

RECIPROCAL VISIT  
DEPO  
20 November - 31 December 2009  
Lüleci Hendek Caddesi, no. 12, Tophane

Rafiq Abdullayev, **Mother Azerbaijan**, sculpture\*

The sculpture titled *Mother Azerbaijan* was designed by the Azerbaijani sculptor Rafiq Abdullayev in 1956. However, the work was never realized due to financial difficulties in the Soviet era. The original model is currently on display at the Independence Museum in Baku.

*Mother Azerbaijan* holds a sword which symbolizes peace and strength and strikes fear in the hearts of her enemies. The female figure dressed in Azerbaijani national clothing was intended to be erected in place of the removed Kiev statue in a square which is now empty.

Sona Abgaryan, **I'm Disappointed**, video

This work consists of a music video in which the artist herself plays in. The music was produced by the Armenian women punk band Pincet. The video reflects the disappointment of the artist with the effects of religion on the contemporary social and political situation in Armenia.

Endam Acar, **My Country**, video

Endam Acar's work is a 4-channel animation video. The artist asked children he met on the streets, in houses (like those in South Ossetia refugee camps near Tbilisi) and schools he visited to make drawings on his portable paper ribbon. After collecting all these drawings on a rolled paper ribbon, he made a selection and created 4 different stories for each of the 4 countries he visited and produced this animation video.

Selda Asal, from the 'Dreams & Struggles' series **All Pale**, Tehran, video & **Dream is still a Puzzle**, Tbilisi, video

Since the year 2007, Selda Asal has been producing projects consisting of video films, sound installations and music videos by working with teenagers in Turkey, Germany, Denmark and France. These two video works constitute the 9<sup>th</sup> series which were realized in Georgia and Iran in the scope of the 'Reciprocal Visit' project. The videos have different titles, but

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\* In Armenia and Georgia which were among the countries visited for the 'Reciprocal Visit' project Fatma Çiftçi encountered two monuments that resembled many other statues around the world: mostly women figures symbolizing freedom, victory and other national sentiments. These two monuments were built during the Soviet era around the same time and with the same aims. The artist was inspired to do this project when she realized that there were no such monuments in Azerbaijan, one of the countries that became independent after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

conceptually they all focus on ‘dreams and struggles.’

The artist creates workshop spaces in order to collaborate with youngsters on texts focusing on dreams and struggles and then prepares a new collage text from parts of what they have written. This collage text forms the lyrics of the video works. The music in the videos is produced in collaboration with different musicians each time and the final work is filmed by the artist to form the final version of the video work.

Volkan Aslan, **Under Construction**, installation & 4 books

In each of the four books that complete the installation there are numerous photographs taken by the artist where the traces of the communist regime in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Islamic revolution in Iran are visible and coexist with renewal processes. In all the countries visited in the scope of the 'Reciprocal Visit' project it is noticeable that there are constant renewal and construction processes going on. This installation is composed of ready made objects, personal belongings, photographs and drawings collected during the journey. Their veiled condition just like the historical processes in the countries they belong to create the sense that the efforts for renewal, restoration and reform will never cease completely. No matter how much these historical documents are veiled, the fact they exist cannot be obliterated and this reminds one that certain things will never change.

Volkan Aslan, **Chapter 3; Chapter 4; Chapter 8; Chapter 11**, 8 photographs

Volkan Aslan collected this series of photographs during a visit to the house of a photographer who works for a communist newspaper in Yerevan. These 8 photographs were taken from a series of 17 film stills with Russian subtitles that the photographer captured at various closed and open-air film theaters. The artist arranged these stills from different films in a way that they would communicate with each other. The series composed of images shot by a film director, framed by a photographer and rearranged by the artist brings together three different time periods, three different tools of communication and three different cultures.

Fatma Çiftçi, **Lada**, video

Ladas were cheap cars produced for the public in the Soviet era with similar aims as the production of beetle model Volkswagens during the Nazi era. The video is composed of photographs the artist took during her journey to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan of Lada cars – one of the rare images reminiscent of the Soviet era – where their license plates are visible.

Shahab Fotouhi, **Untitled**, video

Zeren Gökten, **Aboveground**, video

In all the visited countries including Turkey Zeren Gökten worked with 'pigeon raisers', which is a hobby-like profession many people are familiar with, but also a very particular profession

and an Eastern phenomenon specific to this region. The name of this project is *Aboveground* because this culture is only visible if you look towards the sky. It also exists in United States, Europe and Asia but with major cultural dis-similarities. By filming and interviewing pigeon-raisers the artist focuses on the relationship of these men with pigeons. Pigeon-raising is a 'manly' thing to do. Göktañ also searches for women pigeon-raisers although on some level she knows that she will never be able to find one. She chooses to remain optimistic and persistently asks each man if he ever saw a woman doing this and why not. For these men this is a place where they can free their souls and genuinely love. It is also a place where they can escape from the struggles of real life and 'bad habits' like going to coffee houses and playing cards. Consequently some form of ideology is created through an obsession with pigeons. This ideology seems to exist in a universe that is beside the realm of everyday life and not inside it. The work is a poetic-editing of Göktañ's research.

Deniz Gül, **Untitled Series**, text series

Deniz Gül tried to engage in dialogs on politics with people she met in the region which would take place in their daily routine. She asked them the following question: "What kind of rebellions are there in the name of achieving free expression?" After she returned she started writing about the voices she collected, discussions, talks and rebellions she witnessed during her journey, news she recorded from the TV and the radio, sounds accumulating in her mind and the inner dialogs that developed while she was experiencing this process. The text series composed of the stories Gül collected on a daily basis in a way that will reveal a linguistic memory and involves inner transformations can be read on the A5 size papers she placed on the wall.

Ali Hasanov, **Think of the Radio**, video

'Oblique Strategies' written by Brian Eno was the starting point of Hasanov's work in İstanbul. From over one hundred phrases written by Eno he chose the only phrase he could relate to and focused on it: "think of the radio." This phrase opens up a way for us to rethink about ourselves and our speeds at a time when we have gotten used to living on the edges at maximum speeds and in crazy states. In this 5-minute video, the artist with a background in performance focuses on the gestures of people with very gradual movements. While in our day technology has made speed an integral part of our lives, these still images aim to drag the viewers to 5 minutes of inertia.

Ali Hasanov and Nadia Tsulukidze, **Appointment**, video

The meeting of the two artists at the second workshop held at the Tobacco Warehouse in July.

Gözde İlkin, **Special Passport**, object

During the 'Reciprocal Visit' journey, the process of crossing borders and experiencing each time a mode of existence as a factor of 'border violation' led me to interrogate my identity and question where I am departing from and where I am going over and over again. On the one hand physical stance lost its significance and identity itself became the only factor of

border violation and on the other hand the dialogs in the visited countries ‘deported’ all these violations. While I was thinking about violation and borders, I had the idea of stitching a passport which would pose ‘as’ a passport. When the passport that makes its owner invited and acceptable was transformed into a violation object itself its function suddenly changed. Due to its color and the associated definitions what was originally a normal passport became an object of violation. The stitching work increasingly became a long, tiresome and boring process – just like those moments experienced at every border crossing when the perception of identity disappeared.

### Gözde İlkin, **Temporary Juxtapositions**

The wall installation is composed of waste material, paper, needlework on handkerchiefs and found objects collected and recorded during the ‘Reciprocal Visit’ journey for 18 days. Beginning with the question “how can I get to know a country, its people and its stance in three days,” I started collecting waste materials and handcrafts at every destination we visited after Georgia. We can say that the wall installation *Temporary Juxtapositions* including images embroidered on ephemeral material and found objects is a map of the momentary dialogs and encounters experienced during the journey made out of waste material.

### Ceren Oykut, **Butterfly**, map drawing, sewed rubber cloth

The map-cloth cloth is a product of the entire journey – from Turkey to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and to Iran. It was drawn in collaboration with Gözde İlkin. During this journey in April 2009 Ceren Oykut had followed on the map all the roads taken by minibuses and trains to travel from one country to another. In addition to this she drew all the roads taken by each artist during their work and research journeys in the visited towns. Finally she drew small draft plans (personal maps breaking away with the usual geographical mappings) based on the roads taken by the artists. During the second workshop Oykut transformed all the roads she drew into a patronage map and turned them into a costume.

### Gökçe Süvari, **Haunted**, drawing and text arrangement

The title of this work is a quotation from a dialog in an old cult horror film (“The dead whose haunted souls haunt the living”). It is composed of various stories – some interesting and some humorous – the artist created based on the conversations she had, the sound recordings she made, the notes she took in the countries she visited, as well as everyday situations and her own interpretations. We can say that it is a fragmented version of a journal in the form of a book. The stories include anecdotes belonging to nostalgia for the past and involving changing circumstances and sometimes humorous remarks about them.

### Sophia Tabatadze, **Traveler’s Journal**, print on paper

Tabatadze first prepared notebooks composed of print outs of e-mail messages the artists sent to each other. During the first and second workshops the artists used these notebooks to take notes like journals. In this way invisible personal notes about the project were collected. The

artist exhibits her own notes in the form of posters and the other artists' notes in the form of photocopies.

Nadia Tsulukidze, **Revolutionary Clothing**, postcard series

What is the difference between a woman who wears hijab and a woman who spends hours to have a sexy body and sexy look? A male friend of mine said: "Covered women are sexier. They elicit a bigger desire to see the covered parts." I realized that when I see a woman in hijab, I feel the same desire to uncover her.

I made an experiment. I put hijab on a naked mannequin and the difference was amazing: it really looked sexier; the tension of breaking a taboo made the mannequin more desirable. What would happen if the Western body industry were to include hijab in Western clothing to increase the desirability of the body?

Tsomak Oga, **I AM COMING TO SMASH PATRIARCHY**, performance

The departure point of this work is the sound of ezan. The first time I heard a man reciting ezan I started thinking about what would happen if a woman recited it. This thought immediately yields to a controversy and a contradiction since the religion itself is very masculine and it is a symbol of patriarchy. I thought if a woman recites ezan I can eliminate the aspects of religion, power and masculinity in it. In this performance I will use electronic samples over the sound of ezan recited by a woman and will turn the volume up and down unlike in ezan. Now these are my electronic arms to smash the patriarchy. I am wondering what would it be like if I played this music in a mosque in Turkey? Now, my mosque in İstanbul is DogZstar.