Old/New
New/Old

Mirak Jamal
Aysun Oner
Anna Sznajder

Curatorial initiative
Katarzyna Kosmala and Maria Daskalaki

Preview 1 September 5 pm

Istanbul Bilgi University, Santral Campus, E3 Building
Kazim Karabekir Cad. No 2/13, Eski Silahtaraga Elektrik Santrali, 34060 Eyup/Istanbul
Exhibition 1 and 2 September 2010 at Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey

Memory is what makes us, memory is what’s often left to be translated of the old.

Memories are what we live by.

In the snapshots, in the fragments of memories we create histories and re-write them in retrospect.

The exhibition explores the patterns of translation and displacements of cultural practices and visual moments as well as a contemporary position in relation to our tradition. Participating artists attend to the past and engage with the reiteration of the old through the new and rewrite the now by acknowledging the old. Istanbul forms an ideal meeting place to explore memory; a place of merging influences, negotiating frictions of the past that lie east of Bosphorus with cultural influences of the West. Tradition is enmeshed here with new trends; a juxtaposition of the old with the new creates tensions, irreconcilabilities and results in a peculiar fusion of a global hybridism. Geography and history are intertwined.

Aysun Oner presents the first documentary project about stencil-graffiti culture in Istanbul and Turkey. Istanbul Baskisi/Istanbul Press, exhibited within Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture, consists of a series of photographs taken between 2006-2008 (an artistic collaboration with poet Bahattin Sağlam). The project also includes Istanbul’da Stencil/Stencil in Istanbul, the video featuring the street art stencil graffiti artists.

The Bobbin laces, made by women of Bobowa, collected by Anna Sznajder form an action-intervention-comment on the disappearing tradition of local crafts in Southern Poland. Transformed into an art object, this heritage collection marks its presence in the gallery space. Sznajder addresses the questions of adjusting artistic strategies to current socio-economic realms and the market-driven reality.

Mirak Jamal, presents History of our Forefathers through his Timeline of facial hair. He states: The past is not a separate space than now, and neither is physical distance that binds people beyond the borders and territoriality. In his drawings, he explores his Iranian roots and searches for a synthesis of human identity. The iconic imagery of kings, conquerors, and historical heros’ facial hair reflect shifting fashions and cultures. Versatility of facial styles, like the fu-manchu of Genghis Khan, the long beard of Cyrus, or a Qajar-Era imperial moustache, all come to represent certain timeframes for identification.

The works in the exhibition reflect aesthetic engagement based on the mixing of the old/the new worldviews and the ways of doing things. We face a particular moment – of ‘catching’ up with disappearing cultural forms, before they are lost, before they turn into memories and become possible versions of histories.

The exhibition is part of an international collaborative project that explores the themes of Boundless Creativity/Urban Subversions. Events related to these themes will also take place at Bilgi, Santral Campus, room E3 201 on the 1st Sept, prior to the opening of the exhibition and will include the following presentations/performances:

9.30-10.10 Umbilical viators and exiles (Miguel Imas /Alia Weston)
10.10 -10.50 Art installation: Resisting dominant (Katarzyna Kosmala)
10.50-11.30 Market Estate Project: A triptych (Maria Daskalaki)
11.30-12.10 Performance: I love deadlines! Altering time (Jean-Luc Moriceau)
12.10-12.50 Music: Breathing out as organizing beyond controlling (Nick Wilson/ Howard Milner)