

Faint Flames
des Feux Affaiblis
Didem Erbaş

Cité Internationale
des Arts

18 rue de l'Hôtel de
Ville
75004 Paris

13
September 2023

6 - 9 pm
Studio: 8419
4. floor



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Faint Flames // des Feux

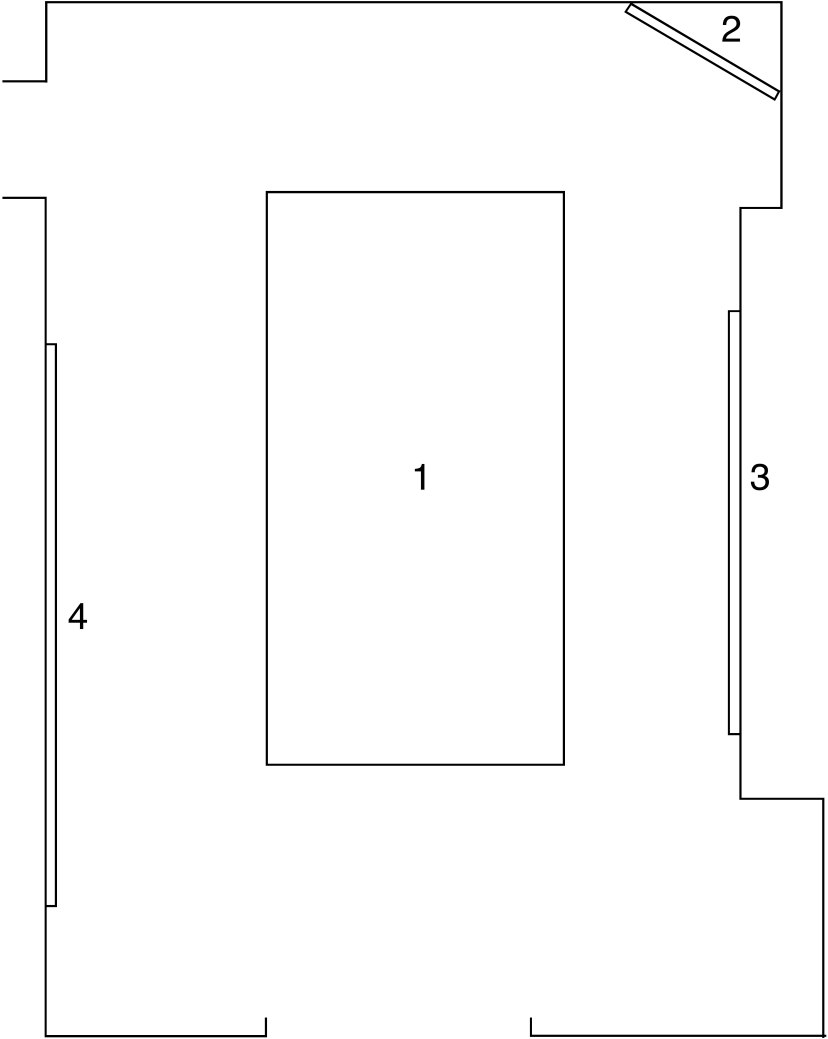
Affaiblis

Didem Erbaş

13.09.2023

In 1977, in his text "L'articolo delle lucciole", Pier Paolo Pasolini compared the power vacuum in his country to the disappearance of fireflies due to artificial lights and environmental factors. The vacuum that Pasolini refers to was created when the left was intimidated by the government and erased/extinct.

Inspired by Pasolini's article and Georges Didi-Huberman's book "Survivance des lucioles", this exhibition is part of a process in which I work on migration, politics, power relations, drones, and war strategies. In the exhibition, fireflies appear as abstract forms to represent the power vacuum in my own country, and all the forms in the exhibition, together with the elements and images in the video question the relationships between the living and the non-living, the artificial and the natural.



1. and 2. Cheerful Strangers

2023

Installation

latex, paper mache, air dry clay, plastic, wax, silicone, paraffin, pigment, polyurethane foam, wire, epoxy, metal, varnish, copper wire, resin, iPad, sketchbook.

3. Struggle for Survival

2023

found footage video and sound, found gravures, short videos on the right side were taken in Silivri, İstanbul. 3”17’ loop.

4. Diagonal Force

2023

handmade color from rose and poppy flowers, pigment, wax, agar-agar, dried roses, copper wire, bamboo paper, paper mache, varnish, and found materials.

“Have the fireflies disappeared completely or are they alive after all?”

Installation *Cheerful Strangers*

The installation on the floor, the paintings on the wall, and the video are three separate works that are all interconnected.

Although the starting point of the forms that compose the installation were a few engravings and objects I bought in the first weeks of my stay in Paris, in the process these forms became reminiscent of the creatures (maggots, worms) in the video. Along with the engravings I found, pipes, metal parts, and similar architectural protrusions I saw in Paris inspired the embodiment of these objects. The objects and forms, which I create using different materials, are also intended to evoke the indistinct figures of an animal or a human being found in archaeological excavations such as bones, etc.

Paintings and the forms on the wall

Diagonal Force

The paintings on the wall are made with colors I obtained from rose and poppy flowers. Although the material I used is extremely delicate, like flowers, the paintings depict scenes from video footage of

modern wars using unmanned aerial vehicles like drones. As in modern war videos, the images in the paintings are offered from a bird's eye view, from a perspective that only birds, drones or instruments of power can witness.

Video *Struggle for Survival*

planaria

The tapeworms and maggots seen in the left frame of the video are *planarians* that spontaneously come into existence in nature (in water). Their cell renewal is so fast that no matter how many pieces you cut them into, each one forms a new planaria. In other words, *they can live forever*. For this reason, they are used in human research in areas such as cell regeneration, the fight against cancer, the regeneration of lost limbs, tissues, and organs, and eternal life. The fireflies – also seen on the left frame – are inspired by Pasolini's article and became the material for the video.

fireflies

Fireflies are small insects that have an extraordinary ability called bioluminescence. Bioluminescence is the result of chemical reactions that occur in the fireflies' bodies and causes impressive light shows, mostly at night.

Firefly larvae live in the soil and prey on snails, slugs, grubs, cutworms, and other soil dwellers. Habitat loss, pesticide use, and artificial light are the three most serious threats facing fireflies, with some species more at risk than others.

war images

The images seen on the right frame of the video are war scenes from around the world that have been normalized by being shown over and over on various TV channels. The text in the video is a short essay on how the images shown on TV by the mainstream media are normalized in the human mind.

sound

One of the sounds accompanying the video is didgeridoo, an ancient Aboriginal people's instrument. The other accompanying sound is a metronome I found at a Paris flea market, a sound blended with the sounds of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Didem Erbaş is an artist born in Istanbul, and currently living and working in Istanbul. She holds a BA in Painting from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and an MA in Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design from Sabancı University. In her practice, she works with installation, site-specific installation/intervention, paintings, and video with a focus on geography, right to accommodation, human intervention to nature, traces on spaces, and transformation. In her works, she is interested in socio-politic issues in her living geography – Turkey. She participated in many group shows in Turkey and also London, Berlin, and Bulgaria. She now continues her Ph.D. studies at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University.