

THE SEQUENTIAL V

RECESS

Aykan Safođlu

February 15 - April 24

SALT Galata

Aykan Safođlu's practice is based on investigations of the formal and conceptual possibilities within the transitions between still and moving images. In [Recess](#), which is the last of SALT's *The Sequential* program, the artist draws on notions of indebtedness and asset borrowed from economics and looks at the reverberations of these terms in his own life story. A prevalent motif in the background of the exhibition is the building that once served as Düyûn-ı Umûmiye [Public Debt Administration], overseeing the internal and external debts of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and later, in 1933, transformed into Istanbul Erkek Lisesi [Istanbul High School]. Through the concepts of gender, sexual orientation, and migration, he examines the traces of the German education and the strict discipline associated with the school.

In his recent photography-based works, Safođlu transforms still images into "migrant images" as he defines them, using the techniques of cropping, rearranging, and scanning. The artist shreds selected photographs from his personal albums and creates waves and vibrations by reassembling them on a scanner bed, moving them up and down, left and right. He references the ruptures in his family's immigration narrative as well as his experiences in school by utilizing these movements in the film *Hundsstern steigt ab* [Dog Star descending] (2020). In the installation *Null-Defizit (in Ablehnung)* [Zero Deficit (In Refusal)] (2020), he elevates the video to a monumental scale by installing photo strips and scans of various educational materials he associates with his school years into metal grids. Resembling graph notebooks or the coordinate system, the structure becomes a symbol for the German (education) system, his artistic training, and the bureaucracy in Germany where he moved after high school graduation.

Safođlu fast-forwards and rewinds the story; the sporadic narrative he builds between the past and the future weaves personal and social memories together through the images that disperse, are reassembled, and resonate. For this exhibition, the artist goes back to a site of memory he remembers from his route to school: As a student at Istanbul High School, Safođlu used to pass by the Workers' Monument (1973) at Tophane Park every day. Honoring the workers who went abroad, the monument was placed right across from the building of the Institution of Providing Jobs and Employees where the German Immigration Liaison Office was located for a time. The artist witnessed the daily destruction of the statue in the 1990s when it

was subject to numerous attacks, meanwhile the news on TV increasingly featured stories of violence organized by radical right-wing groups against Turks residing in Germany. Removed from the park in 2016 and missing since then, the artist revives the sculpture with his puzzle *Wiedervereinigung* [Reunion] (2022) and alludes to a precarious and fragile existence. Built on the same conceptual framework, the works *Depeche Mode* and *decrescendo* (2022) explore the potentials between movement, time, and space through various printmaking techniques.

Recess looks at the feeling of “emotional debt” that has developed in Safoğlu regarding structures that are indicators of power and authority from various perspectives; the artist's practice, on the other hand, is concerned with breaking strict rules and structures. Detailed information on the workshops to be organized by the artist in parallel with the exhibition that will be on view at SALT Galata until April 24, will be announced at saltonline.org.

Programmed by Amira Akbıyıkoglu and Farah Aksoy from SALT, *The Sequential* features independent exhibitions by artists Barış Doğrusöz, Deniz Gül, Volkan Aslan, the duo Fatma Belkis & Onur Gökmen, and Aykan Safoğlu, taking place at SALT Galata from January 2021 to April 2022.

Supported by SAHA, *The Sequential* is included in the 2021–2022 public programs of three member institutions of L'Internationale—Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie (Warsaw) and M HKA, The Museum of Contemporary Art (Antwerp)—following the initial presentations at SALT Galata.

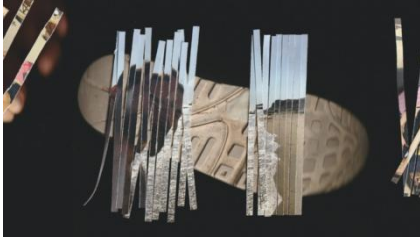


SALT is founded and supported by Garanti BBVA.

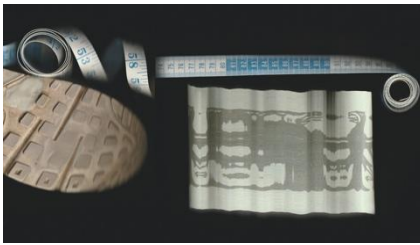
IMAGES



1.
Detail from Aykan Safoğlu's *Null-Defizit (in Ablehnung)* [Zero Deficit (In Refusal)] (2020)
Courtesy the artist and The Pill (Istanbul)



2.
Still from Aykan Safoğlu's *Hundsstern steigt ab* [Dog Star descending] (2020) video
Courtesy the artist and The Pill (Istanbul)



3.
Still from Aykan Safoğlu's *Hundsstern steigt ab* [Dog Star descending] (2020) video
Courtesy the artist and The Pill (Istanbul)

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