

Turkish Pavilion
Venice Biennial, 52nd International Art Exhibition
Press Release, May 2007



Don't Complain
Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin represents Turkey at the 52nd International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia with an installation titled Don't Complain.

Turkey's participation will take place in the Artiglierie section of the Arsenale. Sponsored by Garanti Bank, under the auspices of Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the contribution of Promotion Fund of the Turkish Prime Ministry, and supported by the Venice Biennial/Friends of the Turkish Pavilion, the exhibition is curated by Vasif Kortun and organised by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), the organising body of the Istanbul Biennial.

Exhibition: 10 June - 21 November 2007

Press preview: 7 - 9 June 2007

Press conference: 8 June, 16.00, Teatro Piccolo - Arsenale

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin

Alptekin's installation for Turkey's participation in the Venice Biennial is named "Don't Complain". This tautological title underscores an objection, and sets off suspicions about the probable meanings of such a grievance. Who is complaining when saying "don't complain?" Is it about the artist, the country, or the viewer?

The installation consists of a series of specific single-cell spaces in a semi-arched form. The inspiration for these comes out of a particular type of public dining in West Asia where restaurants may be tightly divided into separate cabins assembled around an open courtyard. Hence, each group of guests keeps to their privacy, and their unique mental setting.

In each cabin of the installation there will be a series image sequences on LCD screens. These are made of a layering of hundreds of single images, recordings of random and nonessential moments, anonymous myths that do not make it to history, and of fleeting acts that normally elude our attention. Alptekin calls them the "Incidents". In the "The Bombay Incident" on Juhu Tara Beach and The "Rio de Janeiro Incident" on Ipanema Beach differences are folded in to silhouettes of commonalty. In another incident, Alptekin traces a mute, black man over four seasons from the same vantage point; it is a register of the man's place on the corner of a street around a rubbish bin next to an abandoned car. He organizes the garbage in liaison with the street cleaners and inhabitants of the districts within the context of an informal economy, tolerated illegality, and auto-ecology. The deeply

empathic assignation to the invisible under-belly of globalization, the cosmos of authorless, displaced presences, has as well to do with Alptekin's peripatetic livelihood, the "escape" from home and local context. His unabated rummaging around of other mental places provides him a specific knowledge and a working model.

The installation was prepared in Vaasa, Finland as part of the artist's Platform Vaasa residency with support from "Cheap Finnish Labour" project and BRG: Barn Research Group [Johan Ångerman, Peter Båsk, Camila Rocha, Cemali Marino, Hüseyin Alptekin].

Hüseyin Alptekin has participated in numerous exhibitions including the 4th (1995) and 9th (2005) International Istanbul Biennials; 24th São Paulo Biennial (1998); 4th Cetinje Biennial, Montenegro, (2004); Manifesta V; 47th October Salon: Art, Life and Confusion, Belgrade, 2006; and How Latitudes Become Forms, Walker Art Center (2003). Vasif Kortun is the director of Platform Garanti Art Center in Istanbul.

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