

CURA.

KÖPEK BY MELIKE KARA

“Melike Kara: Köpek” goes directly after our outer and inner sensations that affect us. The show plays with the plasticity of the brain, and shows artists true identity and upbringing. “Köpek” works around influences of the genes, categorizing the world, and understanding why we operate the way we do. Throughout her own story and beliefs, Kara put together a show which gives us an insight into our own beliefs. She never pinpoints, rather always gives the beholder room for interpretation and the ability to shape the course of the thoughts and feels. Hierarchy, gentrification, perils of empathy (somewhat hidden), inequality, religion, forgiveness, evil, morality, obedience, incompatible, volatile behavior, are all characteristics that would describe the context of “Köpek,” or to make a long story short, “It is complicated.”

Leads throughout Kara’s work are often anonymity and illusion, in regards to who or what the subjects in her work really are. Each and everyone of us has two sides – the identified and the anonymous side. When it comes to anonymity, the course of our beings changes drastically, and one thing that is usually tied to anonymity is bad and violent behavior. Somehow lashing out is attached to being anonymous, either out of guilt, shame, indignity, etc. “Köpek” indicates the latter perfectly.

For the first time ever, Kara also included photography in her work. Photography that serves as a sort of backdrop or let’s say – a soundtrack to her primal pieces. She took all of the photographs in Germany or Turkey; Kara is of Kurdish descendants. Each image portrays something very dear or close to her heart, and is somehow related to the subject in the painting in front. “Köpek” conveys openness and vulnerability yet on occasion looks improvised, which is in fact intentional and very well thought of. This show gives Kara’s work a new shape; it is an extension of her nervous system, and it is her most personal work to date.

One of the things that ties everything together in “Köpek,” is the duality of her being. The reality of her German upbringing mixed with her cultural family identity.

Dual identity in the show can be sensed throughout many aspects. One of them being the way she used photography as a sort of base to her paintings. Photography is also always shown in black and white, the exact opposite to her paintings, which are colored in rather pleasant warm colors. Duality also plays an important role when it comes to her sculpture work – wooden carved dogs. Due to their position, dogs look like they are guarding a specific painting or a subject matter she is portraying. It could also mean they are guarding the artist herself, as she has revealed so much of her own identity throughout these works, guardianship and distance are somehow needed. Duality also comes across in meaning and function the dogs have in German culture or in the country of her origin. In middle eastern culture, dogs are often used as a source of volatile and tortures behavior – whilst in Germany, especially the German shepherd (some dogs in the show resemble the breed), stand for bond, love, safety, etc. One way or another, dog(s) play a significant role in this installment and carry the principal function, after all the whole show is named after them – “Köpek” in Turkish stands for a dog.

That said, John Currin once said good art should encourage cockamamie interpretations and conspiracies, and that is exactly what Kara did with “Köpek.” With her first solo show in Peres Projects in 2016 – “In Your Presence,” the artist showed what she is capable of, she showed the course of her work but did not allow to be seen for who she truly is, this time around she gave it all! Also kudos to Kara, who at such young age (she was born in 1985), possesses the trait (which in my opinion separates good or bad artists) of knowing when to stop working on a successful work.



Courtesy Peres Projects, Berlin
Photographer: Matthias Kolb

“Köpek” is without a doubt the best work Kara made so far, and simply shows how much she is actually capable of. With this only being the beginning, we are all beyond excited for (her) future.

Text by Katja Horvat

Melike Kara was born and raised in Cologne, Germany. She studied at Dusseldorf Art Academy under Rosemarie Trockel where she graduated in 2014. Köpek” is artist second solo exhibition with Peres Projects, Berlin and comes after her 2016 show, “In Your Presence.”

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