

Press Release

ISTANBUL-OFF-SPACES – Independent Art Spaces in Dialogue.

Places for social discourse and discussions about civil society

Exhibitions – Events – Art Education

Place: Art Space Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2, 10997 Berlin
Opening Hours: July 4 till August 16 2009, 12 – 7 p.m.
Admission: free
Opening: Friday, July 3, 7 p.m., Welcome Address: Dr. Franz Schulz,
District Mayor Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg
**Press Briefing &
Preview:** Friday, July 3, 11 a.m.; two artists per group will be present

Thirteen art groups are invited to the Istanbul-Off-Spaces exhibition, and their works on show represent the increasing number and growing influence of independent non-commercial artist collectives and art spaces in Istanbul. Some of them, like Nomad, xurban_collective or Apartman Project, can draw upon many years of experience concerning international exhibitions, whereas Daralan or Kurye represent the newcomer scene. The exhibition was prompted by the 20th anniversary of the town twinning between Berlin and Istanbul celebrated this year. It is funded by the Capital Culture Fund and the Art Space Kreuzberg/Bethanien.

With their works, the artists aim to track down social and political phenomena, and by temporarily taking up residence in Kreuzberg try to initiate a lasting dialogue, especially with the local cultural scene of second and third generation so-called „post-migrants“. Selda Asal and Serdar Ateser from Apartman Project, for example, are planning on producing a music video with school classes from the Kurt Löwenstein School in Berlin Neukölln, where more than 90 percent of the pupils are from a non-German background. Also, a poster by Hakan Akçura will be on exhibition that shows a faceless Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, thereby alluding to the fact that in Islam, graphic depictions of the Prophet Mohammed’s face are commonly forbidden. A light installation on the Bethanien building, on the other hand, refers to the Mahya, an illuminated religious message hung between the minarets of a mosque.

Meanwhile these and similar works have become the subject of discussion in several Turkish publications, and outline the increasing opening of contemporary visual art and its protagonists in Istanbul, the city that is fast becoming a global arts player and will be the European Capital of Culture in 2010.

Host Stéphane Bauer from the Art Space Kreuzberg/Bethanien and Berlin-based artist Sencer Vardarman are looking forward to welcoming the following artists:

5533, Apartman Project, 2+1, Artık Mekan, Atilkunst, Daralan, Hafriyat-Karaköy, Kurye, Masa Project, Nomad, Upgrade!Istanbul, Oda Projesi and xurban_collective.

Detailed information on the artists, their works on show and the independent Istanbul art scene: <http://www.berlinerpool.de/istanbul-off-spaces/>

Download pictures:

<http://www.berlinerpool.de/istanbul-off-spaces/press.htm>

On Saturday, July 4, the exhibition is accompanied by the following supporting programme:

4 p.m.: Introductory presentation by Deniz Erbaş, independent cultural worker, about organisation and working conditions of the independent Istanbul art scene

4.30 p.m.: Introduction of the art groups and discussion about their works and the Off-Scene in Istanbul with guests from 5533, Apartment Project, 2+1, Artık Mekan, Atilkunst, Daralan, Hafriyat-Karaköy, Kurye, Masa Project, Nomad, Upgrade!Istanbul, Oda Projesi and xurban_collective
Presentation: Deniz Erbaş

from 7.30 p.m.: Barbeque on the Balcony

8 p.m.: Panel Discussion on the topic „Berlin / Istanbul in Comparison“, with Nancy Atakan (5533, Istanbul), Deniz Erbaş (Istanbul), Stephan Kallage (Westgermany, Berlin) and Antje Weitzel (Uqbar, Berlin)
Presentation: Stéphane Bauer, Sencer Vardarman

The supporting programme will be in English.

At the same time, the video screening of „Be a Dream!/ Sei ein Traum!“ by Selda Asal within the scope of “Mehr PomPoms!“, Berlin’s young culture weekend, will be shown at the Ballhaus Naunynstraße at 6 p.m.

Ballhaus Naunynstraße – Galerie, Naunynstr. 27, 10997 Berlin

<http://www.ballhausnaunynstrasse.de/>

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