

Breaking point, *Thank you for Hustling*, 2023  
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Kunstverein Springhornhof Neuenkirchen, Germany

by Gürsoy Doğtaş

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„While the sun and the moon follow their paths, time does not follow man“ goes a Daoist saying. Humans seem to experience time as an uninterrupted stream of moments. Once occurred, they are gone forever, never to return. French novelist Pascal Quignard (PG) writes that from the perspective of human existence, time leaves its cycle.

To use time for orientation, lines are drawn. One such line is the night sky. With the help of the annual circle of the sun (ecliptic), astrolabes calculate the positions of stars or determine the cardinal directions. The astrolabes of Viola Yeşiltaç can be seen in the vitrines of the Museum for Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul, not far from the Blue Mosque. They point to a time when these research and measurement instruments contributed to the formation of a large empire. Like in “glass coffins” (Johanna Hedva), the museum presents the relics of an empire that is no more. Neither the objects nor the empire are fully dead, so the vitrines try to make us believe. Hence, the museum revives them with narratives of nationalist hegemony.

Viola Yeşiltaç, however, measures lifetimes with these tools. Human existence leaves the cycle of time and replaces it “with the line as a long shadow of genealogical reach”, in the words of PG. Seen that way, ancestors and successors leave their shadow on individual lives. They migrate into the exhibition space.

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The study of ecliptics requires the invention of lines. On them, the star signs move around. Animals or animal signs are projected onto the night sky (PG). On earth, animals are killed for their furs or their skins.

Empty maritime images on the rough backs of artificial leather. Fibers that soak up watery paint like aquarelle paper. Akin to weather studies, Viola Yeşiltaç observes the open sea with its deep horizon in a repetitive visual composition featuring shades of blue. It might be the texture of the artificial leather that leads the gaze into infinity.

Memories of Martin Wong’s leather jacket:

He moved to New York in the early 1980s. Like the punks of his time, he painted on his black leather jacket. On it, one can see hands that gesture his name in sign language.

„Presentation detail accompanying the music: *as if one heard from underneath the skin.*“ (PG/ Clara Schumann)

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To orient time, lifelines are read from the palms of hands. (PG)

Towers made from layers of felt. On one of them stands the amber-coloured folding chair „Plia“. The object made from the material of Social Sculpture and the implementation of democratic design – together they form „Plia on the Pea“ (2023) and make it harder to access the exhibition space. Whose barricade is this, and against whom? An interrupted migration?

Father, are you behind the barricade, keeping us away?

In 1982, the poet Aras Ören writes the lyrics to the song „Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm“ (Love, Deutschmark and Death) for the band Ideal. The German band sings it in Turkish. On the inside of the album cover, the lyrics are printed without a German translation. Aras Ören recalls: “The song describes the situation of guest workers at that time, their destiny. While writing, I thought of Anatolian folk songs that feature the lines: I worked so hard and when I finally had some money together, death came.”

The song is about the false love of the Deutschmark, the narrator is Turkish. Annette Humpe sings: „Yıllar geçti yüzüm soldu. Mark dediğin yalan sevda. Hayaller hep tuz buz oldu.“ (years have passed, my face is faded. What you call Mark is false love. My dreams are frozen .... )

I take the hand of the Other.