DUST

Gern is pleased to present *DUST*, Bora Akinciturk's second solo exhibition in New York. The show brings together new paintings, a site-specific installation, and *DIAL TONE*, a publication made for the exhibition.

The exhibition starts with Istanbul, and with the buildings that have been disappearing from it. After the 1999 İzmit earthquake, safer housing became an urgent need across Turkey. In 2012, a new urban transformation law pushed that urgency into a fast-moving cycle of demolition and rebuilding. On Istanbul's Asian side, in neighborhoods such as Suadiye, Caddebostan, and Göztepe, many modest apartment buildings from the 1960s through the 1990s were replaced by taller, denser developments. What was presented as earthquake preparation also became a real-estate machine.

Akinciturk reflects on the loss of those buildings, memory, and ways of living, which changed drastically with how technology progressed and systems evolved. In the large plaid paintings, each number refers to an old landline or early mobile number connected to the artist's friends and family. These are numbers from a time when people still memorized each other's homes, called from hallways, waited through dial tones, and knew that someone's parents might pick up first.

The plaid patterns come from another kind of memory. In Istanbul, girls 'school uniforms were often identified by specific colors and checks. For Akinciturk, these patterns carry the feel of adolescence: school codes, friendships, crushes, sidewalks, and the everyday rhythm of the city.

The futuristic font used for the phone numbers reflects a transformation of Akinciturk's early imagination of the future, an optimistic vision shaped by childhood ideas of technology, and progress. Mobile phones, the internet, and digital communication once promised a better globalist world (globalist in a good way), more freedom, greater connection, and the feeling that borders, social, cultural, and physical would become less important. Instead, hyper-capitalism turned connection into constant consumption, attention into currency, and everyday life into doom scrolling, and watching brain rot videos. The works hold this tension between nostalgia and disappointment, between what the future once promised and what it became.

In the smaller works, Akinciturk uses family photographs from his demolished home, along with images of apartment buildings where close friends still live. In these images, the people have been removed with basic AI tools. Rooms, furniture, façades, and empty spaces remain. The result is quiet but uneasy, as if the picture is trying to remember what has been taken out.

The exhibition also includes a new site-specific installation: a working phone line. Visitors are invited to call **1-888-M41L B0X (1-888-641-5209)** from their mobile phones while in the gallery.

Leave a message, a complaint, a number, a song, anything. The calls become part of the exhibition's live archive.

DIAL TONE, the publication accompanying the show, includes texts by artists and writers, along with further manipulated photographs connected to Istanbul's ongoing urban transformation.

Rooted in Istanbul, made from the distance of London, and landing now on the Lower East Side, DUST follows what sticks around after a place changes beyond recognition. The entirety of the works in the show consider how disaster, urban transformation, and technological progress reshape not only a city and the way we communicate but also the ways memory, intimacy, and belonging slowly disappear.

-Mehmet Ekinci

Bora Akinciturk (b. 1982, Ankara, Turkey) lives and works in London and Istanbul. Selected exhibitions include *The Interior,* Artissima Fair, Present Future Section, Turin, Italy, 2025; *A Normal Life,* Pilevneli Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey, 2024; *SPREZZATURA,* Amanita, Florence, Italy, 2021; *SKEE*, in collaboration with *Iain Ball,* narrative projects, London, UK, 2019; *A Very Small Window,* Kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, Latvia, 2019; *VIBRANT MATURITY® 7+ ADULT SHOW,* in collaboration with *Ville Kallio,* Futura, Prague, The Czech Republic, 2018; *Keep Smiling is The Art of Living,* Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York, USA, 2017. His band *Fino Blendax*, in collaboration with *Ahmet Öğüt* at: The ICA, London; Chisenhale Gallery, London; VanAbbe Museum, Eindhoven; The 56th Venice Biennale, Creative Time Summit: The Night Art Made the Future Visible 2015. Akinciturk holds a BFA in Graphic Design, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, 2007; Fine Art Postgraduate studies at Middlesex University, London, 2008.