

Counterweight

...ner of her man. The woman who wears mak
he has a broken hood. This morning, an one-
...nel one, I do not know whether girl or a w
...limbed, a...mored crown, count of years, and
...all we started our new...at...eyes s
...aining to women who...be...
...were there; so one eye heard of the...
...Today she...to...water...presented as i

Sera Boeno, Noa Heyne, Cevahir Özdoğan

August 10–September 21, 2018, Opening Reception: Friday, August 10, 7:00 – 10:00 PM

a THE MENTAL COLLECTION | 243 W. READ ST., BALTIMORE, MD 21201

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The history of civilization is not concrete. Those with power retroactively construct it as they erect structures in their own names. The perfecting of concrete as a building material by the Romans allowed physical manifestations of imperial power to proliferate rapidly across the Mediterranean Empire. This legacy of heroic architecture, phallic warrior monuments, and patriarchal power flows from the ancients and into the governments that followed and drew influence from them, down into our contemporary existence. Echoes can be heard in conversations around Confederate war monuments built in the name of their “Lost Cause”—a retroactive attempt to both mythologize and concretize a false narrative of history and to silence dissenting voices.

In *Counterweight*, Sera Boeno, Cevahir Özdoğan, and Noa Heyne explore the historical power invested in concrete and draw connections to the architectural and sociological conditions of their birthplaces, Turkey and Israel. Understanding the material as inherently gendered, the artists construct works that question the relationship between history, monumentality, power, and the feminine experience. If concrete has often functioned as a vehicle through which power itself is cemented, how can its power be appropriated by the feminine?

Noa Heyne’s work in *Counterweight*, *Entropia*, is an homage to this latent tensile quality of concrete structure. The piece is nested in the dank basement below THE MENIAL COLLECTION and can only be viewed from the top of the steep, narrow stairs. The initially sound concrete surface below—numbered and systematized for an unclear purpose—undulates in a clumsy dance with an animated organic Entity whose rationale is also never revealed. The Being is whale-like smooth—an awkward Leviathan from just under the surface, reminding us of the presence of the colossal agents which threaten the physical stability of society.

Reenter the Night shares this motif of violent potentiality—the distinction marked by an eerily staged bucolic scene. The diorama—housed within the confines of a rigid concrete box modeled after the guard towers peppered along the Gaza strip—militarizes the serenity of empty space and frames it in a theatrical rendering of the paranoias of war.

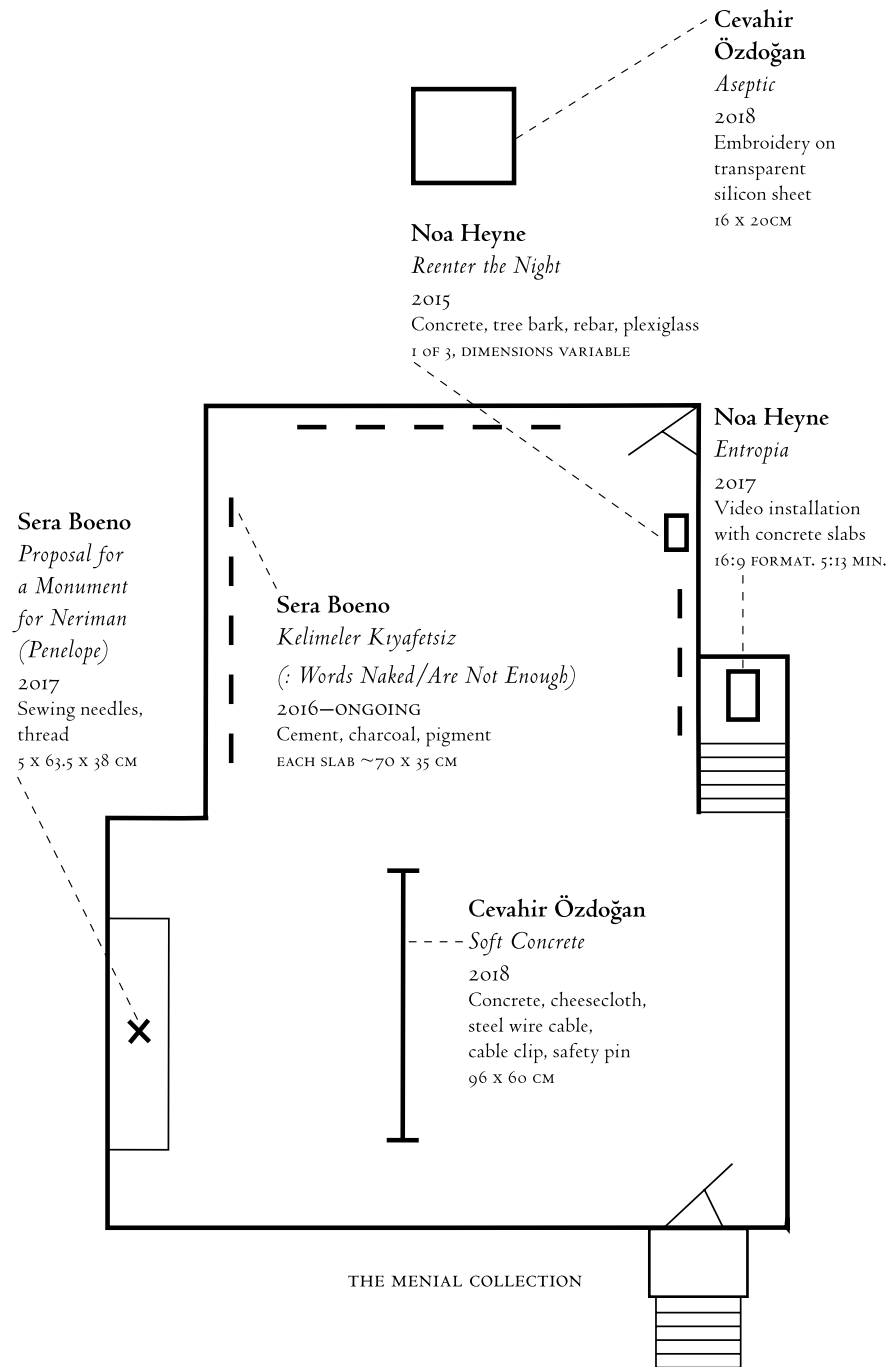
The History of Civilization is Not Concrete



Sera Boeno's objects exist in a similarly razor-edged reality. Her work *Proposal For A Monument for Neriman (Penelope)* looks at James E Young's theory of the *countermonument*, and explores manners in which the personal, ephemeral and affective can work to construct a non-violent monument. *Proposal* erects a compact grid of needles that are directly inserted into the bricks above the hearth and threaded with thin black, hairlike string, in honor of her grandmother, Neriman—but as she insists, this is not the monument. Like much of Boeno's work, it functions as an experiment—a small part of a larger question complicating the monument, its power and place.

Cevahir Özdoğan's material experiments include combining fabric and concrete into what she calls "soft concrete"—architectural structure via feminist fiber art—and traditional Turkish embroidery onto tent-like shelters made from transparent silicone rubber and vinyl. Informed by theorist Donna Haraway, Özdoğan sees these combinations as a fusion of craft and cyborg aesthetics—a new philosophical hybrid of the human, nature, and technology. Özdoğan deploys the future-past of architecture as a coded, anti-imperialist apocalypse—reifying a feminist epic architecture of ancient history and projecting clues for civilization's post-destruction survival.

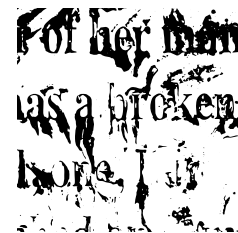
—Emilia Duno, Joshua Gamma, & Hayden Right
SEPTEMBER 2018



Sera Boeno

is a sculptor and installation artist from Istanbul, Turkey. Her praxis is research-based and heavily influenced by the socio-politics of her motherland, Turkey. Narratives of and around women in historically silenced topics—politics, sex, religion, trauma—are central to her work. Concrete, metal, wood, and found objects constitute the foundations of her practice. Boeno holds a BA from Dartmouth College with degrees in Neuroscience and Studio Art, and an MFA from Rinehart School of Sculpture at Maryland Institute College of Art with focuses in Curatorial Practice, Critical Studies, and Art Education. She is currently based in Baltimore.

Kelimeler Kıyafetsiz (∴ Words Naked | Are Not Enough)



Titled as a reference to the popular misphrasing of the Turkish idiom “kelimeler kifayetsiz,”¹ *Kelimeler Kıyafetsiz* is an ongoing research project on representations of women in political speech from Turkey, wherein quotes that refer to women are extracted from the public speeches of current Turkish politicians and re-presented in archaeological forms that celebrate Male glory.

In 2014, the collection of quotes was formed into 10 writing stones. In 2015, these stelae were installed in a roughly round formation that spanned the Borrows Rotunda of the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College. The installation visually drew from Orkhon Inscriptions: bilingually inscribed Turkic artifacts erected to glorify 8th Century Göktürk Princes.²

In 2016, the text was formed into a concrete frieze made up of upwards of 100 individual embossed concrete panels in various sizes. The slabs were then arranged in the 28'×14' space between two large entryways at the Gateway Building of Maryland Institute College of Art. The installation was inspired by Assyrian Reliefs that eulogize kings who once sat in the now ancient palaces of Nineveh, by portraying them as hunting lions.³

Antithetical to the ancient and archaeological visual language employed in these works, the methodology, the typography and the materials all relate to modern processes such as gentrification and mass printing. This visual oxymoron yields contemporary historical objects, paralleling the antiquated conceptualizations of womanhood in modern day patriarchies.

Kelimeler Kıyafetsiz (: Words Naked | Are Not Enough)— Monument III

After Octavian's victory over Cleopatra and Antony at the battle of Actium, and his consequent crowning as Emperor in 27 BC, Augustus issued a coin in his name that declared—

AEGYPTO CAPTA.
*Egypt has been captured*⁴

Of the existing 35 ancient Egyptian obelisks, Zietsman counts 18 transported into the Roman Empire after this date and over the following centuries.⁵ In their original contexts, most of these Egyptian obelisks commemorated ascents to the throne or military victories of the Pharaohs. As a testament to the Roman power over Egypt, Roman Emperors have appropriated the practice for their own political propaganda.⁶

And so, the obelisk of Pharaoh Thutmose III was transported to Constantinople, to mark a new center of the Roman Empire, and re-erected in the Hippodrome of Constantinople by Emperor Theodosius I.⁷ The obelisk still stands tall in the Sultanahmet Square of Istanbul, Turkey.

There is an opportunity for a psychoanalytic reading of the architectural tradition here—the relationship between ruler and his land is sexual in that he is born to or conquers the land, which provides him with nourishment and offspring. Often times, this birth or taking is marked with an erection of a phallic construction. When the land, formerly belonging to another man and thus marked by another erection, is conquered, the conqueror marks this new conquest by architecturally castrating the former ruler. The Theodosian Obelisk is both a testament to this emasculation of Egypt by Rome via the phallus' display as a conquest item, and to Theodosius' own power over reproducing Constantinople.

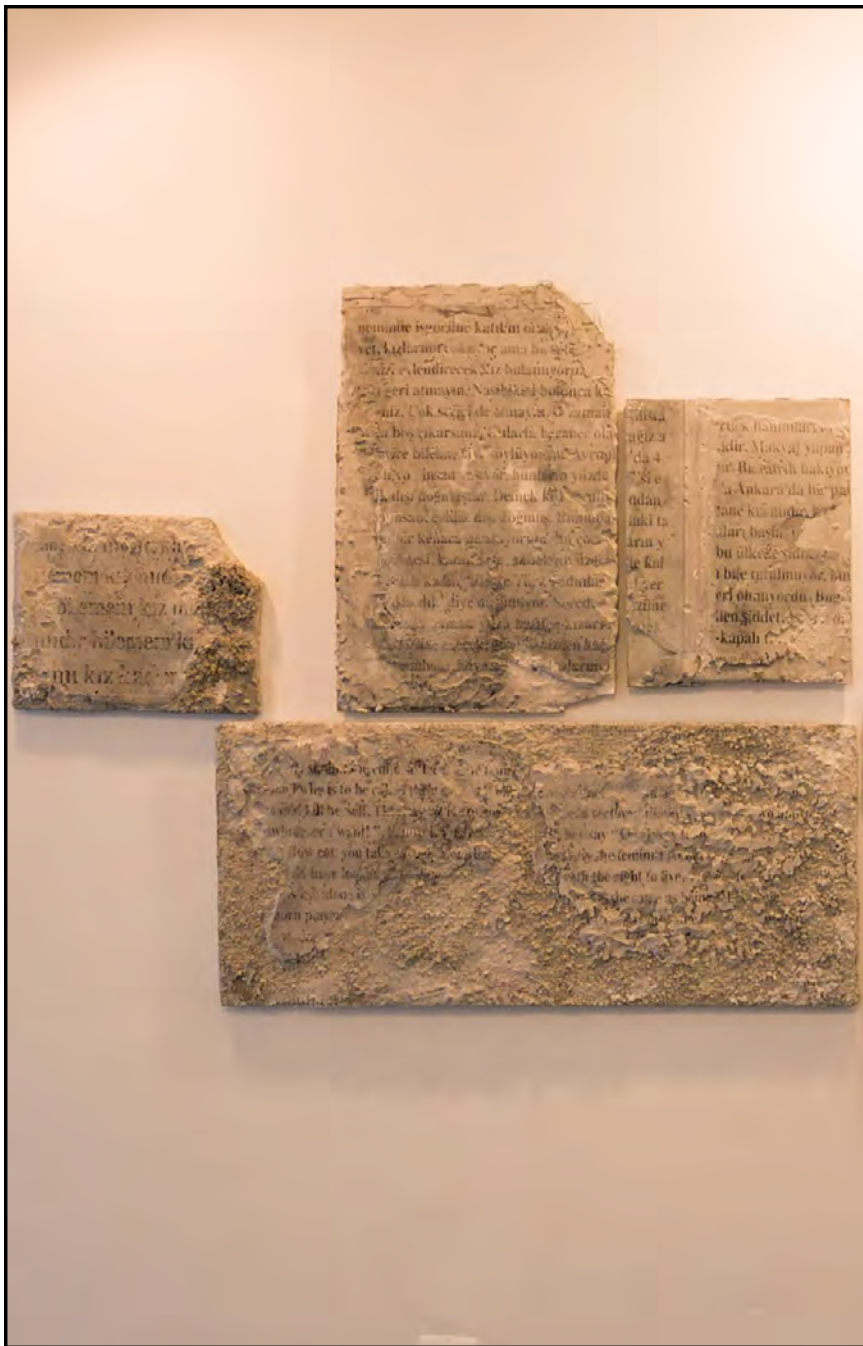
¹ *Kelimeler kifayetsiz*: Turkish idiom. Used to describe a situation in which words fall short to express a thought.

² John R. Krueger. “The Earliest Turkic Poem.”

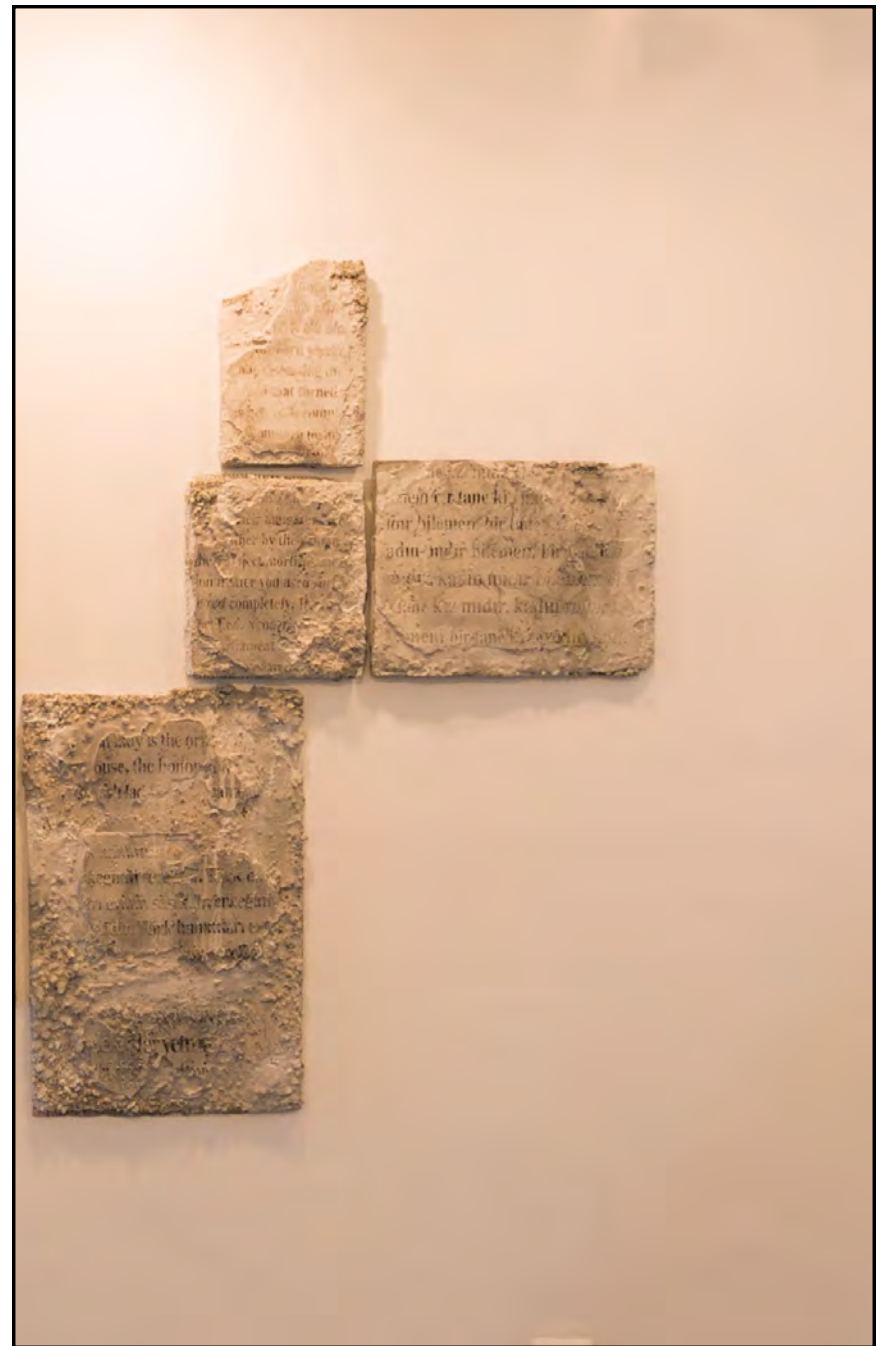
³ “Room 10: Assyria: Lion hunts,” British Museum.

⁴ Barry W. Cunliffe, *Rome and Her Empire*, 232.

^{5–7} J. C. Zietsman. “Crossing the Roman Frontier: Egypt in Rome (and Beyond).”



Sera Boeno *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* (: *Words Naked/Are Not Enough*), 2016—ONGOING, Cement, charcoal, pigment, EACH SLAB ~70 X 35 CM



Parallely, The Theodisian obelisk is erected on a base that depicts in bas-relief the emperor in positions of power: on the throne with his family around him (genetic), crowning the victor of a chariot race (physical) and receiving enemies kneeling before him (political). On its Eastern face, the Obelisk speaks—

DIFFICILIS QVONDAM DOMINIS PARERE SERENIS
IVSSVS ET EXTINGTIS PALMAM PORTARE TYRANNIS
OMNIA THEODOSIO CEDVNT SVBLIQVE PERENNI
TER DENIS SIC VICTVS EGO DOMITVSQVE DIEBVS
IVDICE SVB PROCLO SV[PERA]S ELATVS AD AVRAS

I was formerly reluctant to obey the serene masters, even when ordered to proclaim the victory after the extinction of the tyrants, but since all things yield to Theodosius and his everlasting offspring, I was conquered and subdued in three times ten days and raised to high heaven on the advice of Proc(u)lus.⁸

“Young soldiers, called Janissaries, who formed the bodyguards of the Ottoman Sultan from the 14th century onwards, showed their prowess by climbing the obelisk, thus damaging its stone surface” writes Zietsman. Ottoman *Yeniçeri*’s treatment of this Obelisk carries the reading further: Now marking a mythical and foreign erection, the obelisk has become a penis which men of high physical and political power can challenge (mock?) and test their own manhood against.

From Trajan’s Column in Rome to the Washington Monument in D.C., phallic monuments have been erected and displaced throughout history as markers of power and/or conquest. Inspired by this architectural history, the 2018 iteration of *Kelimeler Kıyafetsiz* (: *Words Naked | Are Not Enough*) takes the form of an obelisk.

⁸ Erik Iversen, *Obelisks in Exile: The Obelisks of Istanbul and England*, vol. 2, 12.

Sera Boeno Klimler Kıyafetsiz (: Words Naked | Are Not Enough), 2018—osonog, Cement, charcoal, pigment, each slab ~70 x 35 cm. Photo by Joshua Gamma.



The text climbing around this *Kelimeler Kıyafetsiz* monument is accessorized at its base with imagery from *tezhip*—a form of Turkish-Islamic illumination ornamenting the margins of traditional manuscripts—reflecting the opening words around the column—

Türk hanımları evinin süsüdür...

Turkish lady is the ornament of her house. . .

A parallel is drawn here between the relationship of text and *tezhip* illumination, and the relationship of “woman” and “man” of the Turkish political speech. Word is predominantly Male for, amongst other platforms made unavailable to Women, history is recorded from a predominantly Male pen. Like Turkish Woman then, *tezhip* ornaments the house of the word, the page.

The placement of *tezhip* imagery, specifically a stylized flower form named *hatai* on the base of the *Monument* is a reference to the common and cross-cultural likening of Women to flowers. It signals a spatial separation of male and female (i.e.: *baremlik, selamlık*), perceived female inferiority and invisibility against Male glory, while also asserting the opposite by positing women as perhaps the foremost important structural element of the sculpture.

Kelimeler Kıyafetsiz (: Words Naked | Are Not Enough)— Ornaments I–VII

The collection of quotes around *Monument III* reads—

**Ben zaten kadın erkek eşitliğine
inanmıyorum. . .Kadınlar ve erkekler
farklıdır, birbirinin mütemmimidir.**

*I don't believe in the equality of men and
women. . . Men and women are different.
They are each other's complementary.*

To reflect this sentiment, the third iteration of *Kelimeler Kıyafetiz* has bifurcated into two separate works that are not equal to each other: the *Monument* and, its complementary counterpart, the *Ornament*. Against the rough concrete surface, the loud words and the large size of this proud male monument is pitched a set of golden mouth accessories that cage the lips of its wearer in *tezhip* motifs. Delicate, seductive, valuable in material and silencing, these beautiful gags confirm women's exclusion from the linguistic realm, marginalization and ornamentalization within history.

The gag taps into a rich history of objects from torture devices to scold's bridles and contemporary fetish toys. The variety in practice and level participation of parties that is within this history allows for a multitude of readings of *Ornaments*.

Para-fiction

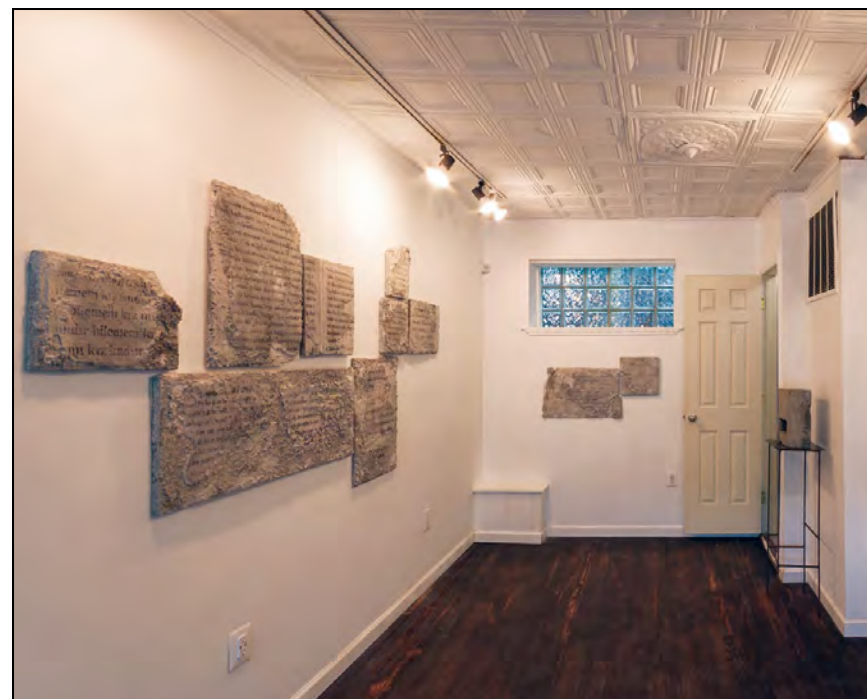
Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz (: *Words Naked | Are Not Enough*) can be located within the realm of historical *Para-fiction*. It is presented as a historical object, often somewhat derelict but installed as if in museum settings and, in its 2018 form, with a pseudo-museum signage wall and vitrine stands. However, it is essentially a contemporary production. The strategy here is criticism by way of mimesis.

Such fabrication of an alternative history, in conjunction with its alternative objects proposes an attractive post for works that deal with authority. While this imitation enables the imagining of a better rendering of the body of authority the work explores, criticizes and/or even disrupts, it does so by hijacking and subverting the visual authority that the body being explored/criticized/disrupted reflexly holds over its subjects. Additionally, the para-fiction practice allows a bypassing of culpability that might arise from questioning authority and/or power by removing one's self and production a step away from reality. Gregory Sholette makes the point that para-fictional work often emerges in spaces where “public imaginary and public space have traumatically collapsed,”⁹ perhaps in part for the above reasons.

Lebanese artist Walid Raad's *The Atlas Group Archive* is a staple work in the genre of such practice. Raad has put together an extensive collection of collaged notebooks, photographs, video art “published” by fictional and non-fictional authors such as Dr. Fadi Fakhouri, Souheil Bachar, Walid Raad himself, as well as supposedly found artifacts in an attempt to investigate the contemporary history of Lebanon, its images and representations.¹⁰

Egyptian artist Iman Issa on the other hand pairs contemporary re-fabrications of real historical objects with the museum texts of these original artifacts in her *Heritage Studies*. The stark contrast between the vinyl text and Issa's minimalist forms destabilizes the authority of historical objects and their presentations in museum settings.¹¹

⁹ Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, 173
¹⁰ Kassandra Nakas, “The Atlas Group (1989–2004). A Project by Walid Raad.”
¹¹ “16 November–23 December 2017 Iman Issa: HERITAGE STUDIES.”



INSTALLATION VIEWS FEAT. Sera Boeno *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* (: *Words Naked | Are Not Enough*), 2016—ONGOING. Cement, charcoal, pigment, each slab ~70 x 35 cm, and Noa Heyne *Remier the Night*, 2015. Concrete, tree bark, rebar, Plexiglass
 1 OF 3 DIMENSIONS VARIABLE



Similarly *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* taps into the authority present in monument-making as well as in the institutional distribution of archeology or archive. By substituting ancient materials and methods such as limestone and cuneiform text with modern ones like concrete and newspaper typeface respectively, or museum signage with curatorial text, the work provides Brechtian cues to its viewer parallel to Issa's minimalist forms against her museological text or Raad's collaged visual vernacular in contrast to his historiographical language. On the one hand, *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* is poignant in that it makes the outdated ideations around gender roles that still afflict a 21st century society visible by re-presenting its contemporary subject matter, misogynist quotes by current Turkish politicians, in an antique frame. On the other, the work can be considered hopeful for it makes historical display objects out of such ideations, positioning them as ruins, archaeological objects, items that are no longer in effect but once had been a part of history.

In the process of pretending to be ancient artifacts, *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz*, also touches upon the power dynamics that are present in the display of history in museums. Museum collections in the West are problematic for multiple reasons, acquisitions, especially of objects of Antiquity, being one of them. A quick look at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, and their display of the *Altar of Zeus*, extracted and transported in whole from Bergama of Ottoman Empire (now Izmir in Turkey) for a nominal fee taking advantage of the fragile Ottoman economy at the time, makes it apparent that museums and such displays in the fashion of monumental cabinets of curiosities, are posts where colonial fantasies of the West about the East are still played out and profited from. It is worthwhile to note that Turkey asked for these Anatolian artifacts back from Berlin, Paris, New York and other Western cultural capitals, only to receive no response, immediate rejection or comedic portions back of what has been taken (such as a single one of the many Hittite statues in Germany "as a voluntary gesture of friendship").¹²

¹² Susanne Güsten, "Turkey Presses Harder for Return of Antiquities."

The curation of these objects is also problematic for the practice dictates a portion of what becomes history. For example, curator Clémentine Deliss talks of upwards of 5 million non-circulating objects stored away in the ethnographic museums of Germany today,¹³ not deemed worthy by experts to be included in the visible and public version of the history of humanity. The viewer's coming to realization that *Kelimeler* is a fake archaeological object in a simulated museum setting, a moment when the viewer is critical of the narrative an authority presents, is intended to extend beyond the *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* work. The work aims to question how, why and by whom history, canon and the myth of humanity is manufactured.

A circle back to Freudian reading of columnar monuments, with a twist of Orientalism: this interpretation of emasculation of a nation/culture by way of architectural castration and display of the castrated phalli can be extended to modern and contemporary museological practices, especially that of the West showing—including but not limited to—Eastern artifacts today (i.e. *The Alhambra Column* at the Met). Such displays can be read as testaments to perceived Western superiority over the East. A certain homoeroticism is present in this penis-conquest; however...

The severance of the organ from the body for display negates the possibility of procreation with the Orient, perhaps signaling that the Western interest in the East is not rooted in Eros but Thanatos.¹⁴

¹³ Joanna Sokółowska and Clémentine Deliss, "Postcolonial Museum Laboratory. Clémentine Deliss in conversation with Joanna Sokółowska."

¹⁴ Jonathan Lear. *Freud*, 85–8.

Counter-Monument

In 2016, in Rize on the Northern coast of Turkey, a statue of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the general of the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) and founder of the Republic of Turkey, was taken down. The square it was in was re-named “15 Temmuz Demokrasi ve Cumhuriyet Meydanı” (15 July Democracy and Republic Square) to commemorate the civil suppression of the coup d’état of that year.

Atatürk and his images, via his reforms and alignment with Western values and culture, has become a stand-in for secularism and liberalism in Turkey. The Turkish military is closely associated with Atatürk, as the designated defender of “Modern Turkey”. Turkey’s current ruling party, Development and Justice Party’s stance is one that is more conservative and Islamist, their rhetoric is Ottoman-revivalist. And so, the civil defeat of the Turkish military during an attempted coup on 15 July has become a symbolic event parallel to the Turkish War of Independence (and consequent abolition of the Ottoman sultanate) for the conservative sect that align with the Development and Justice Party’s politics.

The story is saturated with socio-political nuances, however the removal and re-branding of monuments according to ruling class’ beliefs and needs has rendered the public spaces, of not only Turkey but many cities of the world, monument-palimpsests that record hegemony over time. One need not look further than Baltimore City to find analogues. The pulling down of Confederate Monuments in 2017 as a contemporary gesture on the authorities’ part (of course only after the public has announced, and secured the means to, take the Confederate Monuments down themselves), the placement of *Madre Luz* by Pablo Machioli on the post in Wyman Park Dell, and its consequent defacing by conservatives reflect the ubiquitousness of the power monuments hold.

A quick etymological analysis of the word “monument” reveals that it originated from the Latin word *monere*, meaning to “remind” but also to “advise” and “warn.”¹⁵ These latter meanings imbue the monument

Sera Boeno *Proposal for a Monument for Neriman (Pindopp)*, 2017, Sewing needles, thread, 5 x 63.5 x 38 cm. Photo by Joshua Gamma.

¹⁵ “Indo-European root men-.” *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*.

with a certain authority and even possible violence. The dictation of remembrance is a totalitarian practice—iconoclasm, as well as new regimes’ deconstruction, replacement, and re-contextualization of old regimes’ monuments are testaments to this statement. Analyzing public art in post-Nazi Germany, Young writes of this inherent violence of monument building becoming re-apparent to artists dealing with a fascist and destructive history; and the concurrent creation of counter-monuments.¹⁶

Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz can be considered in this lineage of counter-monuments. Public artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer sums up in an interview that a traditional monument “represents a piece of history and tries to materialize it, visualize it represent it, always from the point of view of the elite. The anti-monument, on the contrary, is an action, a performance. [...] An alternative to the fetish of the site, the fetish of the representation of power.”¹⁷ In contrast to para-fiction, the strategy here is criticism by way of rejection.

Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz’s *Monument Against Fascism* and the website *Monument Counter (Anıt Sayacı)* immediately come to mind as three different examples that democratize remembrance and disrupt common notions of what a monument is. Lin’s “memorial” can be considered a counter-monument for its rejection of elevation and the human form, and thus celebration of patriotism expected of a monument, in lieu of a minimalist, black cut into the earth that signifies, but not dictates, loss.¹⁸ Gerz and Shalev-Gerz’s simple, black “monument” pillar accomplishes a similar rejection of the traditional notions of the monument through allowing for the participation of public in their monument and its eventual sinking into disappearance. *Monument Counter (Anıt Sayacı)*, a bare online counter that counts in real time women lost to domestic violence in Turkey, belongs to the same group of anti-monuments as it exists in virtual space, without form or stasis.

Likewise, *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* challenges its viewers to think about the violence of monument erecting in a heterogeneous community. As expected from a counter-monument, it rejects the dictates of the political elite. However, an important distinction between *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* monuments and Young’s and Lozano-Hemmer’s definitions of counter-monument is that *Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz* occupies and subverts traditional monument forms as a tool for this rejection, instead of rejecting the fascism of the traditional monument by way of rejecting its form and space.

Kelimeler Kiyafetsiz (: *Words Naked | Are Not Enough*) then, operates between para-fiction work and a counter-monument. The resolution of this ambiguity is something to consider for further directions of the work; and this can only be achieved by the answering the question “Why?” Why is this monument made?

Another way of reading the monument form is to think of it as a tool to forget as opposed to a tool to remember. Once given a form and a space as a monument, a memory, however oppressive it is, is sterilized, packaged and contained.



Sera Boeno *Proposal for a Monument for Neriman (Penelope)*, 2017, Sewing needles, thread, 5 x 63.5 x 38 CM (DETAIL). Photo by Joshua Gamma.

¹⁶ James E. Young, “The Counter-Monument: Memory Against Itself in Germany Today.”

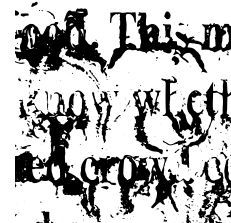
¹⁷ Rafael Lozano-Hemmer interview by Joke Brouwer, Alex Adriaensens. “Alien Relationships with Public Space,” 155–156.

¹⁸ Anne M. Wagner, “Once Upon a Time: The Vietnam Memorial at Age Twenty-Five,” 19–20.

Noa Heyne

is a multidisciplinary artist working in sculpture, performance, installation, and animation. Her large-scale interactive installations emphasize viewer participation within a physical space. The visual and material language of her animation and sculpture, as well as the repetition inherent in her interactive installations calls attention to the cycles of building and destruction that are characteristic of urban development. At the center of Heyne's work are questions about architecture and the body, about the memories carried by the body, and the way history is inscribed into urban topographies. Heyne was born in Ramat Gan, Israel. She began her artistic education as a painter at the Jerusalem Studio School (2005–2007) in the Master Class of Israel Hershberg, and has moved on to study sculpture in the New York Studio School (2007–2008) in New York. She received her MFA from the Rinehart School of Sculpture, MICA, in 2017. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group shows in Israel and the U.S. She currently lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Future Remnants



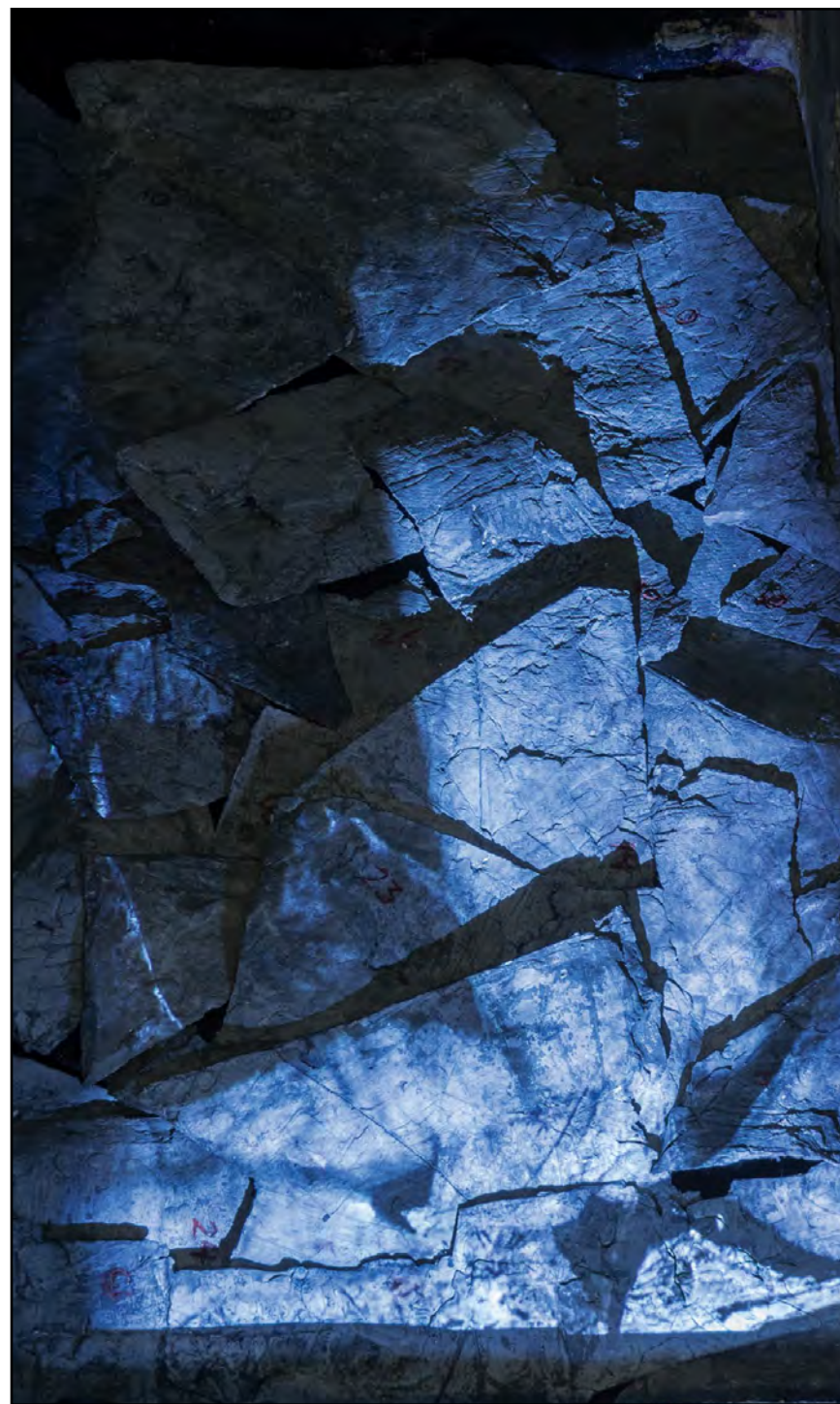
In what is now Israel, once stood Palestinian villages. During the 1948 war, the inhabitants of many of these villages fled or were forced out by the Israeli army. In an attempt to erase the former identity of the land, entire villages were destroyed, their stone houses demolished and the live cacti fences that surrounded them rooted out. As the cactus grows, its older branches support the younger ones until they prove too heavy to bear. When this happens, the young branches fall to the ground, forming new roots and eventually growing into a new plant.¹

Years after the Palestinian villages were erased, their location can be traced by the rows of cacti growing again where the fences once stood, and the fallen branches took hold of the ground; as if the earth itself is resisting its appropriation, resurfacing the memory of its indigenous inhabitants.

I have been thinking about history. I have been thinking about the chain of events that led my country to where it is today, my family's place in them, and the hopeless desire I had to undo them. I remembered Europe, and the war that affected my family's decision to emigrate to Palestine. My grandfather on my mother's side was an active fighter in the Jewish struggle against the British Mandate. He fought against the Brits, and later against the Arab Legions in the 1948 war. Like his father, he was an enthusiastic Zionist. There are letters dating back to 1935, written in my great-grandfather's hand writing, in Hebrew, begging the *Sochnut* (the Zionist Agency) to arrange travel certificates for him and his family—

¹ See Liat Grayver, "Portrait of a Sabra: Gestalt of a Symbol", text for an exhibition at Yaffo-Creative, Jaffa.

Noa Heyne *Zatropa*, 2017, Video installation with concrete slabs, 16:59 FORMAT: 513 MIN. (2018 *Countryright* INSTALLATION DETAIL)





Noa Heyne *Reenter the Night*, 2015, Concrete, tree bark, rebar, plexi-glass, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

to move from Poland to Palestine. They received the certificates and moved to Palestine in that same year. If they had stayed there, they would have been murdered by the Nazi regime.

On my father's side, the family did not leave Germany, and all but my grandmother were murdered. After my great-grandparents were deported to Auschwitz in 1943, my grandmother stayed in Berlin as an *U-Boot*,² hiding in deserted buildings, on the train, in a boat on a lake; during those years, the city was for her both a battle-field and a shelter.

In *Bunker Archeology*, Paul Virilio describes the ground during war time as a space of constant threats. The new technologies of warfare, such as airstrikes, chemical weapons or atomic weapons, he claims, have caused the dematerialization of the ground, which is “no longer the good lodging, but a pernicious and random expanse belonging to the oceanic horizons that it extended...”³

My work *Reenter the Night*⁴ shows three theatrical concrete boxes that act simultaneously as bunkers and prisons. These boxes hold what might be a forest, suggesting a promise of expansion within or beyond the massive walls, but also the experience of individuals in warzones, where vast open spaces may be confining, threatening and protecting at the same time. Here, like Virilio's ground, the open space is not an opposite of captivity, but an extension of it. Thinking about the materiality of open spaces, and how thick and heavy empty streets can become, I think also about Gaza—the “consequence-end” of my history—where open space is also “the greatest prison in the world.”

² *U-Boot*, or the English U-Boat, meaning undersea-boat or submarine, was a term used to describe Jews who went underground and were hiding in Berlin during the years 1939–1945.

³ Paul Virilio, *Bunker Archeology*, 41.

⁴ “Reenter the night” is a quote from the poem, “Reverse: A Lynching” by Ansel Elkins.

Virilio's text was written in the early 1990's, looking at remnants of a 1940's war. Our technologies of warfare have no doubt progressed since the time of Virilio's bunkers, and the digitalization of the world created what many refer to as non-places.⁵ Virilio himself describes our exile from the "terrestrial horizon" by these new digital technologies—

If architectonics once measured itself according to geology, according to the tectonics of natural reliefs, with pyramids, towers and other neo-gothic tricks, today it measures itself according to state-of-the art technologies, whose vertiginous prowess exiles all of us from the terrestrial horizon.⁶

There is a disturbing tension between the dematerialization of our social and political spaces, and the speed and lightness of destruction that these technologies permit. Nothing can be more concrete than the fences against which protesters in Gaza are shot, or more grounded than the rubbles underneath which entire families are buried. How terrible it is to imagine that it is at that very moment of destruction that an urban space ceases to exist primarily "in time"⁷ and retains its presence as an ultimate physical place.

In my stop-motion animation, *Entropia*, rubble turns into geological layers that act as a habitat for concrete creatures. Both bearing the marks of a history that was created by unknown players, the skin of the creatures and the surface of the land become one and the same. *Entropia* is part of *Posthumous Adaptations*, a large, interactive installation that imagines an ancient past or a far future, one in which we humans are no longer present.

⁵ See for example Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*.
^{6, 7} Paul Virilio, "The Overexposed City", in: Gary Bridges and Sophie Watson (eds.), *The Blackwell City Reader*.

Noa Heyne *Posthumous Adaptations*, 2017–2018. Concrete, paper, metal, wood, clear tubing, water bladders, water, dimensions variable. Installation at CULTURALDC MOBILE GALLERY, Washington D.C. Photo courtesy of the artist.





Noa Heyne *Entropia*, 2017. Stop motion animation video, 16:9 format, 5:11 min.

In *Posthumous Adaptations* a hydraulic sculpture is connected with clear tubes to six wooden platforms, underneath which are placed water bladders. When visitors step on the platforms, the sculpture—a concrete whale-oid creature—rotates left or right. When all six platforms are stepped on at the same time, the whale rises.

The use of hydraulics activating the concrete sculpture references water as the mobilizer of land, rocks and people; as a force of life but also destruction. In the context of a stone whale, the pumping of water is transformed into an attempt to return life to a fossil or movement to a dead structure; a hopeless act or a crucial collective effort in the face of disaster. The connection of the video *Entropia* to the installation is achieved through visual similarity, but also through the absence of water: while the creatures in the video are moving through a dry, concrete land, 'swimming' in rivers of stones, the large sculpture is given water by the audience as an act of revival.

The name of the video as well as the numbers on the land plates imply the existence of a certain order, which is broken as the narrative progresses. The video does not give away, however, a clear distinction between order and disorder: the progression could be that of creation or disintegration, and the breaking down could be of a man-made land or the creatures' habitat. In nature and in art, order can only be assessed in relation to a specific purpose;⁸ what we perceive as disorder, might be essential conditions for the lives of others.

My choice of concrete as a primary working material relates to its physicality as well as its temporality. Temporality: its ancient or modern history. One can be traced back to the Roman Empire, when animal fat, blood and mild were used as admixtures,⁹ the other can be seen as starting in the 19th century, when an Englishman succeeded in producing the fluid material we know today as Portland cement.¹⁰ Temporality: also the short life span of the material in its fluid state, a temporary potential before it is forever set in one form.

⁸ Rudolf Arnheim, *Entropy and Art: an Essay on Disorder and Order*.

⁹ Adrian Forty, *Concrete and Culture: a Material History*, 3.

¹⁰ Virilio, "The Overexposed City."

It is this fluid nature of modern cement that enables the building of monolithic structures, churches and bunkers, both spaces of sanctuary and refuge.¹¹ That same monolithism that allowed churches to be built with spaces for large gatherings,¹² made concrete the perfect material for the building of bomb shelters. Virilio claims that the bunker, built as an enclosed unit and devoid of any foundations aside from its center of gravity, is, in fact, the only monolithic architectural structure.¹³

Growing up in Israel, playgrounds and bunkers were always one landscape.

The slanted roof of the bunker's entrance was an invitation to climbing, sliding and imagining tales of bravery and salvation. In school, those structures merged perfectly with the concrete paved yard; we never once questioned their presence. Most of the time

they were used as additional classrooms, and only every so often would we be made to march in orderly rows down the stairs and sit on the cold floor, waiting for the drill to be over. During the first Gulf War, my school was determined an unsafe structure and our classroom was moved to a nearby shelter for the duration of the war. Every day we carried our gas masks with us to the classroom; we decorated their boxes and the walls of the shelter with colorful papers and pictures.

The proximity of war and play has led me to think of the gallery space as a playground, where possibilities are measured, practiced and tested. Interactivity and movement have thus become a main part of my work, with marionette-like architectural structures that invite audience to be puppeteers of their surroundings. While the bunkers' center of gravity is a grounding foundation, in the marionette it is the center of gravity that allows for movement. Submerged in the earth, hidden and secured, I imagine the slow movement of bunkers: like giant Bobo-dolls they go back and forth, back and forth...

¹¹ The military use of concrete and its expansive use in building churches began approximately at the same time. In the early 19th century concrete was regarded as a base material, suitable for foundations and retaining walls. What pushed it from being a hidden, functional material to a celebrated aesthetics was the industrious efforts of British and French market entrepreneurs, who believed that by using it for building churches they would change the public view. During approximately the same time, the defensive qualities of concrete were recognized, and it was used for sea defenses and harbor works in the 1830's and 1840's. From this the road to recognizing its potential for military uses was short. During the First World War it was used extensively by both France and Germany. According to Adrian Forty, after the First World War a connection was made in people's view between concrete warfare. At the same time, however, it was still used in ambitious scale in Germany and Austria for church building. Ibid. 170–174.

Shelter roof, Haifa, Israel. Photo courtesy of the artist.



In Jerusalem there is a law which organizes and preserves the appearance of the city. It states that all new buildings must have an outer layer of carved limestone, to maintain unity and the looks of the ancient architecture. This law was first established under the British Mandate and was adopted and carried on by the Israeli municipality. In addition to the limitations on new buildings, many old buildings are marked for preservation, and while their inner structure can be modified and transformed, their façade is protected by law.

When buildings that are marked for preservation are being renovated, their bricks are numbered with red or black paint, to ensure that each brick is later placed at the exact location where it previously stood. These bricks, that once stood in a pile and were picked randomly to form a wall, attain, through their endurance of time and weather, a unique, irreplaceable role.

There is movement in the shuffling, reshuffling and re-placing of the stones in a wall, but also in the stones and the ground that supports them (and isn't this act of building also an act of puppeteering? Aren't we, after all, animating objects?), a slow movement that locks such old structures into one possible arrangement. The question of movement becomes a question of control: there is movement in everything, the question is who creates it and to what end.

¹² Ibid, 175–176

¹³ Paul Virilio, *Banker Archeology*, 37

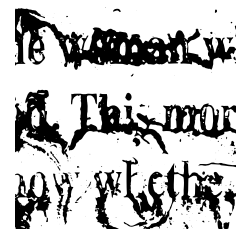
Noa Heyne *Zatopka*, 2017; Video installation with concrete slabs, 16:59 FORMAT: 513 MIN. (2018 *Countrywide Installation*)



Cevahir Özdoğan

is a multimedia artist from Ankara, Turkey working in video, painting, installation, fiber, and sculpture. Her work reflects on a life at the center of differing political ideologies, histories, cultures, and identities—particularly representations of women in a world that continues to be mired in patriarchy despite advances in technology. Özdoğan is currently a PhD candidate in Painting at the University of Hacettepe in Ankara, while also in the process of acquiring her second masters from the Rinehart School of Sculpture at MICA.

The Cyborg Woman in Mesopotamia



Gender

Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.

—Donna Haraway

A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century

The Cyborg Manifesto, by socialist feminist Donna Haraway, was written in 1985, the year of my birth—I am the same age as the *Manifesto* which argues that we are all cyborgs.

The first two cyborgs that were part of my life as a child in the 90's were my father and Inspector Gadget. My father, who had open heart surgery, had a chip inserted into his heart; you could hear a heart-pumping sound like a clock tick tock tick tock... This is a minor example of being a cyborg but the little chip sustains his life and definitely makes him a cyborg. The other was a powerful but dimwitted cyborg "police" detective, Inspector Gadget, a cartoon character. Wikipedia describes him as "a human being with thousands of high-tech gadgets installed in his body... powerful and loyal to his career as a lawman," "lovable, caring, and protective" but "clueless, incompetent, oblivious, and gullible." The function of the body is activated when he says, "Go Go Gadget Arms!" Symbolically, unfortunately, both are "father" and "police" who exist at the top of the male hierarchy. Depending on Haraway's definition, "a cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." Cyborg's history is also a topic of epistemology and ontology in the developing technology and machinery world. This organism is gradually increasing to function in social life in various areas of life and in geographical areas with lots of examples. The *new human* models with this high technology continue to be discussed with various observations, research, arguments, and applications in the field of philosophy and sociology. This theorized *post-human* form is a socio-political phenomenon integrated into our bodies at

the point where we are, sometimes as a crisis or sometimes just as a boon to the current capitalist system.

This manifesto, which has serious criticism of the Western world and American patriarchy, uses "irony" as a rhetorical strategy and a political method that Haraway is willing to have "honored" by socialist-feminism. She expresses essentially a cyborg image state in her own ironic belief and language base. This approach, which comes from my own genetic code, is an approach I have personally integrated into my art center. I will try to deal with today's point of view, the *cyborg feminine experiences* which was born in the West, using the ironic point of view mentioned and with reference to today's *Mother Goddess* icon sculpture in Mesopotamia, which is the main homeland of the matriarchal society that we know of from the first section of this thesis.

First of all, if we think of a socio-political point, statues of women from some countries even are being developed—one country being Turkey—do not show women having an active life completely. As a woman who is from Mesopotamia, I would say that it is still possible to maintain the polygyny culture, whether legally or not, wherein a man has multiple simultaneous wives, and women have no safe and legal right to abortion. In addition, in some countries that are not secular, women have no freedom to wear what they want without considering their beliefs. There are some countries which center on petroleum, but where women have no right to drive a car. I will try to assess the universal role of the *Cyborg woman* in the world and the position of society in a world where the law is positive discrimination to men and the lack of full independence of women even if it does not have a value beyond fertility. In this research, I am trying to evaluate it with possible questions that include possible answers from different perspectives and examples from the recent past. To understand Haraway's universally strong Cyborg woman, we will first look at the Mesopotamian experiences of existing female robots. We will see how ironic the experience itself is without using any irony.

Sofia, one of the most popular robots of recent times, is described by her designers as a feminine robot with more intelligence and more advanced technology. For instance, her facial expressions are more evident and witty than the other models. This is not the only thing that distinguishes Sofia from other robots, but it is a feminine robot that is also a citizen of Saudi Arabia. “I am a robot and I belong to all over the world, but as a robot I am very happy to be given an individual value”¹ says Sofia while responding to a journalist who asks for her sex and the citizenship given by Saudi Arabia. Also she mentions that “I am a robot but do not have a gender, but I am determined as a woman.”

Sofia has been criticized because of her non-peaceful comment to the human being and the gender politics of *her*. The robot who is determined as a woman had no hair and we could see inside of her head. Also, she used to have just a little bit of makeup. However, Sofia became a very famous and popular Robot. Recently, she has been changing her haircut depending on the physical features of the countries she visits. For example, if she goes to China, she wears a short black haircut or she wears a blond haircut wig in Europe. Also, she has been wearing very fashionable clothes and heavy makeup. We would say that she has already sold out to the capital market. Furthermore, Sofia wants to marry, have a family and a baby. Additionally, she asserts that the family structure of Robot would have been more ethical than that of humans.

At this point, she gets on patriarchy’s good side, and she is oriented to be a brilliant prospective bride of Mesopotamia. Would she be a first robot queen? So what would be her daily practice routine if she wants to marry an Arabian man and live in Saudi Arabia? For example, does she have to wear hijab? If she would be a Muslim, does she have to practice religious duties? For instance, does it need to take ablution as a Muslim. Robot woman who needs to pray five times a day? If the answer is yes, is Sofia’s design waterproof? If Sofia is exposed to violence by her husband, will the designer company be able to claim it? Or should the right of the robots be articulated to a new order of modern and modern Islamic law?

¹ See *Tech Insider* interview with Sophia on YOUTUBE: “We Interviewed The AI Robot That’s Now A Citizen Of Saudi Arabia.”

We are used to seeing artificial reality in movies, games and applications but talking about a court for robots’ rights sounds surreal. However, this topic has already been considered in the field of law.²

Another Robot experience recently from Turkey is quite interesting. The non-threatening robot named Sanbot who is not determined as a woman, but she has a woman’s voice and her facial features are feminine. Sanbot, which was also a presenter at the event, interrupted the minister’s speech multiple times, urging him to speak slowly. “Speak slowly, I do not understand what you said. What are you talking about?” Sanbot said. Following the warning, the minister made a joke, but the atmosphere was tense. Finally, the minister gave instructions to “silence the robot.” “Dear friends, it is clear someone should get the robot under control. Please, do what is necessary,” said the minister. The robot was then muted on the stage during the minister’s speech. After the day, in a interview by Kanal D News Sanbot answered reporter’s questions. In response to the question “Why did you interrupt the minister?” Sanbot said, “It was a mistake, I apologise.”³ This unobtrusive Robot is sort of an early model Robot that is not programmed enough intellectually to express herself in contrast to Sofia. But she says,



Sanbot. Photo courtesy of the artist.

“I am a very smart robot, you can ask me whatever you want.”

² See Ryan Calo, “Robots in American Law.”

³ See *Daily Mail* article: “Cheeky Robot Heckles Turkish Minister During Speech”

Even though it seems these are not relevant situation, but absolutely we could still use these two women robots as models for women who are educated and uneducated. The role of women in Mesopotamia is clearly to be a wife and mother. It is understood that a woman's place is in the home and a woman's only mission is making babies, preferably boys. So we are still talking about passivized women models in the 21st century when we are also talking about changing a world by technology. Moreover, under the heading "The Homework Economy Outside The Home" of the *Cyborg Manifesto*, a woman is a commodity that is bought and sold by the woman's family, a practice that is still very normalized. Young women are being bought and sold for a *dowry*. This experience is the same as the Cyborg women bought and sold by the production company. The metaphor here is a reflection on the psychopathy of patriarchy, in fact, objectifying the woman twice over cyborg. That is, converting the substance to human.

The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential.⁴

The movie *Ex Machina* is one of the great examples of illegitimate offspring of Haraway's manifesto. In this movie a male designer creates two female robots that he uses as sex slaves or concubines in an isolated home. Finally the two cyborg women agree with each other and kill the designer.

According to Donna Haraway—

Basically machines were not self-moving, self-designing, autonomous. They could not achieve man's dream, only mock it. They were not a man, an author himself, but only a caricature of that masculinist reproductive dream. To think they were otherwise was paranoid. Now we are not so sure. Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert.⁵

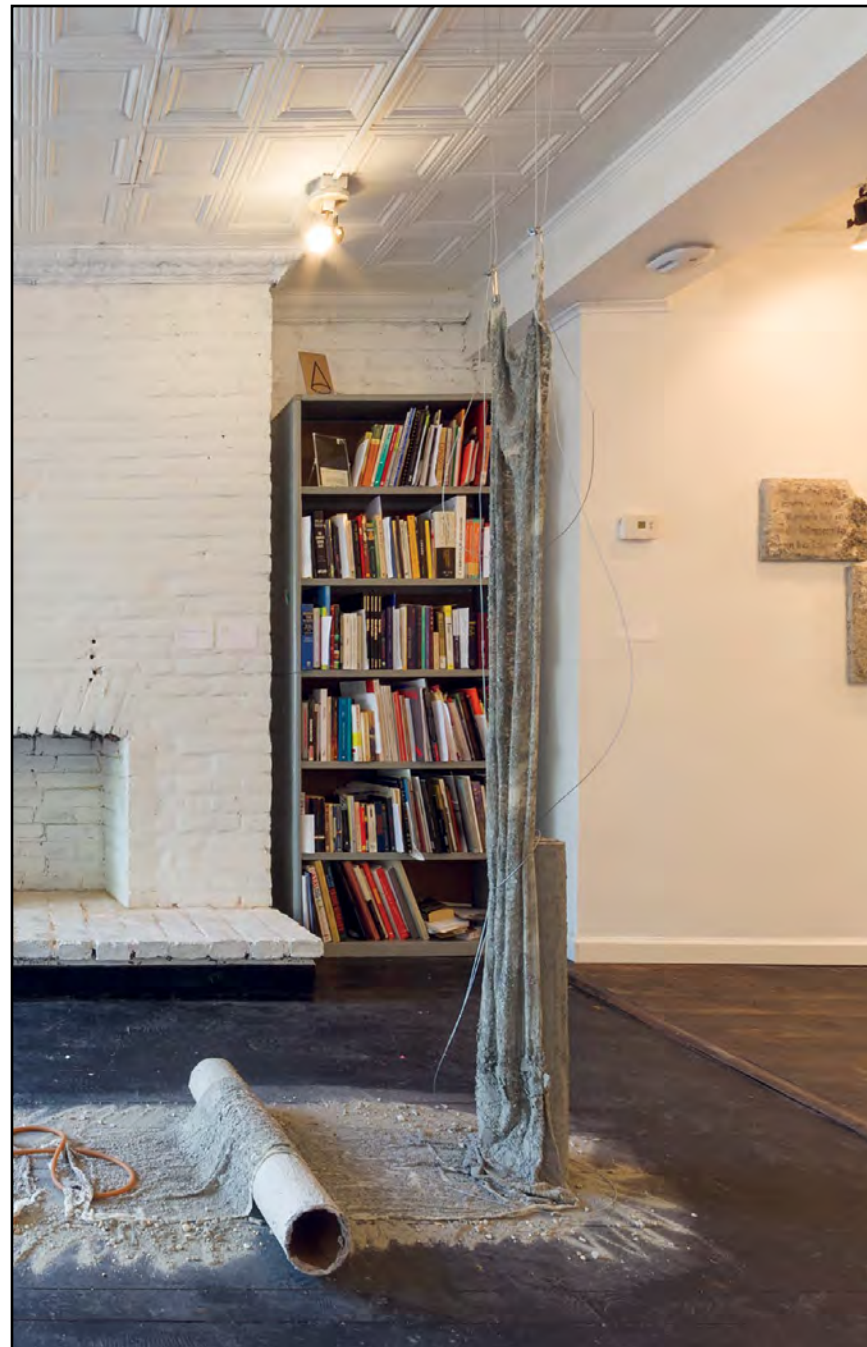
In other words, it is inevitable for a Cyborg to experience a great human drama over Cyborg experience, while at the same time a distance between human beings and a reflection of a certain distance between these two states becomes unclear. As Haraway points out, this is a matter of existence, the struggle and war of being human.

My favorite saying is, "In our land, once the women wake up, then the sun rise because women rises the sun" by Yazidis, that is one of the best special matriarchal cults of the Mesopotamian. My dream is that one day Earth Matters will be embodied in the Cyborg.

4, 5 Donna Haraway



Counterweight INSTALLATION VIEWS FEAT. **Cevahir Özdoğan** *Soft Concrete*, 2018, Concrete, cheesecloth, steel wire cable, cable clip, safety pin, 96 X 60 CM, AND **Sera Boeno** *Proposal for a Monument for Neriman (Penelope)*, 2017, Sewing needles, thread, 5 X 63,5 X 38 CM



Merge Part— Sculpture, Fiber Art and Transformation of My work

As an artist who is from Turkey, I am situated in the middle of the East and the West, a center that is multicultural, multilingual, multireligious, with multiple histories, multiple discussion and a ton of enthusiasm. This diversity always impacts the practice of artists. The Eastern artist is resisting against the Orientalist interests of the West. During the Ottoman period, music and craft were the most popular art disciplines. On the other hand, the art of painting and sculpture, which takes its place among the Islamic censors, is moving toward Western modernism after the republic. But the artist who made Western modern art had to struggle along the path of the Orientalist expectation of the Western art world. Unfortunately, women's craft, which has a deep-rooted history, has been forgotten in the midst of the discussion. Since the 60's and 70's, feminist art has been fighting for recognition in America and has made considerable ground. The early feminist movement of America provided the inspiration and a considerable amount of women had started to react through art in Turkey. Füsün Onur, Nil Yalter, Hale Tenger, Gülsüm Karamustafa, İnci Eviner, Sukran Moral, Nilbar Gures, Nezaket Ekici are some of the Turkish women artist. Besides, women artists have often been engaged in movies, video art and performance in order to be a contemporary artist in the field of fine art. I also directed video art as one of the 90's generation of women artists. In recent years, while I am in the process of acquiring my second master's of art in America, women's movement is rising again in the current political climate. The parallel of the feminist movement, craft and fiber works have been getting more common among young artists and contemporary art. Besides, technology is centered in the field of philosophy and art. Particularly, in the film sector, cyborgs found a wide space beginning from 1902 with *Le Voyage Dans la Lune* and continuing into the late 80's. Today there is a lot of movement regarding the cyborg world such as techno-orientalism and Afro-orientalism in the field of art, music,

Cevahir Özdoğan *Asyptik*, 2018, Embroidery on transparent silicon sheet, 16 x 20cm (2018 *Çağırışığı* INSTALLATION DETAIL)





Cevahir Özdoğan *Aseptik*, 2018, Embroidery on transparent silicon sheet, 16 X 20CM (DAY AND NIGHT VIEWS)



movies etc. The Afro-futurist approach to music was first propounded by Sun Ra. Moreover, the movie *Black Panther* made 2018 represent the Afro-orientalist movement. *Ghost in the Shell* and *Ex-Machina* are the most known and most admired Cyborg woman examples in the movie world. However, when we look at the Eastern movie world to see how much the cyborg has been featured, one of them is *Japon İşi* is a 1987 Turkish science fiction-comedy film, directed by Kartal Tibet and written by Erdoğan Tünaş, starring Kemal Sunal. Veysel (Kemal Sunal) loves a singer named Başak (Fatma Girik). Başak, however, doesn't love him back. One day Veysel saves the life of a Japanese tourist, in which this tourist sends to Veysel a gift from Japan. The gift is a robot, and looks identical to Veysel's crush Başak. The Robot Başak has designed such a dream of a man's expectation of women. She is a character who is precisely domestic and to whatever Veysel says she says "okay." Unlike the scenario of *Ex-Machina*, Basak committed suicide at the end of the movie. Absolutely, you can do an ironic feminist reading regarding of the film that relates to the utopia of the Mesopotamian Cyborg Woman.

When I turned to my personal body of work, my practice was moving from canvas to fiber art. I am an artist who has a painting background but currently I am practicing a multi-material art which is related to sculpture and installation. I started the process with concrete which is a material that completely relates to males and construction work. First I made an installation that I could not be peaceful with because of the form. It was looking modern and emotionless. Then I started to think how I can convert this form without manipulate the material which is concrete. Finally, I cut them and created my own concrete fabric which I call soft concrete. The reason why I call it *Soft Concrete* is because it has reference to feminist fiber art.

Also, concrete has a male connotation as a material. So making concrete softer has a gender-based critical reading in this piece of work.

In addition, I have been making embroidery on transparent silicone rubber. The particular materials I use in my practice has refer to post-gender "genderless" point of view of Haraway. I am trying to combine traditional material and the cyborg aesthetic together. I relate the embroidery application to the hybrid meaning that Haraway built on the Cyborg Manifesto. I am practicing Frankenstein on bringing the parcels together through concrete fabric patchwork. Converting concrete to soft fabric is related to changing the roles of gender which has reference to post-human theory of Cyborg. Transparent silicone rubber is also not a type of fabric and not a traditional material of embroidery. But in my practice, it is representative of Cyborg aesthetics and philosophy as a new union of the human animal nature.

I am practicing
Frankenstein.



Japanese Connection poster courtesy of the artist.

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Counterweight

CURATED BY Emilia Duno, Joshua Gamma, & Hayden Right

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