

Can we, all together, just try to contemplate on getting lighter, with all its heaviness? I'm talking about getting lighter as a necessity in itself. In a time when ways of carrying on are hankered for, in which people are tired of using words such as regeneration, recovery, hope and healing, in such strange, repetitive and cumbersome times. In a world where number of people dreaming of flying like a bird increases rapidly...

Sena Başöz, in her exhibition titled "On Lightness" is inviting us to experience her imagination full of subtleties. The exhibition ascends accompanied by the sounds of the wings on the hardwood floors of Depo that are squeaking with our weights.

The installation piece titled Forough includes hundreds of images of birds that are spread around the space. We exchange glances with these bird portraits with large headrooms that seem to make space for the viewer's mind. Başöz has come across these taxidermied birds in the Natural History Museum of St. Joseph High School, and they are dated sometime between the end of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. She photographs them, while at the same time keeping in mind that photography is in fact an act of killing in itself. That moment when the representation of all those lives that have been restricted, left devoid of freedom and lost turns into a photograph. The dilemma of anchoring a whole life in a single photograph or letting it continue its course. While we exchange glances with the dear bird portraits without losing eye contact, our mind plies between trying not to forget and remembering.

Just like all the times we have been able or not able to mourn.

A wind, direction of which is not easy to anticipate, as in life, accompanies hundreds of bird portraits that have been printed on paper and installed on the wall. With Başöz's creativity, this artificial wind enables the papers to flap like birds. The sound that bird portraits make while flapping without leaving their surface turns into a momentary wing for all the other beings in the space. The sound of the road that leads to freedom, to being oneself and to getting lighter is shaky like a sparrow's voice, hasty yet authentic.

The possibility of being able to fly like a bird.

Like the sky that houses all kinds of birds and in fact just like life itself.

In the sheltered backroom of the space that is just like a Box, a drawing with the same name depicts two parakeets ascending from a cardboard box. Başöz makes the viewer witness to this moment of liberation with the power pastels introduce to the image. Birds shoot out from a parcel that is contrary to their nature. Getting out of an impossible and uncertain situation through flapping with the potential of becoming oneself. A state of flying towards freedom in an angsty, fragile and authentic way. Like a metaphor for a human's, artist's, woman's self-realization. A form of flying towards self-entirety.

The Ivy is the only living being in the exhibition, and is brought from the artist's home to the space to regenerate a piece standing as a silent witness to our living rooms and privacy. The piece includes fragments from a family photo referring to Başöz's personal history and the ivy from her apartment completes these fragments. The ivy, with its tangling, proceeding and resistant nature that strikes more roots the more it's pruned,

bridges a gap of over thirty years between itself and the ivy in the image. While the collaboration of these two plants makes us think about transposition of womanhood in the family, the things that may be carried over and being a perpetuator of tradition, the roots of the ivy keep stretching in the water. Womanhood also keeps proceeding on its route sometimes through meandering inside and outside, and sometimes through coiling onto itself.

Through this exhibition Başöz focuses on the creaturehood in human nature.

She thinks about this trait being the sole link connecting us to each other and to nature. And she counts on this side of ours the most.

In another corner of the space, a wonderful example of absurd creativity, a sculpture titled Feet is floating on water. Just like all other beings, they have also found a way to carry on.

Feet that don't sink but can't flow within this surface with defined borders. Their lightness prevents them from sinking. A humble and strong sculpture of miracles or being able to proceed at times when it's impossible to flow with life's rhythm.

From the Eraser, which can even be considered as the gist of the education system in our collective memory, sounds diffuse into the space: When we listen carefully to this eraser that both erases and records, we understand that it is both a receiver and transmitter. This eraser with an antenna is a search for the frequency that will make our voices heard without squeaking within a world in which the right channel never seems to be found... It keeps signaling in an attempt to be found, reunited and reached.

All these sounds, air and feelings go through the Boxes that are piled on top of one another despite their lightness, defined by slender borders. From our minds that we can't tidy up, issues we can't seem to leave messy, envying the Swiss Parliament that doesn't open due to lack of agenda, our sore arm that holds the copper wire on the antenna to receive the right frequency from our squeaky world and from the womanhood and manhood that we inherited from our families and from all of these things.

Our scattered world of thoughts has been filtered through a net strainer, tidied up and put aside to a corner. Just like the artist visualized in a simple graphite drawing, tidying up and settling into a vehicle is the desire of such dispersed minds that hope to embark on new journeys.

In the dictionary, lightness is defined as the opposite of heaviness. Lightness doesn't make sense in the absence of heaviness.

Light as a bird, heavy as a stone.

The exhibition titles we have seen over the last few years in the contemporary art scene can't be out of pure coincidence and perhaps can be considered as a reflection of the grey cloud we have been sharing recently; The Shining Darkness, Dead-end of Bliss, Darker Than Night, After the Night...*

Now it's time to think about lightness with all its weight.

In this exhibition Başöz points to mourning, getting lighter by making heaviness present through its absence and to being oneself. The exhibition is woven with signs of a potential that is transparent, genuine and aware of its own fragility.

Just like Forough, Sena Başöz says "Keep the flight in mind, the bird may die".

"On Lightness" reminds us to fly with the weight of ourselves and the whole world.

Yasemin Özcan

*2016 - The Shining Darkness, CANAN - Rampa; Dead-end of Bliss, Yasemin Özcan - artSümer; Darker than Night, Fulya Çetin - sanatorium; 2017 - After the Night, Fulya Çetin / Çağla Köseoğulları - FAIL Books