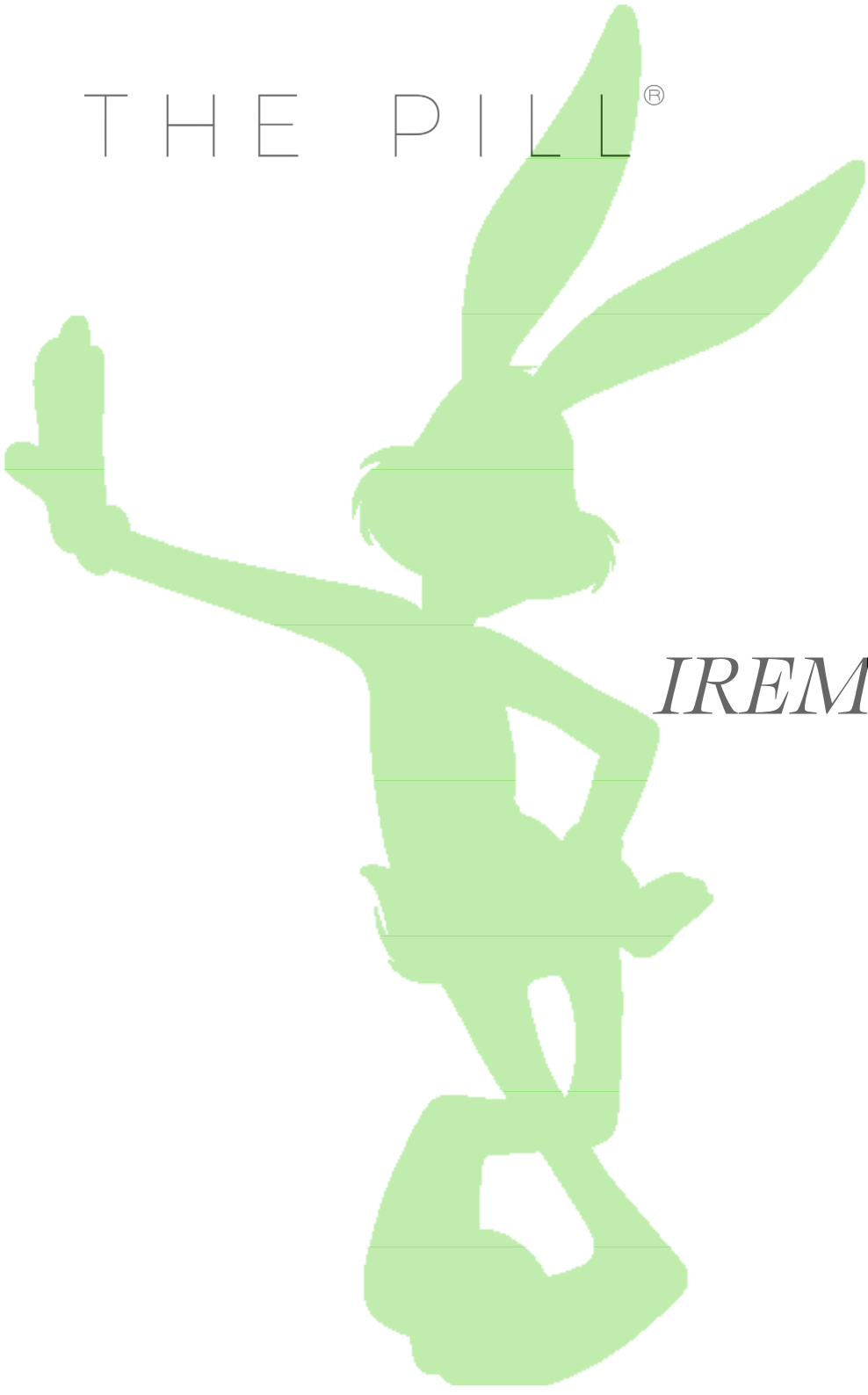


THE PILL®

THE PILL®

IREM GÜNAYDIN



THE PILL[®]

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Biography

Curriculum Vitae

Texts and Works

Selected Press and Books

İrem Günaydın is an artist based in Istanbul. Her work unfolds through writing as a speculative and para-fictional tool, one that probes the conditions of artmaking by engaging with the edges of narrative, form, and institutional memory. Oscillating between textual and spatial gestures, she works across mediums to construct aesthetic infrastructures that investigate the discarded, the supplemental, the misfiled, the misread. She often begins with a letter, an archive, a myth, or a rumor and then folds it inward, reframing it as a conceptual score, a structural support, or a performative frame.

Günaydın treats the “parergon,” that which is considered outside, secondary, or ornamental, as central to her inquiry. Her practice insists on re-seeing the overlooked: a Medusa turned mold, a buried collection of flint and botanical remnants, a bastardized table, a studio that isn’t hers. These are not metaphors but working sites. Through typographic displacements, architectural recodings, and narrative duplications, she examines how symbols, bodies, and materials circulate, shift, and collapse under the weight of contextual reassignment.

Her exhibitions act as spatial essays: the table, the column, the apple, the frame, and the bastard all become conceptual figures that carry histories, myths, and critical philosophy, only to be ruptured through careful misalignment. She constructs and disfigures objects in tandem, exposing their reliance on what is unseen: the labor of support, the background noise,

the erased gesture. What is frame? What is work? Where does a figure end and ground begin? These are persistent coordinates in her practice.

The name she uses online, *fourthisbullshit*, comes from a phrase by Harald Szeemann in 1966: “The third time, one should stop. Because the fourth is Bullshit.” Günaydın adopts this not just as provocation, but as a position, a refusal of expected cycles, a commitment to entering from the wrong angle, and an insistence on the illegitimate, the extra, the too-much. Her work often stems from this “fourth gesture,” the one presumed unnecessary, excessive, or improper, and she turns that position into a method.

Deeply invested in the folds between high theory and pop ephemera, her works stage playful yet precise dialogues between Derridean structures, minor anecdotes, and cartoons that puncture representational logic. A message in a bottle may travel through a myth, a biennial, a film still, a bureaucratic form, or a dinner table, each becoming both delivery system and conceptual residue.

Günaydın’s work often exists in states of adjacency: script and sculpture, archive and excavation, mold and monument, figure and shadow. She performs with and through the gaps in knowledge systems, offering not closure, but carefully constructed disorientation. What remains after history, after art, after authorship is where her work begins.

İREM GÜNAYDIN

1989, Istanbul. Lives and works in İstanbul.

Education

2014 BA Fine Art, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, UK

2011 Foundation, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, UK

Solo Exhibitions

2026 About The Artist, THE PILL, Istanbul, TR

2022 Scripted Expanded Molded I, THE PILL, Istanbul, TR

2022 A Proposal for a Future Exhibition: Scripted Expanded Molded I, 400x118, Istanbul, TR

2021 Entrée, Martch Studio, Ayvalık, TR

2020 SALAD CAKE, THE PILL, Istanbul, TR

2017 From a Tummy to the Sky – via a Mouth-, Ark Kültür, Istanbul, TR

2016 AEnd, Torna, Istanbul, TR

2012 Portfolyo, curated by Leyla Gediz, eski studio, Istanbul, TR

Group Exhibitions

2026 Mother, curated by Hermes Payrahuber, NY, USA

2025 Festival Panoràmic, Barcelona, ES

2024 Mussakhan, Public commission, Istanbul, TR

2024 Further Away, 6th Mardin Biennale, cur. Ali Akay, Mardin, TR

2022 AS IF IT COULDN'T - 6th Year Anniversary Group Show, THE PILL, Istanbul, TR

2016 {iniş çıkış yukarı aşağı}, Red Bull Art Around, Istanbul, TR
İşleyiş – Mechanism as part of PRODUCE #3 The Game Settled Into a Cagey Midfield Match, with Charlie Coffrey and Merve Kaptan, Elhamra Han, Istanbul, TR

Book and Time, together with torna & Bandrolsüz, Istanbul, TR

2015 Mamut Art Project, Istanbul, TR

Hatırlatıcı, together with Merve Kaptan, Yeni Bahtiyar İş Merkezi, Istanbul, TR

2014 to the things themselves, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, Degree Show, London, UK

2011 They're playing with the shadows; they got bored, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, UK

2009 Kuru Kahveci Mehmet Efendi, mtaar, cur. by Sevil Tunaboylu & Erkin Gören, Istanbul, TR

Grants & Residencies

2026 Cité des Arts Residency, Paris, FR

2024 SAHA Studio, Istanbul, TR

2022 Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Stuttgart, DE
Golubitsky Art Fondation, Krasnodar Region, RU

2021 Entrée, Martch Studio, Ayvalık, TR

2016 torna, Istanbul, TR

2011 They're playing with the shadows; they got bored, Shortlisted Brenda Landon Pye Portrait Prize, London, UK

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TEXTS AND WORKS

ABOUT THE ARTIST turns the gallery space into an immersive and interactive environment where a single monumental sculpture stands alone against a backdrop of currency exchange records and real-time data flows. Operating at the intersection of financial transactions, currency value, weather reports, and wind patterns, the exhibition puts on display the recent history of dispossession in Turkey through the evolution of currency exchange rates of the last 24 years, re-imagined as an evolving climate. It also marks a third iteration in a series of conceptual propositions by Irem Günaydın, bringing into play transformed elements from her previous two solo exhibitions at the gallery.

Irem Günaydın's thought process builds upon a concise conceptual and formal vocabulary to explore what remains at the edges of narrative, form, and institutional memory. In this exhibition, this unfolds through elements such as a fiber-glass mold in a specific green color, the use of scale and repetition as political tools, and the figure of Bugs Bunny. With this vocabulary, Irem Günaydın shape-shifts between script, form, frame, mold, and scale. This time, with its tautological title, the exhibition reveals the artist as an unstable yet continuous fiction conjured into reality through instances of institutional critique in changing forms, ranging from a conceptual score in written form to a trickster multiplication of the self through substitution, deployed as agile escape and proliferation strategies.

The frame, setting the boundary of representation, simultaneously stabilizing and setting in motion both the work of art and the labor of living, constitutes the object of inquiry in ABOUT THE ARTIST. This time, alongside the institutional framing of art, it is the larger institutional frames governing our lives that are at stake. As Bugs Bunny shifts from a silhouette into a fiberglass mold in "toxic green", Irem Günaydın insists on its grotesqueness as a figure in blown-up scale, opening a discussion around the artist-as-activist, reduced to an inconvenience that must be contained by operations of minimizing. What Irem Günaydın chooses to upscale in the site-specific installation Weather Report is precisely that which is minimized in the hopes that it would disappear through the cracks of institutional discourse. And this organized amnesia is precisely what 75 foreign exchange tickets chosen from the last 24 years and blown up into an architectural scale is here to defy. The immersive environment urges us to remember and to confront, through this precision, the making of our current conditions of existence through the evidence - a counter-archive - displayed in a dizzying scale: the diminishing value of our smallest common denominator. And this covers everything from currency to social contract.

With ABOUT THE ARTIST, we move from the wild and joyous imagination connecting Cézanne's truth in painting, the red and blue pills of The Matrix and Bugs Bunny at work in Salad Cake (2020), and through Scripted Expanded Molded I's (2023) art-historical discussion of bastards and

bastardization as a strategy of rebellious appropriation of what is held off-the-frame, to arrive here: the tone turns dark, the atmosphere thickens. The apple seems rotten, yes, there is something rotten in the state we're in. And yet, The Fourth Bunny, sits coherently next to The Fourth Medusa and The Fourth Table also known as the Bastard, turning the number four from an ordinal number to an ontological position, a suffix, a condition of being-after-too-many-times. As such, The Fourth Bunny is a monument to continuity through shape-shifting; a stand-in for organized memory, and now, it has the capacity to replicate itself infinitely through fibers of glass, the other smallest common denominator shaping our world.

As İrem Günaydın writes: In this exhibition, minimization is no longer an option.

İrem Günaydın is an artist and suffix based in Istanbul, who works after authorship, occupying the remainder, the footnote, the administrative trace. Her work unfolds through writing as a speculative and para-fictional tool, one that probes the conditions of artmaking by engaging with the edges of narrative, form, and institutional memory. Oscillating between textual and spatial gestures, she works across media to construct aesthetic infrastructures that investigate the discarded, the supplemental, the misfiled, the misread.

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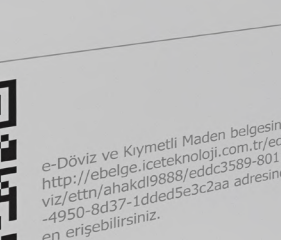
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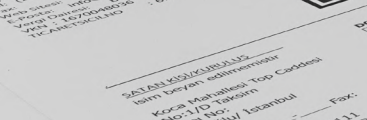
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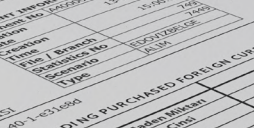
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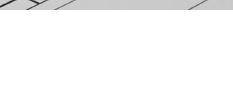
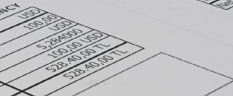
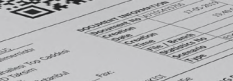
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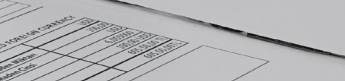
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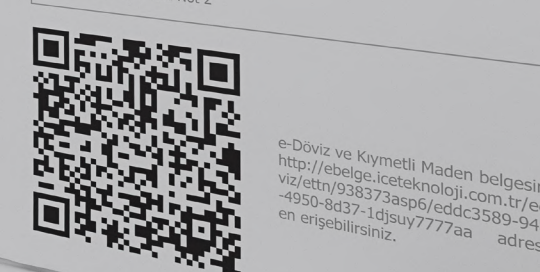
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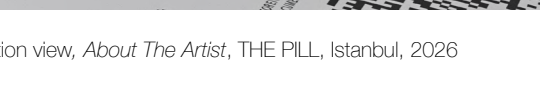
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İrem Günaydın
Fourth Bunny (Potrait I), 2025
Fiberglass, mold-based sculpture
250 x 150 x 111 cm

İrem Günaydın
Weather Report, 2026
Enlarged financial receipts and QR-linked historical weather reports,
variable dimensions

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Yalnız : YÜZYET
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Exhibition view, *About The Artist*, THE PILL, İstanbul, 2026

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Vergi Dairesi:
TCKN: 11111111111
MUSTERITURU: GERCEKKİŞİ

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document No	A002415047183
Creation	28-05-2013
Creation Time	14:46:09
File / Branch	749
Statistics No	7449
Scenario	EDOVIZBELGE
Type	ALIM

ETTN: 8-4950-8d3eddc39-857-011ed5e3c2aa

I WOULD RATHER LAY
FLAT ON THE SKIRTS OF THE MOUNTAIN.

INFORMATION REGARDING PURCHASED FOREIGN CURRENCY

Purchased Item/Alınan Ürün	USD
Foreign Currency Amount/Kıymetli Maden Miktarı	100,00
Foreign Currency Type/Kıymetli Maden Cinsi	USD
Exchange Rate/Uygulanan Kur	1,850000
USD Equivalent/ABD Doları Karşılığı	185,00 USD
TRY Equivalent/TL Karşılığı	185,00 TL
Net Amount/NET TUTAR	185,00 TL

Yalnız : YÜZSEKSENBEŞ TL

USD AMERIKAN DOLARI
Not 2



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DÜZENLEYEN YETKİLİ

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TICARETSICILNO: 671

SATAN KİŞİ/KURULUŞ

İsim beyan edilmemiştir
Koca Mahallesi Top Caddesi
No:1/D Taksim
Kapı No:
Beyoğlu/ İstanbul
E-Posta:
Tel: () - Fax:
Vergi Dairesi:
TCKN: 11111111111
MUSTERITURU: GERCEKKİŞİ

ETTN: e9-858-49d0150-8d3

INFORMATION REGARDING PURCHASED FOREIGN CURRENCY

Purchased Item/Alınan Ürün	USD
Foreign Currency Amount/Kıymetli Maden Miktarı	100,00
Foreign Currency Type/Kıymetli Maden Cinsi	USD
Exchange Rate/Uygulanan Kur	1,850000
USD Equivalent/ABD Doları Karşılığı	185,00 USD
TRY Equivalent/TL Karşılığı	185,00 TL
Net Amount/NET TUTAR	185,00 TL

Yalnız : YÜZDOKSANSEK
KR.

1840 USD AMERIKAN DOLA
Not 2



Details of visitor interventions written
in lipstick on Weather Report, from
the exhibition About the Artist, 2026

DÜZENLEYEN YETKİLİ

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FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE PURCHASE DOCUMENT



SATAN KİŞİ/KURULUŞ

İsim beyan edilmemiştir

Koca Mahallesi Top Caddesi
No:1/D Taksim
Kapi No:
Beyoğlu/ İstanbul
E-Posta:
Tel: () - Fax:
Vergi Dairesi:
TCKN: 11111111111
MUSTERİTÜRÜ: GERCEKKİŞİ

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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Type	ALIM

ETTN: eddc39d37-1d-858-4950-8d011ed5e3c2aa

INFORMATION REGARDING PURCHASED FOREIGN CURRENCY

Purchased Item/Alınan Ürün	USD
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Foreign Currency Type/Kıymetli Maden Cinsi	USD
Exchange Rate/Uygulanan Kur	1,346.691
USD Equivalent/ABD Doları Karşılığı	100,00 USD
TRY Equivalent/TL Karşılığı	134.669.100,00 TL
Net Amount/NET TUTAR	134.669.100,00 TL

Yalnız : YÜZOTUZDÖRT MİLYON
ALTİYÜZATMIŞDOKUZ BİN YÜZ TRY.
USD AMERIKAN DOLARI
Not 2



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DÜZENLEYEN YETKİLİ

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FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE PURCHASE DOCUMENT



SATAN KİŞİ/KURULUŞ

İsim beyan edilmemiştir

Koca Mahallesi Top Caddesi
No:1/D Taksim
Kapi No:
Beyoğlu/ İstanbul
E-Posta:
Tel: () - Fax:
Vergi Dairesi:
TCKN: 11111111111
MUSTERİTÜRÜ: GERCEKKİŞİ

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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Creation Date	20-03-2003
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INFORMATION REGARDING PURCHASED FOREIGN CURRENCY

Purchased Item/Alınan Ürün	USD
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Foreign Currency Type/Kıymetli Maden Cinsi	USD
Exchange Rate/Uygulanan Kur	1,708.319
USD Equivalent/ABD Doları Karşılığı	100,00 USD
TRY Equivalent/TL Karşılığı	170.831.900,00 TL
Net Amount/NET TUTAR	170.831.900,00 TL

Yalnız : YÜZYETMİŞ MİLYON SEKİZYÜZOTUZBİR
BİN DOKUZYÜZ TRY.
USD AMERIKAN DOLARI
Not 2



e-Döviz ve Kıymetli Maden belgesine
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DÜZENLEYEN YETKİLİ

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Vergi Dairesi: Beyoğlu
VKN: 1670048036
TICARETSICILNO: 671



FOREIGN CURRENCY EXCHANGE PURCHASE DOCUMENT



SATAN KİŞİ/KURULUŞ

İsim beyan edilmemiştir

Koca Mahallesi Top Caddesi
No:1/D Taksim
Kapi No:
Beyoğlu/ İstanbul
E-Posta:
Tel: () - Fax:
Vergi Dairesi:
TCKN: 11111111111
MUSTERİTÜRÜ: GERCEKKİŞİ

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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Creation Date	27-04-2004
Creation Time	16:30:21
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Statistics No	7449
Scenario	EDOVIZBELGE
Type	ALIM

ETTN: e7-1dddc39d3011ed5e-858-4950-8d3c2aa

INFORMATION REGARDING PURCHASED FOREIGN CURRENCY

Purchased Item/Alınan Ürün	USD
Foreign Currency Amount/Kıymetli Maden Miktar	100,00
Foreign Currency Type/Kıymetli Maden Cinsi	USD
Exchange Rate/Uygulanan Kur	1,413.657
USD Equivalent/ABD Doları Karşılığı	100,00 USD
TRY Equivalent/TL Karşılığı	141.365.700,00 TL
Net Amount/NET TUTAR	141.365.700,00 TL

Yalnız : YÜZKIRKBİR MİLYON ÜÇYÜZATMIŞBEŞ
BİN YEDİYÜZ TRY.
USD AMERIKAN DOLARI
Not 2



e-Döviz ve Kıymetli Maden belgesine
http://ebelge.iceteknoloji.com.tr/edo
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en erişebilirsiniz.



Details of visitor interventions written in lipstick on Weather Report, from the exhibition About the Artist

Fourth Movement

Aslı Seven

Irem Günaydın's second solo exhibition at The Pill gallery, titled "Scripted Expanded Molded I" at first glance seems to be organized around two main works of art: a monumental sculpture titled "Fourth Medusa" and an expansive installation at the center of the gallery, "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard". A deeper look would however reveal Irem Günaydın's long-standing method of creating her exhibitions around a piece of writing which acts as a central catalyst for all of the visible forms we encounter. While the text is completely absent from this ensemble, this time around we are invited to a series of musical performances that serve as its activations based on composer Selen Gülün's collaborative translation into graphical notation.

The audiences in Istanbul are likely to easily identify the "Fourth Medusa" installed at the entrance of the gallery as a reference to the existing three found in the city's historical peninsula: the two Medusa heads repurposed as bases – spolia – for two of the Roman Basilica Cistern's columns in water, and the third one installed in the gardens of the Archeological museum. In contrast to its "original" counterparts, "Fourth Medusa" is not carved out from marble, it is not even a 'proper' sculpture so to speak, but a mold. Based on the exact measurements of the originals and using photogrammetry, the surface of the Medusa head was divided into 20 parts for reassembly. These parts were then cut and shaped in fiberglass – a common contemporary material in sculpture production, used both for casting and molding - to be assembled along multiple lines and joined together with protruding bolts and screws. We are in the presence of a monumental mold, an intermediary, supportive or temporary structure made to host another material and give it a shape in order to reach a final form, and all of this is modeled after a spoiled fragment.

There are several threads knotted together here, to reflect on Irem Günaydın's artistic gestures. First of all, in monumentalizing an intermediary support structure – a mold – she not only signals an interest in the "supportive" repurposing of the original Medusa heads within the Basilica cistern's architecture, but also inscribes this exhibition in continuity with her long-

standing investigation into the relationship between process and form, context and canon, frame and work, pushing to the forefront of our attention, questions around the conditions of possibility of art making, as well as the circulation of forms and their meaning.

A selective activation of mythologies around the Medusa head to understand the fourth position claimed by the work's title is key to begin to unpack the entire exhibition: Medusa, one of the three Gorgons in Greek mythology is a snake-haired monster who turns those who look at her directly into stone with her gaze. Perseus can only behead her with the help of the reflective shield Gods have given him: he can look at her through the reflection on the shield, thus avoiding petrification. The mythological sequence itself has long served as an allegory for art and art making: it is only through the indirect, mediated access through a reflected image - artistic forms - that we can access any "truth". And then comes the spoliation inherent within the repurposing of the ancient marble Medusa heads – fragments whose origin remain unknown to this day - as stands for columns within the Roman architecture of the cistern, one positioned upside down, the other laid horizontally, dispossessed and properly taken "out of context" to fulfill a "supportive" function.

To this series of "bastardizations", Irem Günaydın adds another layer by turning the Medusa heads into a container. More importantly she creates a fourth iteration into the triplicity at work in Greek mythology (three sisters) and the Byzantine recovery of the three heads. In this sense the "Fourth Medusa" acts as a "parergon", an additional operation from the sidelines, inscribing something 'extra', exterior to the field but whose exteriority pushes against the limit and intervenes internally.

Here lies the thread connecting to her previous exhibition at the gallery, "Salad Cake" (2020) through the artist's investigation of the Derridean notion of parergon: all that is beside, in addition to, or outside "the work of art", understood as the work's negative space and its borders, as that which simultaneously stabilizes and sets in motion the work of art. The figure of the column which also appeared in the previous exhibition in a work titled "Fabric Vestibule", is fully embodied here as the parergon to architectural

building, erected in Irem's display into an autonomous form, only at the cost of its spoliation yet again. This is the kingdom of bastards threatening to expose and depose the legitimate children by undermining the concept of legitimacy itself. Irem Günaydın's art alternates between a play around conceptual gestures performing such dislocations and an insistent, careful study of thought patterns, only so she can find the precision to disrupt those same patterns from the outside in.

In the last few years Irem and I have sat together on multiple tables and had numerous conversations across those tables, sometimes across phones and computer screens that stood on tables as we sat in front of them. Dinner tables, office tables, coffee shop tables. It was my understanding from one of our published conversations, that tables are limited flat surfaces to gather things: tools, ideas, concepts, inspiration; and without that gathering and isolation of disparate things within such a container, there is no story to tell, no texture to weave, no task to attend to, no way of consistently caring for objects or inquiries. A table is a support mechanism, an enclosed space to collect and isolate things from the world and make something new. But it is also an afterthought, once we have produced something, a step-child of sorts that never gets the attention it deserves. In Irem's previous exhibition, the table was cast as the central figure – albeit by locking the table's corner, a fragment, to a frame – in the silkscreen series, "The Integral ". Here, it has been vacuumed out into the conceptual realm: it is materially absent but conceptually runs through the installation "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard".

Before the fourth table, there are three tables we need to attend to. In bringing this term into her exhibition through the form and title of her central piece of work, Irem activates and expands in her own terms object-oriented philosopher Graham Harman's well-known discussion of the third table, and his critical treatment of early 20th century astrophysicist Arthur Eddington's two tables. The table becomes a prop for a thought experiment to think about the nature of reality, and to arrive at an ontology of objects : can we define objects in themselves, independently from the human mind and causal relations? Is a table still a table if no human being experiences, perceives or thinks of it as a table? The first two tables are initially set as mutually exclusive

yet somewhat entangled in the human mind: the everyday table I use in all its sensual glory, and the scientific table described in the abstract terms of particle physics. As it is often the case with human thought experiments, the pattern of duality is overcome by the insertion of a third position and to the question of which table is more real, Harman's answer is neither. Both are equally unreal since they suffer from opposite types of reductionism, one reducing it to its effects on humans, and the other reducing it to its causal components in the form of electrons. The reality of the table is rather located somewhere in between, in a third position, which he speculates might be an artistic table, a table-as-art, admitting that objects exist in autonomy both from the everyday uses we have of them, and from their constitutive particles. After all, a work of art can neither be reduced to its material, nor to its context of production or reception, but compels us to meander through an infinite field of possibilities, to look again and revisit its surfaces, figures and grounds, both material and conceptual. After all, a song is a song and sometimes the best thing about a movie is that it feels like a movie.

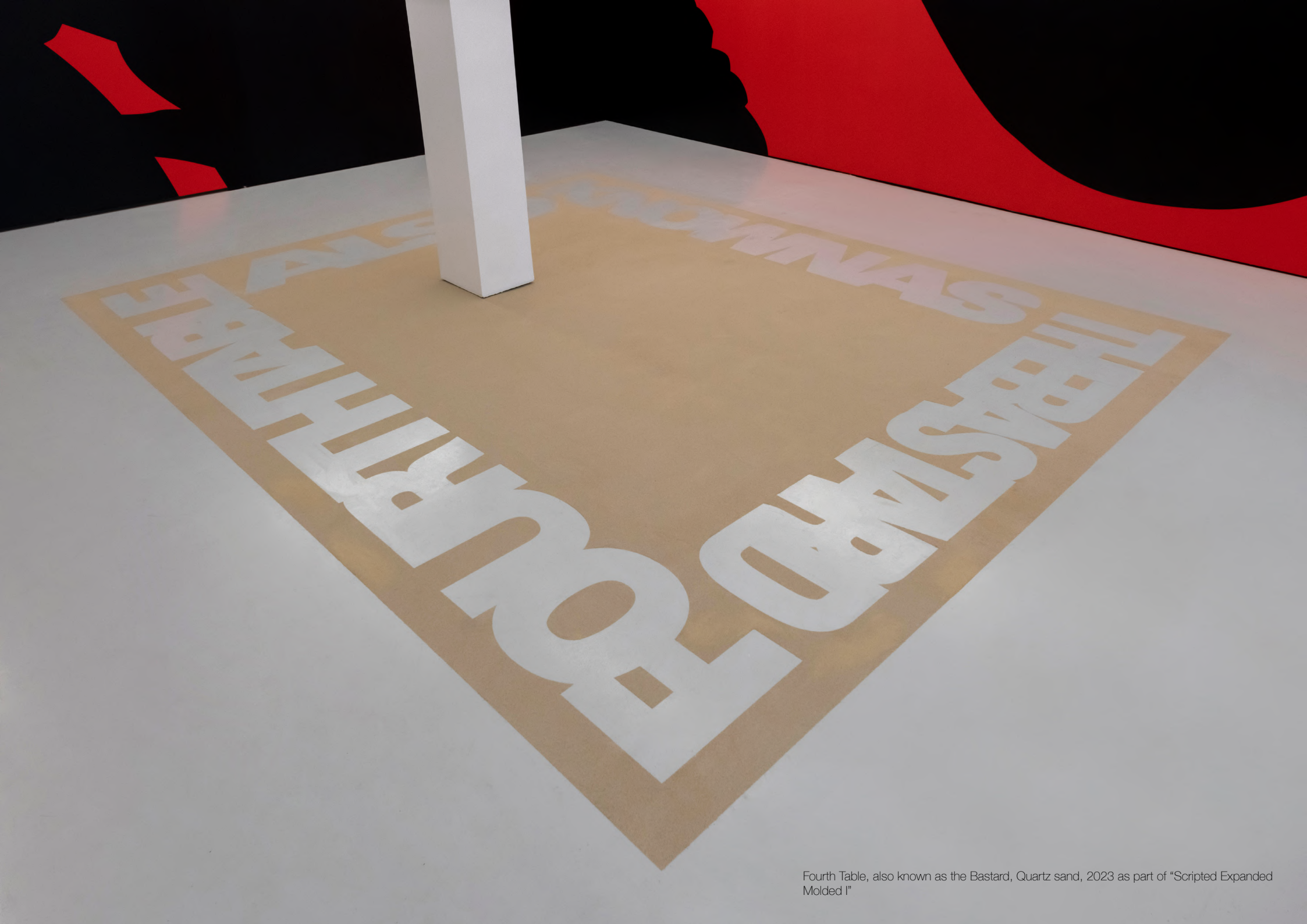
As far as thought patterns are concerned, Irem's fourth table does not exactly create a fourfold structure expanding logically from duality and triplicity. It is rather an off-beat step aside that insists on remaining outside, in an adjunct position, by refusing the form of the table all together. "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard " delineates a rectangular field laid horizontally on the ground, replicating the shape of the gallery space in sand. A dual nod is to be found here, both to one of Irem's earlier works, "Ænd", from 2016 in the form of a carpet matching the exhibition space with text inscribed along its edges, and to Marcel Broodthaers' "Tapis de Sable" (Sand Carpet) from 1974. The off-beat step aside is materialized in several ways: The table is literally and metaphorically reduced not only to a textual sign, but also to the negative space tracing the outer edges of that same rectangle, from the inside, becoming a décor, an ornamental addition that replicates the function of frame. Referencing Broodthaers' critical approach to the institution of artistic retrospective at work in "Tapis de Sable", it serves as a reminder of the temporary nature of an exhibition, which provides the frame of our entire experience here: the readability of the textual sign, and of the whole work, is entirely dependent upon the sand – the most mobile and transient of materials – to strictly remain fixed in place. The adjunct

fourth table introduces a risk and enjoys itself at the expense of – possibly – transforming the theory.

“Fourth Table also known as the Bastard ” expands through the fragmented silhouette of an apple running through the four surrounding walls, framing the space we are in. The fourfold structure of the table is re-iterated through this silhouette , establishing an interchangeability between the operations of a table and an apple, as the two privileged signs that have historically dominated the so-called still life genre in painting. Both are simultaneously containers and figures of compositions and mythologies, acting as frames and catalysts for every revolution in our understanding of perception and visual representation. A dynamic conjunction of art history, science and edibles: after all, Cézanne did astonish Paris with an apple.

During the process of writing this text, a peculiar connection emerged in my mind between the “Fourth Medusa” and the image of Liz Truss - the shortest-serving prime minister in the history of England - as lettuce, as the comparison of her mandate to that of the vegetable's life-span took over global social media. Maybe because the form of a lettuce has some likeness to a human brain , or maybe because it's green and wavy like the “Fourth Medusa”. But more precisely because there is an affinity between the lifespan of a lettuce becoming the measure against which expectations around political rhythms were being reformulated during October 2022; and the way Irem posits these ‘outsider’ or ‘bastard’ versions and variations of highly aestheticized or philosophized things as limit-frames. They reveal that which is taken for granted, the implicit mechanisms underlying the way we think of a work of art, or a philosophical question, or an everyday object. A dislocation is inserted in the habitual relationship between signs and their referents, a conceptual gesture that suspends or disrupts the “conventional” meaning making process: what happens when the bastard comes to stand for the original, or becomes a measure for evaluating the original?

After all, the vegetable did emerge triumphant from a showdown with the prime minister when its image was projected onto the Houses of Parliament. And after all, Broodtheers did successfully enter the world of art from the outside by poking the beast at its most vulnerable, undisclosed frame: I, too, wondered whether I could not sell something and succeed in life.



Fourth Table, also known as the Bastard, Quartz sand, 2023 as part of "Scripted Expanded Molded I"



IREM GUNAYDIN



SCRIPTED EXPANDED MOLDED I



"Fourth apple" (apple silhouette on the wall) , vinyl, dimension variable, 2022



Irem Günaydin

Fourth Medusa, 2022

Polyurethane foam, fiberglass, stainless steel bolt

250 x 156 x 172 cm

[illegible]

stand up
15"

+ looking at the audience
+ standing up, slowly

I'm a great

standing!

looking at the audience

I'm a great, gambler.

I walk into a dirty, dingy room that is sealed off
with yellow police tape
Inside a woman is lying dead
on the floor.

Adapted on page Dead

first position
feet to be first on
the floor and turned at

Naïve-Latin

30"

I OBSERVED THE SCENE

SP

walking back slowly to sit slowly
Her ring, her left hand
whispering

[Her ring, her left hand]

improvise

hit the loop pedal

Part I ^{7 min}
scripted ~ App 2'

Text

Perform

~15" move to 2nd keyboard
Hummus die!
fp
* speak clearly
Telety die
frogs die
wax
nights
* sit down!
I'm there and tell
* looking behind
2nd keyboard w/ person sound
single note w/ repeat
Hold every note
3"
30"
2'
Shaking
* walking backwards to the 1st keyboard
* body
* base dances with the backlit Magic Keyboard.
* choose any notes in any order & improvise

A series of musical performances activated the exhibition, based on composer Selen Gülsen's collaborative translation of İrem Günaydın's text into graphical notation.

Access performance videos:

Part I: *Scripted*
Part II: *Expanded*
Part III: *Molded*
Part IV: /



Performers: Selen Gülün, İrem Günaydın, piano, synthesizers, voice
View from the live performance titled "Part I: Scripted," the first out of the four-part performance series as part of the "Scripted Expanded Molded I" exhibition.
<https://vimeo.com/776886064>



Performer: Barış Ertürk, baritone sax, bass clarinet
"Part II: Expanded," the second out of the four-part performance series
<https://vimeo.com/781085359>



Performer: Ezgi Daloğlu, alto sax, tenor sax
"Part III: Molded," the third out of the four-part performance series
<https://vimeo.com/783204317>



Performer: Çağıl Kaya, voice
View from the live performance titled "Part IV: I," the last out of the four-part performance series
<https://vimeo.com/784514257>

A Love of Hors d'Oeuvres
Aslı Seven

Almost exactly one year before this exhibition, there was a late night conversation between İrem and I. We were sitting on one of the long tables arranged in the studio of Leyla Gediz: it was a New Year's feast-party. People surrounded us, there was food in front of us, our glasses were full and we talked at length about the concept of "Parergon". The word comes from Greek, merging of "para- " and "ergon", it designates all that is beside, in addition to, or outside "the work of art". While it may simply refer to the frame or the ornamental elements, in Derrida's thought it expands to include the artwork's negative space and its borders, as that which simultaneously stabilizes and sets in motion the work of art. In French, the exact translation would be "Hors d'Oeuvre", universally known as the culinary term for small portions of food served outside the main course - often to encourage a guest to drink more.

A year later we are at THE PILL, in an exhibition titled "Salad Cake", standing before a video installation. The camera moves back and forth between fruits and vegetables scattered across a table, all in close up views. A voiceover, the artist's voice mixed with the voice of Morpheus from the Matrix and a male voice speaking English with a French accent, recount a story about four art historical characters confronting the truth of painting and a choice between the "dreamworld" and the "desert of the real", which turns out not to be a choice, but rather a provocation to fold them together. A letter, from herself as an artist about herself as a non-artist. And then there are vertical views of cooking gestures: separating egg yolks on one and macerating berries

on the other. I keep thinking that in an invisible way, what frames them all together is the studio of Leyla Gediz (A painter's studio) once again, where İrem produced this exhibition, where we saw each other last summer. A painter's table constitutes the ground upon which these fruits and vegetables are scattered. Both outside and inside İrem's works. What we have here is a whimsical play across mediums, weaving art into non-art and back into art again.

İrem Gunaydin is interested in the conditions of possibility of art making. This is another way of stating that she is interested in the frame and the ground rather than the image-as-representation; in what happens between context and canon, between work and frame on one hand, between process and oeuvre, on the other. She is also interested in perforating the tightly knit textures of art history and the matter of her own identity as an artist. The former, she does by diving deep into art historical canon with a focus on categories of still life and landscape, of naturalism and baroque – dissolving these categories themselves in an exploration of the plasticity of their subject matter and material conditions indistinctly. The latter, she does with a form of address most subjective yet grounded in the everyday: the epistolary form.

A text titled "Flaschenpost: I Owe You The Truth in Painting and I Will Tell It To You", written by the artist, acts as a pass-partout throughout the exhibition. The latter part of the sentence is borrowed from a correspondence between two painters, Paul Cézanne and Emile Bernard, Cézanne being the one uttering the sentence and confessing a debt of truth in painting. A debt later taken up by Jacques Derrida to reflect on the same subject matter in an eponymously titled book, a debt which, now, İrem seems

to take up in her own letter, adding one word to the sentence: Flaschenpost. It means “message in a bottle”, in German. So, it isn't just the epistolary form connecting Irem Gunaydin in a conversation with Cézanne and Derrida, and connecting us as readers to all of them in a confessional mode of address, but also the idea of a distance in time and space, which is operative here. The medium is the message, and in this case its truth lies in declaring the uncertainty of its reception: when, where, by whom? How long the distance, what is the fold in time? This idea of an unstable yet undeniable distance, along with those of distinction and composition are central to the exhibition: between artist and audience, between self and shadow; between figure and background, subject matter and frame, mask and face, between the surface of the painting and the grid of the canvas. This becomes clearer through Irem's folding of art history outside in, using the margins to destabilize the center, scratching the elitism of high art with eruptions of the everyday and the popular. Three canonical figures, Poussin, Cézanne and Magritte appear as characters in her narrative, confronting the question of which pill to choose in *The Matrix*: red or blue? Irem's response is not to choose, but to “fold” in different ways, to arrive at constellations of red and blue. Similarly, the Judgment of Paris, one of the most depicted Greek mythological scenes since Renaissance, is no longer a matter of choosing between Hera, Aphrodite and Athena, but a problem of juxtaposing beats during a DJ's gig, of varying the emphasis to achieve varying effects.

And then, there is the repetitive doubling of Irem herself: Irem the artist and Irem the currency exchange officer, dancing with each other in a shifting geometry of figure and background. They constitute each other's subconscious, never knowing

each other completely. They appear contradictory, but they are complementary, pushed together and pulled apart by gravitational forces. We are at once confronted with the economic reality of life as an artist and the problem of recognition of art making as labor: back to conditions of possibility of art making.

In her imaginary dialogues, Irem has a tongue-in-cheek way of interweaving threads of art historical canon with anecdotal knowledge from and around major art historical figures and themes, entangling them with visual references from 20th century popular culture – Bugs Bunny as the animated figure piercing the fabric of film, or Sylvester the Cat's ease at shifting between dimensions. Thus arriving at a punctured texture that allows space for movement, breath and potentialities in multiple directions. In Derridean terms, we would speak of subjectile, an eruption of the ground through the figure, a protrusion of art by its outside. Circling back to the message in the bottle, what Irem's letter and videos lay bare is the open space between the letter's externalization and its arrival at destination where the speculative and the teleological processes of signification coexist, without the necessity of correspondence.

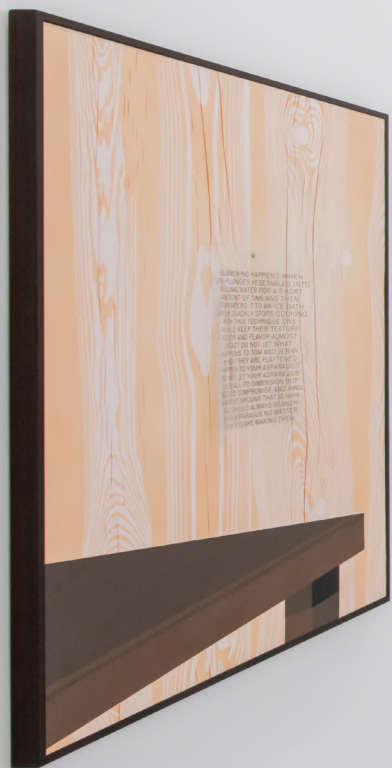


Exhibition view, Salad Cake, 2020





İrem Günaydın
Decimal Fraction, 2020
Photogrammetry, MJF print
80 x 63 x 6 cm





FLASCHENPOST: I OWE YOU
THE TRUTH IN PAINTING
AND I WILL TELL IT TO YOU, 2020
VIDEO + 2 AP EDITION
21"46"3

Salad Cake, THE PILL, Istanbul, 2020

Irem Günaydın
The Integrals II, 2020
Stencil on pasteboard, silkscreen print, acetate
100 x 80 cm



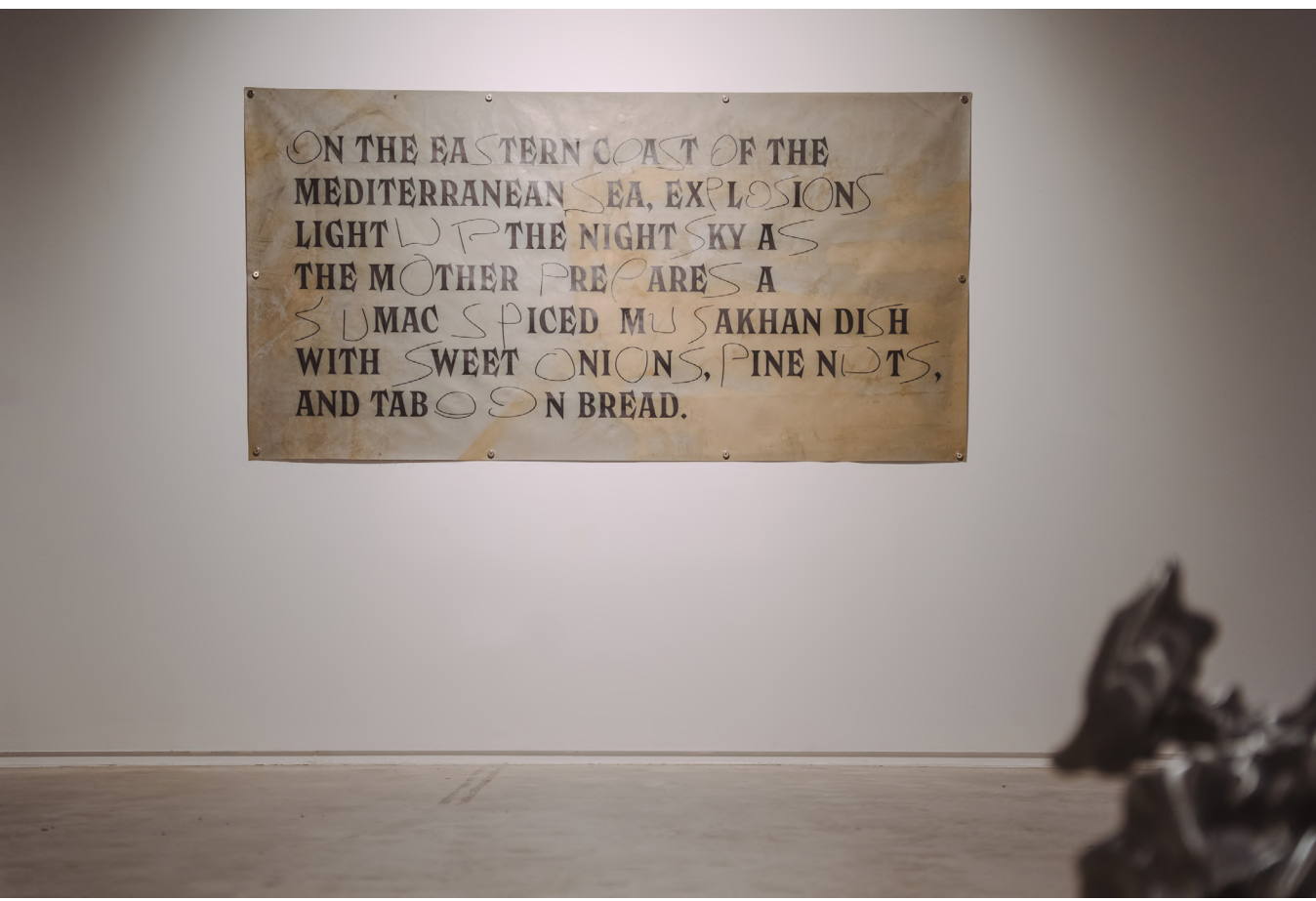
I owe you
the truth in painting
and I will
tell it to you

Published by The Pile as part of Irene Stenqvist's exhibition **SALAD CAKE** at the gallery in Istanbul, December 2020.
Edition of 200. Surferoom, Oslo, Sweden, K22 Coopers & Lysons for the Philanthropy Museum of Oslo, website for work of influential Theodor Thorsen The Glass



*The museum is not orientalism — Pera Museum, Istanbul, 2025.
Written in lipstick on a restroom mirror.*

A series of unsanctioned, site-specific inscriptions written in lipstick on museum restroom mirrors, each beginning with "*The museum is...*" to reflect, distort, and confront the institution's presence, politics, and self-image as an artist.



ON THE EASTERN COAST OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA, EXPLOSIONS
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY AS
THE MOTHER PREPARES A
SUMAC SPICED MU SAKHAN DISH
WITH SWEET ONIONS, PINE NUTS,
AND TABOON BREAD.

Musakhan, meaning “something that is reheated,” explores how warmth can signify both survival and the persistence of oppression. The work uses Hamaset, a bespoke uppercase typeface whose sharp exterior and soft interior reflect the ideological transformation of language. While its first iteration took the form of metal letters mounted on a concrete barrier, this version is printed on a tent used for two years by a family displaced by the 2023 earthquake in Hatay. By connecting Hatay and Gaza—two places where people continue to rebuild and endure amid systemic collapse—the work transforms the heat of metal into the lived warmth of fabric, ink, handwriting, and air. The handwritten text layered over the designed typeface brings the body into contact with the monument, creating a tension between the formal and the intimate, the collective and the individual.

Mussakhan (Hatay), 2025
UV print on discarded tent
112cm x 221 cm

ON THE EASTERN COAST OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA, EXPLOSIONS
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT SKY AS
THE MOTHER PREPARES A
KUDMAC SPICED MUSSAKHAN DISH
WITH SWEET ONIONS, PINE NUTS,
AND TABBOLEH BREAD.



It's a sculptural work combining steel typography with the cast surface of a T-wall barrier. Developed through research into the material infrastructures of occupation, it investigates how language adheres to architecture, transforming barriers into sites where political histories and everyday life become inseparable.

İrem Günaydın
MUSSAKHAN, 2024
Powder-coated metal
300 x 200 x 132 cm

İrem Güneydin
The Extant Collection, 2024
Cardboard box, UV print, 4 pieces
Lightbox, A3 size
220 x 157 x 25 cm



The Extant Collection narrates the true story of Güner Coşkunsu, an archaeologist in Mardin who fought against the destruction of archaeological sites throughout her career. Some authorities intentionally and consciously tarnished Coşkunsu's presumption of innocence to remove her from her profession altogether. Coşkunsu exposed the authorities' disregard for significant archaeological findings, including Paleolithic artifacts deemed insignificant and slated for burial. Following Coşkunsu's death, an artist, moved by the injustice, secretly excavates the buried artifacts for a year, finding boxes adorned with images of endemic plants instead.

In the late 2010s, Güner Coşkunsu, an esteemed archaeologist and academic committed to ethical and scientific principles, challenged the established rural order in Mardin, one of the oldest settlements in human history. She waged a battle against the destruction of archaeological sites, which are not only the oldest but also the largest in terms of area and contain artifacts in situ that hold a human history dating back approximately half a million years. She faced gossip and harassment and was labeled as a stone fetishist. She drew attention to the abandoned cultural and natural heritage subjected to treasure hunters, contractors, and environmental damage throughout Mardin. She resisted unscientific, anti-academic, and even illegal situations. A commission established by the university entered the office of Coşkunsu without prior notification. They produced the following assessment report: "Numerous historical artifacts were identified in 89 boxes. It was determined that there are three artifacts within the inventory scope of Law No. 28632 in boxes numbered 41, 68, and 36. It was observed that Coşkunsu conducted unauthorized surface research, collected artifacts in these areas without permission in both study and inventory categories, and

preserved the artifacts in inappropriate conditions. Due to the mentioned reasons, it is necessary to file a criminal complaint against Coşkunsu for violating Law No. 2863.”

Reports confirm that the archaeological and geological collections discovered in Coşkunsu's office are not significant and are commonly found in the offices of archaeologists worldwide. These reports are safely archived within the boxes for each material group, but the museum and the university chose to withhold this information. The collection, which claims to contain three historical artifacts, is requested to be buried within the university campus, with coordinates to be determined by the museum directorate.

During Coşkunsu's tenure in Mardin, The Paleolithic flints and obsidians on the campus of the university, and more broadly, the prehistoric stone materials, which could yield groundbreaking data for global archaeological literature if subjected to scientific examination by competent experts, were unfortunately deemed archaeologically insignificant by the authorities. Commission reports indicate that the museum deems the ic artifacts unworthy of examination and Paleolithlithic artifacts unworthy of examination and preservation. Statements such as “not showing the characteristic of cultural assets” and “... we recommend obtaining permission from the Directorate General of Cultural Assets and Museums for the burial of flint tools and pieces in the archaeological site” reveal their efforts to dispose of archaeological stones that have not been examined, documented, or even photographed. In this absurd paradox, collections of stones, whether ordinary or historical artifacts, found themselves relegated to burial in Mardin. After being invited to the Mardin

relegated to burial in Mardin. After being invited to the Mardin Biennale, I decided to search for the buried stones. Since I didn't know the coordinates, I would have to dig up the entire Mardin. Moving to Mardin became a necessity for this. I decided to rent an apartment under a pseudonym. I had to be very careful not to experience what happened to Coşkunsu. Therefore, I decided to keep my excavation idea a secret from the curator and the biennial team. For a year, I continued my excavation tirelessly and discreetly. I was digging at night as it would attract too much attention in daylight, and during the day, I have been questioning myself about the impossible task I gave myself. The fact that the task of finding surviving evidence fell to an artist who isn't even from Mardin made me feel hopeless about the future of Turkey. In the end, I found the buried boxes. I opened them. The Extant Collection is before you.

1 Güner Coşkunsu passed away in 2023.

2 Law No. 2863 Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property: This law ensures the national protection of cultural property.

3 I found images of plants on the cardboard boxes. Later, I discovered they were the endemic plants of Mardin: *Iris nectarifera*, *Ajugavestita*, *Arum rupicola*, and *Crocus musagecitii*.

A PROPOSAL FOR A FUTURE EXHIBITION:

Scripted Expanded Molded I consists of three works. They are all gleaned from İrem's written work titled "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard", which takes its inspiration from the work of a physicist and a philosopher. In his Gifford Lectures of 1927, British physicist Sir Arthur Eddington talks about two tables. First, the table of everyday experience: it is tactile and substantial. It supports elbows and holds objects. Second, the table of science: it is mostly emptiness. There is nothing substantial about it. It is the only one which is there, wherever there may be. Sometime later the physicist's writing was taken up by Philosopher Graham Harman who wrote an essay called "The Third Table" in which he thinks both humanists who insist on the everyday thing and physicists who care only for quantum reality, are all mistaken. He posits the existence of a third table, the only real one, existing in between the first and the second table, deeper than all apparent (scientific or everyday) objects... A decade later, İrem writes the "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard". Her table is neither legit nor authentic. One can think of it as the bastard sibling of the other three tables. Her table is not a table. If it is not a table, what is it?

I want you to imagine a relatively big space for exhibiting at a street-level gallery. Epoxy flooring, high ceiling, and some white

SCRIPTED

walls. Imagine the following phrases FOURTHTABLE, ALSO, KNOWNAS, and THEBASTARD which derive from the title of İrem's written piece, getting a fair amount of volume and turning into a set of fine-art, wooden shipping crates. These letter-shaped crates frame the space of a gallery and act as a passe-partout through the exhibition. The crates are not designed and manufactured to meet the needs of works of art, nor have they traveled the world before arriving here. They are not built to accommodate a particular fine art object. They neither have foam cushioning nor labeling on them. They seem to want to weigh nothing but themselves.

According to the legend, Medusa is one of the three Gorgons, the female monster of the underworld in Greek mythology. Medusa, the snake-headed one of these three sisters, has the power to turn onlookers to stone. There are two Medusa heads in The Basilica Cistern that lie beneath the city of Istanbul and one Medusa head which sits in the garden of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum. However, they do not belong to the place where they are at now. They are both spolia! Besides, these two Roman Medusa heads are casually used as column bases at the cistern's northwest corner. One is positioned upside down, and the other is tilted to the side. No one is sure why this is, but a popular opinion is that they're oriented upside down in

EXPANDED MOLDED I

order to negate the power of the gaze of Medusa. İrem invented a character named Fourth Medusa, as the bastard sibling of the other three Medusa statues, who also manifested in the written work in multiple versions of herself such as an artist, a gambler, a chef, a detective, etc. Given the excessive repetition of the same fucking concepts throughout this exhibition proposal, İrem must have had a hard time distinguishing between artist, bastard, and the number four! Eventually, I produced The Fourth Medusa. I really did! It is represented by a fiberglass mold which supposes to welcome you at the entrance of the gallery. The mold that the Fourth Medusa inhabits has twenty pieces fixed by stainless steel bolts. One can reproduce her one thousand and one times using one thousand and one materials. I just can't resist imagining that she could even be reproduced out of butter! Fourth Butter Medusa. LOL. Who wants to spread the Medusa butter on bread?

Imagine that you are in the gallery space, encountering the Fourth Medusa—especially as a mold. I can't convince any sponsor to fund the butter Medusa—at the front entrance and the crates at the back of the space. You are here because of *Scripted*, the first out of the four-part performance series which takes place each week. İrem has collaborated with one of the leading figure composers in

the Turkish jazz music scene. The composer writes a graphic notation¹ to be performed by different musicians once a week, including the composer herself, to accompany İrem's written work. "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard", four weeks, four musicians. During the performances, particular passages from İrem's text sampled by the composer beforehand will be triggered from pedals at certain points of the notation by the musicians. Each performance takes approximately twenty minutes. The exhibition opens with *Scripted*, the composer plays her notation on multiple synthesizers that are scattered around the space. The second week of the show hosts *Expanded* in which a musician is invited by the composer to play the notation on bass clarinet with extended techniques.² For the third part, *Molded*, another musician is invited to play the notation with the cello, bags, and covers of the musical instruments that were used during the previous performances. The fourth part, *I*, houses a musician who plays the notation with their voice.

¹ Graphic notation is the representation of music through the use of visual symbols outside the realm of traditional musical notation.

² Extended techniques are techniques used on musical instruments to produce sounds that are not normally associated with the instrument.

A PROPOSAL FOR A FUTURE EXHIBITION:

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After İrem writes the "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard", her table is neither level nor authentic. One can think of it as the bastard sibling of the other three tables. Her table is not a table. If it is not a table, what is it?

I want you to imagine a relatively big space for exhibiting at a street-level gallery. Epoxy flooring, high ceiling, and some white

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the Turkish jazz music scene. The composer writes a graphic notation* to be performed by different musicians once a week, including the composer herself in accompanying it. The written work, "Fourth Table also known as the Bastard", is a series of notes, instructions, during the performances, particularly those that İrem herself has sampled by the composer beforehand will be triggered from pedals at certain points of the notation by the musicians. Each performance takes approximately twenty minutes. The exhibition opens with Scripted: the composer plays the notation on multiple synthesizers that are scattered around the space. The second week, the show hosts Expanded in which a musician is invited by the composer to play the notation on bass clarinet with extended techniques.** For the third part, Molded, another musician comes to play the notation with the cases, baglam, and various other musical instruments that were used during the previous performances. The fourth part, I, Husein Canusman who plays the notation with their voice.

* Graphic notation is the representation of music through the use of visual symbols outside the realm of traditional musical notation.

** Extended techniques is a term used to describe unconventional techniques of playing musical instruments.

"Fourth Table also known as the Bastard" requires previous Turkish membership.



*Flatly Fluted Horizontally Formated Orders, Co-
rinthian capitals and bases, cast polyurethane,
85x65x10cm, 65x40x10cm, 2021*

Exhibition view, Entrée, Balıkesir, TR



A Corinthian order installed in a former Greek neighbourhood in Ayvalık, north-western Aegean coast of Türkiye. Decorative fragments (flutes, cornices, door motifs) were flattened into a glyphic script and extended across the gallery walls. The work reflects on forced displacement and the architectural residues of the Greek population exchange.

Facade Ingredients, 2021, fine art print, 21x26cm for each, 8 pieces



This exhibition, held over three floors and a garden, unfolds via works that combine video, sculpture, written material, and graphical elements into one seamless narrative. The exhibition starts in the garden with the work “Mutluluk Göbüşte Başlar,” which translates as “Happiness starts in the tummy” in English. The sentence is installed on the round pool and is also the beginning phrase of the limited-edition text written by the artist. The exhibition title, “From a Tummy to the Sky via a Mouth,” refers directly to the works that unfold holistically throughout the gallery and garden spaces. If one considers the garden as the tummy and inside the gallery as the mouth, then a route develops, which starts at the tummy and ends in the sky via a mouth. In conjunction with elements from the video works, the text is published in a limited edition of 120, each numbered by the artist. Four figures gleaned from the video works accompany the text, one for each page: the berry, the toothbrush, the elephant, and the green bean. These figures propose a flow via the geometry and graphics by reappearing in different mediums for the rest of the exhibition. The text and the video continue with mouth-oriented activities such as brushing teeth, speaking, and eating. The libido is always centered in the mouth.

MUTLULUK GÖBÜŞTE BAŞLAR,
2017, powder-coated steel,
145x70x5 cm



{İniş Çıkış Yukarı Aşağı} (Ups and Downs) is a multi-site installation comprising six textual banners displayed on streetlamps in an Istanbul neighborhood. Drawing on palmistry, topography, and Maurice Blanchot's Death Sentence, the work translates the palm prints of five of the artist's close friends and their own into precise, cartographic descriptions of lines that break, intersect, disappear, and diverge. By rendering these intimate bodily surfaces through language rather than images, each palm becomes an imaginary territory mapped through poetic observation instead of destiny. Installed in public space, the banners transform private gestures into civic markers: their format evokes an announcement or warning, yet what they declare remains deliberately ambiguous. Referring both to the physical lines of the palm and the unpredictable terrain of life, the title reflects the work's movement between ascent and descent, the personal and the illegible, and the bodily map and the urban landscape.

Exhibition view, {İniş çıkış yukarı aşağı} 2016, Moda, Istanbul

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PARK BOOKS

INTERVIEW

İrem Günaydın on Confronting Turkey's Economic Collapse

İrem Günaydın on what it means to be an artist in Istanbul today and the counter-archive she built from 24 years of Turkey's economic collapse.



Installation view of *About the Artist* by İrem Günaydın at THE PILL.
Courtesy of the artist and gallery.

by Jelena Martinović / May 20th, 2026

İrem Günaydın describes herself as an artist and a suffix, someone who works after authorship, attaching herself to structures that already exist and shifting their conditions from within. Working across installation, sculpture, and text, the Istanbul-based artist engages with what sits at the edges of institutional memory and official narratives. Her work consistently gravitates toward what systems discard or overlook, reframing it as the central subject.

Her third solo exhibition at THE PILL in Istanbul, *About The Artist*, turns 24 years of Turkish economic history into an environment. Seventy-five currency exchange receipts, enlarged to architectural scale and covering every surface of the gallery, document the collapse of the lira against the dollar from 2002 to the present. Each receipt carries a QR code linking to weather and wind data from the same date as the transaction. In Turkey, Günaydın observes, people check exchange rates with the same compulsive frequency as the weather forecast.

The receipts at the centre of the installation are documents most people sign and throw away. Produced in their millions across two decades of economic turbulence, they record a history that has been collectively lived but normalised and absorbed. Günaydın builds a counter-archive from them, blown up to a scale that makes the history they carry impossible to ignore.

We spoke with Günaydın about what it means to make art in Istanbul today, the economic conditions that shaped the exhibition, the logic of the suffix, and what it means to build a counter-archive out of documents that were never meant to be kept.

On language and food: Love of hors d'oeuvres at 'Salad Cake'

BY MATT HANSON | ISTANBUL | JAN 18, 2021 - 11:14 AM GMT+3 |



Irem Günaydın, "Flaschenpost". (Photo Courtesy of The Pill)

In Balat, the contemporary art gallery, The Pill, is exhibiting a series of works by Irem Günaydın an artist who places writing at the heart of her creative practice. The show, "Salad Cake" is a love letter to edible enigmas

The shadow of a green rabbit is cast over the entrance to The Pill, an otherwise nondescript storefront of a pale, semi-transparent whitewash, its entrance only steps away from the bustling inner-city traffic along the Golden Horn inlet. With reference to pop culture as televised via America, the rabbit conjures child cartoon nostalgia for the wily voice of Mel Blanc over the elusive character by Tex Avery.

Yet, the curious silhouette of the bunny as it stands incarnate at The Pill in Istanbul is not chewing on an orange carrot stick down to its green shoots. Its body leans against the exterior wall in a nonchalant fashion, rather hospitably, as to say, welcome, let's sit and dine like civilized human beings for once. What the works of artist Irem Günaydın offer as curated inside The Pill, is an eccentric play on the inherent variety and plain materiality of rabbit food.

Most immediate, the entryway foyer before the main gallery at The Pill is standard white as is customary for the majority of shows at the small institution that uniquely exhibits Francophone and Latin American artists from Paris and Mexico City for art lovers in Istanbul, certainly an invaluable exploit. Günaydın is local, however, from Istanbul, that is, despite its aversion to the prescriptions of exclusivity on the urban chain of neoliberal globalization.

And it might be argued that there is no other commodity quite like agricultural products to design and influence the economic ties and multicultural sways of international relations within the zeitgeists of old, and of today. Günaydın, however, does not treat food as such, but approaches the methods of its culinary preparation as philosophical metaphors, putting such elements as Newtonian physics, Grecian classicism, "The Matrix," and art history into a blender.

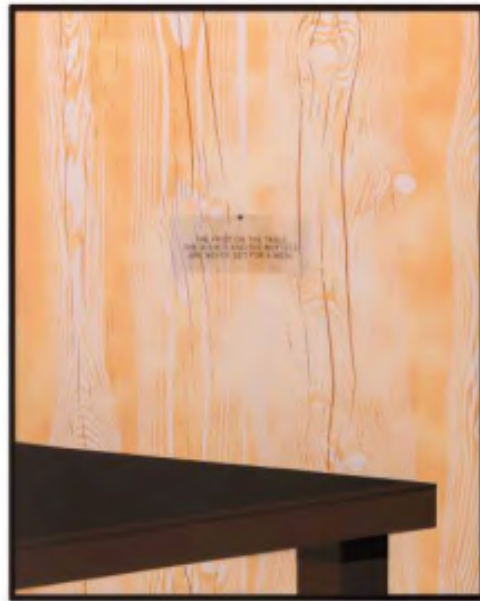
In terms of nutrients

The opening of “Salad Cake” spans a peculiar, autobiographical literary treatise, sprawled over a limited-edition poster. The outline of the recurring green rabbit stands under a titular text, “I owe you the truth in painting and I will tell it to you.” The font is elegant, old-fashioned, befitting the curtains of Ionic column imprints that hang before the core exhibition space. It has a contrasting effect, tricky, rabbit-like.

In her conversational writing voice, Günaydın introduces herself as a “rather young person” penning a letter to the reader “as an artist” and stipulates that the letter need not be answered. In fact, if the reader might try, they’d likely not find its author by her supposed name. She goes on to reveal that there are two Irems, in fact – one who makes art and the other who makes a living in a foreign exchange office.

Almost right away, she breaks from her humdrum professional confessional to thoughts on the ancient Greek pantheon, specifically the beauty contest, hosted by Paris of Troy, between Hera, Athena and Aphrodite over the golden apple. Under the heading, “Maceration,” which essentially means chewing, Günaydın goes from Newton’s gravitational apple to a spinning DJ whose record choices mirror Paris of Troy deliberating over the three goddesses.

Günaydın relates the force of gravity to her writing practice, and to the upward and downward motions required when cooking with a knife. And then, in her characteristic manner of flitting across subjects, she refers to the pill scene in the Matrix, which has curious parallels with the gallery in Balat showing her work, and with that of the rabbit, although green instead of white. Irem is like Alice, traveling to wonderland and back through her imagination.



Irem Günaydın, “The Integrals VII,” 2020, stencil on pasteboard, two colors silkscreen print, acetate, 100 by 80 centimeters. (Photo Courtesy of The Pill)

By way of color

If there is a relationship to the apples of French artist Paul Cezanne and the golden apple of Greek myth, Günaydın has inferred that it might be found by also relating the works of two other painters, gifted with historic insight into the nature of reality. Since Cezanne painted a basket of apples and transformed the representation and perception of art from Cubism to impressionism, Günaydın reflects on Rene Magritte, Nicolas Poussin and Cornelis Norbertus Gijsbrechts.

Magritte is famed for the phrase, “This is Not A Pipe,” a subtitle to his 1929 painting, “The Treachery of Images.” Günaydın imagined him in his signature bowler hat, presented with a pill, like that which Neo took in “The Matrix” but also, in her fancy, posed before Cezanne. Embarking from the surrealist interpretation a la Magritte, Günaydın turns “The Matrix” dialectic on its head, stating that there is no pill.

Readapting the 1999 script of the Wachowski sisters into the mouth of Magritte, Günaydın performed a dramatic stunt, interlocking narrative motifs in popular culture and making them her own. Her invented Magritte is quoted: “Then you will see that it is not the pill that changes the state of Matrix, it is yourself.” And following his materialization of a bird who eats the pills anyway, Günaydın goes on to announce the presence of Gijsbrechts.



İrem Günaydın, "Decimal Fraction," 2020, photogrammetry, multi-jet fusion print, 80 by 63 centimeters. (Photo Courtesy of The Pill)

The 17th-century Flemish painter Gijsbrechts was, according to Günaydın's whims, "from two-point-five dimensions." She first describes him as an artist who "makes things that do not exist appear to exist." And the kaleidoscope of sources runs deeper as Gijsbrechts, under the pen of Günaydın, speaks of a pair of ancient Greek painters from the fifth century B.C., Zeuxis of Heraclea, whose realism fools birds, before Parrhasios of Ephesus, fools Zeuxis.

From words to vegetables

In the concluding passages of her prefatory text work, Günaydın writes reflexively, with a self-conscious forbearance, so as to take the reader along gently into her otherwise dense escapades of surreal fiction. She explains: "Dear reader consider the following passages as a series of zig-zag and curve pathways that gradually lead the eye from foreground to middle ground to background."

There is a persistent and intriguing accord between visual art and creative fiction in terms of framing subjects of imagined perception. Both are conceptual contexts in which the existence of objects is suspect, the former often defined more in terms of space, as in a gallery, museum or installation, and the latter in terms of time, with respect to the durational length of the storytelling.

"Salad Cake" progresses through into The Pill with a series of rectangular pieces of a wooden aesthetic. Each background is exactly identical, only their variation proceeds with the tacking of transparent sheets on which capitalized texts are printed. They are the idiosyncratic enunciations of Günaydın, whose attention sways between culinary processes and philosophical axioms.

Some are a bizarre mixture of the two: "The fruit on the table / The dishes and the bottles / Are never set for a meal." Beside a video that finishes the show with the extravagant voice of the artist, a piece of photogrammetry and Multi Jet Fusion three-dimensional print, "Decimal Fraction" (2020) offers an unadorned arrangement of salad ingredients, which, considering her anecdotes from classical Greece to surrealist Paris, make art history.



*İrem Günaydin, Dancing in Circles Around a Center That Does Not Give a F*uck*

✦ THE INTEGRALS VII
STENCIL ON PASTEBOARD,
TWO COLORS
SILKSCREEN PRINT,
ACETATE
100 x 80 CM
2020

You belong to a generation that has often been described through its dehierarchized approach to the world: hyperlinked, seamlessly moving through high and low, old and new. How do you source your materials?

I don't source materials, materials source me! I always find the idea of artistic practice magical in terms of where it drags artists, far away from the shore, sometimes with the flow, other times against the current. Every idea I have becomes translucent to me along the way. I personally love dead artists and philosophers, slow food, and the form and function of plants! I don't think I ever relate to my generation.

I get the feeling that in your works, the subjective or at least affective point of view is one that matters. What is your affective community, and how is it reflected in your work?

I think my work is personal to a bare minimum. The economic reality of life as an artist led me to live a double life to make a living. Therefore, perforating my own identity as an artist has become inevitable within my work. I share the same reality along with many of my fellow artists, the reality of not being given a fuck. This caused frustration for a while for sure, but I don't care now.

When you described leftfield techno as what "you wouldn't hear in the main rooms," the metaphor for precisely such an approach to art seemed a very strong one. What would you say interests you in the genre?

The phrase leftfield came from baseball terminology, referring to the area of the outfield. As an artist I always felt I'm situated with a similar kind of positioning of a left fielder who plays the outfield. And I find leftfield techno which is regarded as being outside the mainstream similar to art where rhizomatic gestures, attitudes, and forms can manifest themselves boldly.

"In her imaginary dialogues, İrem has a tongue-in-cheek way of interweaving threads of the art historical canon with anecdotal knowledge from and around major art historical figures and themes, entangling them with visual references from 20th century popular culture—Bugs Bunny as the animated figure piercing the fabric of film, or Sylvester the Cat's ease at shifting between dimensions. Thus arriving at a punctured texture that allows space for movement, breath and potentialities in multiple directions. In Derridean terms, we would speak of subjectile, an eruption of the ground through the figure, a protrusion of art by its outside. Circling back to the message in the bottle, what İrem's letter and videos lay bare is the open space between the letter's externalization and its arrival at a destination where the speculative and the teleological processes of signification coexist, without the necessity of correspondence."

EXTRACT FROM *A LOVE OF HORS D'ŒUVRES*,
ASLI SEVEN, 2021
ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION *SALAD
CAKE*, İREM GÜNAYDIN, *THE PILL*, 2020-2021



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