



Still from the video installation *1+8* (Nusaybin, Turkey)
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İO: Please describe the installation *1+8* at SALT.

Madangel: *1+8* is a multi-screen video projection about Turkey and her eight neighbors that engages viewers in an immersive environment. Eight screens represent the eight borders of Turkey featuring each of the divided landscapes and their inhabitants on both sides — in Turkey and right across the border in Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Nakchivan, Iran, Iraq and Syria. The visuals for the installation comprise direct address interviews and performances, including dance, music, rituals, as well as contemplative scenes of the landscape, architecture and daily life at the borders.

İO: Who are the protagonists of the videos?

Madangel: The protagonists of the installation are the borderlanders. Individual portraits and personal encounters reveal what connects and separates people who live at the edge of their country, bringing up questions of identity, identification and the nation as imagined community.

İO: Can you speak about how you collaborated with the protagonists?

Madangel: We asked people to tell us something about themselves, their life and the place they live. We did not want to conduct classic interviews — meaning us defining topics and their relevance — but chose to approach the borderlanders with an open mind and without preconceived questions.

1+8 introduces the borderlanders through their own narratives and testimonies. 10 different languages are spoken by the protagonists of *1+8*. As we ourselves speak and understand only one of them, we had to find a way to start conversations. We solved this by writing down a sentence in each language, for example: “We are making a portrait of your town and the people who live there. Please tell us something about yourself and your hometown.” We read this sentence to the people we encountered. We did not understand what they were talking about in the interviews while we were recording them. Only much later, after we had the interviews translated did we know what they said. You would think that this methodology is doomed to fail but what

happened was quite the opposite. The unconventional situation seemed to have encouraged a lot of people to talk freely and about intimate and personal topics. There was a very special quality in these interviews.

İO: Prior to working on this installation you made a documentary film called *1+8* that is currently showing at international film festivals. What is the difference between the film and the installation?

Madangel: The film is a feature length art documentary structured in eight chapters, moving from one border to the next, one country at a time. It is a linear, edited assemblage of encounters and experiential moments whereas the installation is not edited but uses a computer based algorithm to create a dynamic projection drawing sequences from an extensive database of videos. The result is a unique viewer experience as the choreography of videos will never appear the same way twice.

We were excited by the idea of making an installation because the form of multi-screen projection lends itself perfectly to comprehend the borders' simultaneity and interconnection on a physical level. The installation invites the audience to become immersed in the contemplation of life at the eight borders of Turkey.

İO: Can you speak about the simultaneity of the screens?

Madangel: The choreography of the installation is designed to draw and shift the viewers' attention, the focus is on one voice at a time — while one protagonist is speaking or performing the other projections show quiet images from the borderlands or silent portraits of the borderlanders. The simultaneous presence of all eight borders/projections highlights the complexity of Turkey's geopolitical gestalt and highlights the wide range of relevant issues concomitant at the country's contour.

İO: Why did you choose to use an algorithm?

Madangel: We wanted to achieve a unique experience for each viewer and emphasize the unpredictability of border environments and situations.

İO: Do you use the same footage for the film and the installation?

Madangel: The film is 131 minutes long and contains only a fraction of the video material we filmed, the installation includes over 8 hours of footage.

İO: You filmed at 16 different border towns, how did you decide on the specific locations?

Madangel: We chose bordertowns that are close to each other, like Hopa, Turkey and Batumi, Georgia or towns that were divided by the border like Nusaybin, Turkey and Al Qamishli, Syria. We were also interested in border towns which have border crossings or were very close to border gates.

İO: Can you speak about the impact of the border on these places?

Madangel: Borderlands are complex and paradoxical spaces as they are divided and shared landscapes at the same time. For example, the Turkish-Greek border where we filmed, is demarcated by the river Meriç/Evros, the borderline is situated in the middle

of the river, so who does the water belong to? Who owns the fish? Who feels responsible for environmental issues?

The border landscape is an extreme site, a paradigm of nation state relations. The tensions between nation states is felt on the body of the people. The borders are heavily patrolled military spaces that impact people's daily movements, their political rights and economic possibilities. People are under constant surveillance and domination. There are few chances of employment apart from border related jobs. Many of the borderlands we visited are full of mines and thus cannot be used for agriculture and grazing livestock by the locals which creates estrangement and poverty.

The borderlanders — no matter on which side of the border — live at the edge of their country where differences are either aggressively asserted and/or communities converge.

İO: Can you explain the reason of the black screen in Iran?

Madangel: In Iran, we were not granted a shooting permit to film inside the country. So instead we interviewed Iranians at the Turkish side of the border with Iran — people who regularly cross over for business, smuggling or family reasons as well as recent refugees. While they were willing to speak, they still felt it was too dangerous to be filmed and so offered to give audio interviews.

İO: *1+8* provides a socio-political analysis of the current situation at the borders of Turkey, what can you share about the visual language of the material?

Madangel: *1+8* does not actually provide a socio-political analysis but invites the viewer to make their own assessment and analysis. The visual language is contemplative and observational.

İO: What are your plans for future projects?

Madangel: We are working on a film project about radical women around the world.