

Pi Artworks London: *Sticks and Stones*  
Fatma Bucak  
Curated by Nat Muller  
29 September – 21 November 2017  
Private view: Thursday, 28 September, 18:30 – 20:30

Pi Artworks London is pleased to present Fatma Bucak's first solo exhibition in the UK, *Sticks and Stones*, curated by Nat Muller. A weekly in-gallery performance will accompany the work *Black Ink* (2016-17) with more details to follow.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never break me," hums the old nursery rhyme. Today, in an ever-polarising climate of assault on the press and free speech, words are increasingly used to break those who utter them. In *Sticks and Stones* Fatma Bucak addresses two of the most pertinent struggles of our times: for freedom of expression and freedom of movement. Through her photographs, videos and installations she shows how these two liberties are inextricably intertwined.

Sticks and stones as materials appear frequently throughout the exhibition. *Damascus Rose* (2016-ongoing) uses rose cuttings that have travelled from Damascus to London where they will then be grafted and cultivated in a bed of earth, in the hopes they will take root. This route echoes the perilous journey and plight of millions of Syrian refugees fleeing the war. In *342 Names* (2016-ongoing), Bucak carved the names of 342 people who forcibly disappeared following Turkey's 1980 military coup, into a lithographic stone, one on top of the other until they became illegible. Specially for this exhibition she has made a series of lithographic prints using one inking of the stone until it stopped producing an image: a humble memorial to the cruel erasure of memory.

Bucak draws from her personal background of belonging to a Kurdish minority in Turkey and from global conditions in which repression, dispossession, migration and violence have transformed human existence considerably. She has developed a subtle and poetic sensitivity in her work that responds to issues of borders, displacement, and identity. Her practice, whether using objects, her own body or those of others, often represents the raw reality of a world becoming intellectually smaller and geographically contained.

The photo series *A Study of Eight Landscapes* (2014-ongoing) depicts sculptural compositions of objects found along the borderlands of US-Mexico, Turkey-Armenia and Syria-Turkey. Not only do these images offer an alternative view of these liminal spaces, they also implore us to consider a myriad of possible narratives. In the video *Scouring the Press* (2016) we see the artist together with two other women crouched on their knees in a rugged landscape. In front of them are tubs of water in which they wash Turkish newspapers. The act embodies the machinery of labour going into censorship. Another comment on the media landscape in Turkey is *Black Ink* (2016-17) a recipe for ink made from the ashes of a burned book found at the charred warehouse of an independent Kurdish publishing house. As with all works in *Sticks and Stones*, Bucak reminds us of the fragility, but also of the resilience of life.

**Pi Artworks London is open Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 – 18:00.**  
**For information, interviews and images, please contact Jessica Ziskind:**  
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**Fatma Bucak (London)** has held solo exhibitions at Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Turin; Brown University David Winton Bell Gallery, Providence; ARTER, Istanbul; Harpe45, Lausanne; Artpace, San Antonio; Pori Museum and Alberto Peola Contemporary Art Gallery, Turin. Her work has also been exhibited at the 54th Venice Biennale Tese di San Cristoforo – Arsenale; The Jewish Museum, New York; International Festival of Non-fiction Film, MoMA, New York; SALT, Istanbul; ICA, London; The RYDER Projects, London; Spike Island, Bristol; Contemporary Art Platform Gallery Space, Kuwait; Manifesta 9 – Collateral exhibition; La Permanente Museum, Milan; Fondazione Fotografia, Modena and Art in General, New York, among others. In 2013 she was the winner of the 13th Illy Present Future Prize, and was selected for the Bloomberg New Contemporaries in the same year. She was artist-in-residence at Townhouse, Cairo in 2014, Artpace San Antonio in 2015, Cité International des Arts in 2017, and went on to win the Academy Now London award. She received the Arter – Koc Foundation Contemporary Art Grant and UniCredit Project Grant in 2011. She also co-curated the Transition Project: live and video performance exhibition series at the Yapi Kredi Kultur Sanat, Istanbul together with Basak Senova. She is currently preparing her new work at the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art (GIBCA).

**Nat Muller (Amsterdam)** is an independent curator and critic. Her writing has been published in *Bidoun*, *ArtAsiaPacific*, *Art Papers*, *Hyperallergic*, *Canvas*, *X-tra*, *The Majalla*, *Art Margins* and *Harper's Bazaar Arabia*. She has also written numerous catalogue and monographic essays predominantly on artists from the Middle East. She served on the advisory committee of the Fund for Creative Industries (NL) from 2013-2016 and the Mondriaan Fund (NL) from 2010-2014 and now serves on Amsterdam's municipal committee for artist studios and incubator spaces. Recent exhibition projects include *Spectral Imprints* for the Abraaj Group Art Prize in Dubai (2012), Adel Abidin's solo exhibition *I love to love...*, Forum Box in Helsinki (2013); *Customs Made: Quotidian Practices & Everyday Rituals*, Maraya Art Centre in Sharjah (2014); *This is the Time. This is the Record of the Time*, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam & American University of Beirut Gallery (2014/15); *Minor Heroisms*, Galeri Zilberman, Istanbul, and *Sporting Chances*, Pi Artworks London among others. For the past few years Nat has been a nominator for the Prix Pictet Award, the V&A Jameel Art Prize, the Visible Award and the Paul Huf Photography award, amongst other jury and nomination committees.

**Pi Artworks İstanbul**

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