanlar*. The floor opens with a play on a longer extract: **kendinibeğenmişçesinesankibizdenöncehiçbirşey söylenmemiş çesinegillerden**, which comes from the second half of the sentence "We are knocking on your doors with an emotion and arrogance unparalleled in world history and without fear of seeming like **those who are conceited and behave as if nothing has ever been said before them.**" It is transcribed phonetically in Turkish, but with letters from five alphabets: Armenian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Arabic, which were used by the multi-lingual population of the Ottoman Empire up until the Alphabet Reform enforced the use of the Latin alphabet in 1928.

Winchester's work *On Reading and Writing* delves deeper into issues of national identity and ideology in relation to language. She excavates rare or marginalized texts of Karamanlidika and Armeno-Turkish literature, that have suffered exclusion by both the Turkish literary canon and other nationally applied cultures. By showcasing a rich scene of linguistic complexities, she attempts to shed light on the historical coexistence of different cultures, on cultural polyphony, and the possibility to imagine a new dialogue between cultural past and present.

A new addition to her work on language is *Negative Epiphany* (2015), a series of black prints made by over exposing paper to sunlight today, but developed using old printing techniques, and shown alongside cameras from the period 1900-1915. The prints stand in as shadows of photographs that have been shot, but cannot be shown here today.

Books and artworks were loaned from Ars Aevi Museum of Contemporary Art, Sarajevo; Collection of Turgut Kut, Istanbul; and Sakkoulidis Collection, Sismanoglu Megaro, Istanbul.