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Image courtesy of Burçak Bingöl

Relief Valve, is an exhibition hosted by The New Agrarian Center curated by Arzu Ozkal and Nanette Yannuzzi-Macias.

Wearing accounts of global warming, environmental pollution, deforesting, desertification, and the loss of biodiversity increasingly populate our daily digest. Farmlands are continually sacrificed for golf courses, fish farms are polluting our coasts, and species are disappearing from our planet at a dizzying rate. As disturbing as these are and as powerless as we feel about them we often resort to individual efforts such as turning off lights, recycling paper, and using revolving doors. Seldom are our objections seen or heard in the public realm, instead we worry about our carbon foot prints but rarely take an active role in protesting growing ignorance and environmental vandalism. On the other hand, the actions many of our politicians take regarding these issues, are politically motivated and heavily laced with lobbyist influence. Many of the government's environmental policies and actions, are 'sold' to the public through grandiose media performances aimed at buying votes, and, unfortunately, the citizens are willing to play along, even when living under extreme conditions.

We are hoping Relief Valve will offer a modest but rich antidote to this post-modern condition by opening a valve of visual discourse and creative exchange in the exploration of these ideas. And start a dialogue to 'relieve the pressure' of pessimistic conjunctures through an exchange of symptoms, locale, and tutelary actions.

Relief Valve Artists:

Yeni Anıt

Five times a day. Photography, 2010

He was born in 1973 in Kilis/Turkey, graduated from Marmara University Fine Arts Faculty, Department of Sculpture. received an M.A. in sculpture. He wrote his thesis on "Plastic Arts And Cybernetic". He has been teaching sculpture since 2000, new media since 2008 at Marmara University. He co-founded "Videoist" a video art initiative with Huyla Ozdemir and organized 14 screenings since 2003-2010. Some of the recent personal shows are "New

Colossus: Shattered fingers of a Stone Worker” at 5533 (Istanbul, 2009), “New Colossus: Bloody Fingers Of a Helpers Hand” at Kargart (Istanbul, 2008), “New Colossus:Grafiti with Gravity” at Kiosk 24 (Herford, Germany) He uses the nickname “New Colossus/Yeni Anıt” at art shows.

>> Is our dependence on commodities and submission to consumption an extension of our awareness that we can't take our material possessions to afterlife, that is, an extension of our knowledge of the ultimate end? Otherwise, is there such a thing as a drinkable emotion, a climbable annihilation, a desirable void, a savoury suffering, or a faithful sin? <<

Nazan Azeri

Growing-up. Video, 2003

Azeri graduated from Istanbul University's Faculty of Law in 1975. After practicing law for some time, she enrolled in Marmara University's Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Art. She completed her postgraduate degree, which she studied between 1996-2000, with her thesis titled “Playfulness in Visual Arts / Renaissance, Surrealism, Dada.” She organized and took part in the exhibition titled “Metamorphosis”, an exhibition dedicated to artists that use photography in their works, as a part of the 20th IFSAK Photography Days. She has been working as an associate professor in Beykent University's Faculty of Fine Arts since 1998.

>> For me, the individual is not a creature surrounded by walls. Society actually lives within me and the images that are reflected in my works are my memory, my state of womanhood, the society in which I live and the state that the world is in. These intermix with my internal processes and transform into visual images. These images are actually metaphors of all these processes.<<

Burçak Bingöl

Recycle Me - Recycle Me Not. Flip Book, 2010

Bingöl graduated from BA, MA, and PhD programs respectively in 2000, 2002, and 2008 from Faculty of Fine Arts, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. Throughout the PhD program she worked as a research assistant in the Department of Ceramics. In 2009, She completed a program on photography in New School, New York. She has been an Artist-in-Resident at Hunter College, NY for 8 months in 2006. She's also one of the visiting artists of NCECA 2010, Philadelphia. She's currently accepted to ISCP in New York to work as an Artist-in-Resident for 6 months. She has made several talks and workshops on her art in Turkey, New York and Argentina and she exhibited her artworks in 3 solo and many group shows. She currently lives and works on her artistic and curatorial projects in Istanbul.

>> Recycle Me - Recycle Me Not is a project caricaturize recycling. If we are polluting the earth way more than what we can recycle, it could well be said that recycling is nothing more than a game playing by us in the name of being socially correct.<<

Genco Gülan

Shopping Water. Video/Sound Installation, 2007

Genco Gülan, is a multidisciplinary conceptual artist. He studied Political Science at

Bogazici University then he pursued an MA degree on Media Studies at New School, New York. Gülan got prizes from BP, New School, Lions and E.M.A.F. He made shows in Istanbul, Graz, New York, Seoul, Zagreb and Berlin. His works appeared in; Centre Pompidou, Pera, Proje 4L, ZKM and MAM Rio de Janeiro. He participated to; Steirishes Herbst, Ars Electronica, Mediaterra, Balkan Art, prog:me and Accente festivals. Gülan gave conferences at Yale, SVA, Bilgi and Köln Universities. Currently he teaches at Bogazici, Yeditepe Universities and Mimar Sinan Academy.

>> Shopping Water is a fairy tale prophesizing capitalisms deliterious effects on global warming. Woman (Katherine Müller) finds herself in an ancient sunken city (Myndos) while shopping for bottled water. The installation points out that, if we continue along our current path of consumption, we might all need to learn to live underwater. <<

Güneli Gün

Out of Africa. Poem, 2010

While her family lived in towns all over Turkey, Gün grew up mostly in Izmir as a boarding student at the private American School for Girls. She completed her liberal arts education at Hollins College, Virginia, followed by graduate degrees at Iowa Writers' Workshop and Johns Hopkins University Gün taught at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, at Johns Hopkins and Oberlin College She's the author of two works of fiction, Book of Trances, and On the Road to Baghdad, which was translated into a dozen languages and put on stage in London at the Sadler's Wells Theater. She has also translated Orhan Pamuk's The Black Book and The New Life for which the American Literary Translators Association awarded her a translation prize. Gün has published criticism and short fiction in various publications.

>> When I was ten and eleven years old, the crowning event of my elementary school week was going to the afternoon children's matinee on Saturdays, most of the time to see a Tarzan movie, the favorite with the young audience. We were so stuck on Tarzan that our hopes for jungle excitement were dashed when it turned out that The African Queen was only a boat with a drunk and an old maid on it. Too "real" for the children's matinee! Tarzan, a wild man raised by apes, was the steward of life in the jungle, predicated on the notion that man can live in harmony with nature. Although I was transported into Africa watching the noble savage swinging on vines, I also knew that Tarzan was really an actor who lived the civilized life, and that in between takes the actors ate beef and caviar and drank champagne, and that the animals in that country, where illusions are manufactured, were light and dark shadows on celluloid film. This poem is about the disjunction between dream and reality, which can only flow together seamlessly in surrealist art. <<

Erhan Muratoglu

No Parking. Video, 2007

Muratoglu is an interactive designer and digital artist. He is specialized on Motion Graphics Design and Audio-Visual Design. He studied Industrial Design (Bachelor of ID, Middle East Technical University) and Graphic Design (MFA in Graphic Design, Bilkent University). He worked and exhibited in Turkey, Europe, the UK, and the US with his computer generated projects, and received awards in festivals for his experimental videos. He has been writing on design, technology, art and media for various publications, since 1992. He is one of the

founding members of NOMAD, an association working on digital art and culture. He is in the organizing committee of ctrl_alt_del sound-art project.

>> In 'No Parking' Erhan Muratoglu contemplates the current condition in Istanbul where human beings and their physical surroundings are clashing more and more. The globalisation, increasing prosperity and expanding urbanisation are causing shortage of public space. People, cars and public space are hindering each other continually. The short animation looks like a videogame as Grand Theft Auto; with the difference that here the city strikes back. No parking... Other works by Erhan Muratoglu also originate from the still faster changing impressions and situations of the –urban- surroundings and the problematic consequences these can have for individuals.<<

Suat Ögüt

The Whole World Realized. Video, 2010

Diyarbakır, 1986. Lives and works in Istanbul. Having graduated from Marmara University's Painting Department in 2007, Ögüt had his first solo exhibition "Speeding Up Domestic Life" curated by Kristina Kramer & Anna Heidenhain, Istanbul (2008). Some of the recent group shows he has shown his works at are "In Between" Antoni Muntadas Workshop Projects Exhibition, Istanbul (2010), "Amsterdam Biennial, Istanbul Pavilion" Amsterdam (2009), "Global Fair & Festival Celebration, International Exchange Program Exhibition, S.Korea (2009), "Istanbul Audio Tour " Istanbul (2009), "Portable Art: 2010 European Capital of Culture" (2008), "Art In Nicosia" with European-Mediterranean Art Association, Cyprus and "Nightcomers" 10th International Istanbul Biennial special project (2007).

>> With the surprising approaches of advertising language, consumer products gain a delicious dimension. In metropolises, shopping malls provide closed spaces for daily life. These strategies defined by consumer culture are communicated to the consumers through posters. In Turkey, genetically engineered products have been legally accepted and advertising is complicit in normalizing these products. The seductive visuals of advertising posters are central to the acceptance of these products.

My aim was to look for a way to deconstruct the instrumental language of advertising. Posters, which have a popular presence in public space are taken out of their aesthetic framework and merged with marginal street art through a performance. By placing posters related to food products on the road, their aesthetic existence becomes secondary and the cars pollute, destroy them just like they do the environment. This allows for a strategy that undoes the content of the posters through the intervention of another vehicle.<<

Ethem Özgüven

Mediterranean is over. Video, 2006

Özgüven directed short films, videoart and documentaries since 1986. Since 1990 he teaches at "international video workshops" which he founded with walter pucher and petra holzer. until 2002 the international video workshops hosted more than 150 participants from 20 different countries. He gives workshops and seminars about video-art and documentary in and abroad. He directed in 1995, 1996 "golden orange international short film and documentary festival". He directed "The environmental scenario and production awards" in 1997, 1998, 1999.

>>Especially in the last twenty years, all species in the mediterranean are in danger of extinction due to industrial and domestic waste.<<

Iz Öztat and Dikran Tas

Sacred Relic of the Future. GMO-free wheat seed, 2010

Öztat born in 1981, lives and works Istanbul. She completed her MA in visual arts at Sabancı University, Istanbul and her BA in visual arts and cultural studies with Honors at Oberlin College, Ohio, USA. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul and teaches at Kadir Has University. Her solo shows include READ/ OKU at PiST, Istanbul (2008), Love It or Leave It, Ohio (2005) and Nothing Disappears Without a Trace, Ohio (2004). In August 2008, she co-founded cura bodrum residency in Mugla with Emincan Alemdaroglu, which is an investigation into self-organization and non-institutional support mechanisms. She participated in unitednationsplaza (Mexico), Resartis General Meeting (Netherlands), Prishtina Contemporary Art Library Workshop (Kosovo), Cairo Residency Symposium (Egypt), Gender Trouble Platforms (Armenia), Shatana Workshop (Jordan) and Transient Spaces (Lithuania).

Dikran Tas finished Bezciyan Armenian High School. He worked as an apprentice to his master Kirkor Ortainceyan from 1992 to 2007. Since then he has been working with his family at Barocco silver as a master metalsmith. He has worked on the production of icons, portraits of politicians and honorary gifts given to people of importance. He is committed to carrying on the craft of metalsmithing and passing it on to next generations.

Dikran Tas and Iz Öztat have been collaborating since 2007 on a series of works titled "Sacred Relics".

>>Inspired by the reliquary of Sakal-i Serif, which is an object holding the hair of Prophet Muhammed, the artists produced a reliquary to hold a single GMO-free seed. It draws attention to the fact that there can potentially be no GMO-free organisms left unless they are protected with the effort of preserving a sacred relic through time.<<

A.Tufan Palalı

A Pelican's Story. Photography, 2010

Specialist Agricultural Engineer A. Tufan Palalı, born in 1970 in Konya, never dreamed that his simple desire in 2007 to take better photographs would turn into a passion. By opening the door to this magical world of photography he rediscovered himself and has made photography an essential part of his life. At first he photographed everything he could but soon realized his preference for photographing only the things which he himself wished to see. Palalı, who greatly enjoys being aware of the life around him and commenting on it with his camera, is continuing his study of documentary and conceptual photography.

>>A study to draw attention to the harmful effects of environmental pollution on living things. All the photographs in this study were taken from the same region however, the presented cause-effect relationship is fictional.<<

Mark Slankard

Toplu: Landscapes of New Turkish Suburbia. Photography, 2009

Slankard's photographic and video works have been exhibited and screened widely, including such venues as the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Columbia University, Texas Tech University, Visual Studies Workshop, SoHo Photo Gallery, Rebecca Ibel Gallery in Columbus, OH and Ohio State University's Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus. His work is also featured in Robert Hirsch's textbooks, *Exploring Color Photography* and *Light and Lens*. Slankard received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Ohio University in 2002 and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Indiana University in 1996, where he also studied photography. He is a 2002 National Graduate Seminar Fellow of The Photography Institute at Columbia University. Slankard is currently an Assistant Professor at Cleveland State University in Cleveland Ohio.

>> I first traveled to Turkey in 2003 to visit my wife's family. I have returned many times since. We would stay far from inner core of the cities we visited. In this landscape, I began to see many parallels to my experience in the Suburbs of the American Midwest played out on an exaggerated scale. In 2008, I began photographing the rapidly changing landscape of these far-flung, densely populated regions on the suburban outskirts. <<

N. Eden Ünlüata

Sish-Kabab. Installation, 2010

Studied Industrial Design at Middle East Technical University (Turkey) and earned MFA degree in Graphic Design from Bilkent University (Turkey). MA Candidate, Columbia College Chicago, Interdisciplinary Arts, 2010. Worked and exhibited (in over 20 shows) in Ankara (Turkey), Adana (Turkey), Istanbul (Turkey), Paris (France), Oak Park, IL and Chicago, IL. Currently live and work in Chicago, IL. Works produced in Turkey covered topics of migration, displacement, habitation, representation, expression and oppression of national, ethnic and sexual identities; challenging common perceptions of the homogeneous appearance of public domain, calling attention to the reconstituted history and hinting at the collective amnesia. Earlier pieces produced in Chicago focused on the cultural transition and the forming of identity, adaptation to cultural nuance and the struggle to define a place in the larger picture. Recently been focusing on the topics of nuclear proliferation, environmental awareness and sexually transmitted diseases.

>> In Turkish culture food carries the messages of welcome, love, caring, family, friendship, heritage, and many more... It is over food that important matters are discussed, intimate details shared. As a nation that can feed itself it is also a source of national pride. However all these are readily compromised when short term financial interest over powers the sustainability of the food chain. Similar to the short sighted use of coal to heat homes (while natural gas is an available option – though expensive) that delivers heavily polluted air, there have been many policies and practices of replacing farmland along with natural environment with ill-planned developments that are threatening the quality and quantity of the food produced. <<