

Pi Artworks London: **Gülay Semercioğlu**
The Woman On The Wire
9 October – 21 November 2015
Private View: 8 October, 18:30 – 21:00

Pi Artworks London is pleased to announce Gülay Semercioğlu's solo exhibition at the gallery. Semercioğlu has been working with Pi Artworks since 2005, and her work has recently been acquired by the Metropolitan Museum, New York and Istanbul Modern, Istanbul.

Semercioğlu carefully loops by hand thin, coloured, enamel coated, wire to create knitted structures. By densely overlapping these fine wires, the surfaces appear from a distance like shimmering, glossy blocks of smooth colour, while up close the viewer witnesses fluctuating tonal modulations as light is reflected from one strand to the next.

In the past her work has drawn parallels with abstract and colour field paintings, but for *The Woman On The Wire* she seeks to emphasize more than just the formal qualities of her process. Within this body of work the artist investigates authority and control, with particular attention to the curtailing of agency and free-will women are subjected to within Turkey's persistently patriarchal society. A subject matter that was central to her practice up until 2005, which she now feels ready to re-approach through the prism of her well known recent aesthetic.

For her new work, Semercioğlu has worked with women from across Turkey, in collaboration with whom she has produced in her signature style items familiar to domestic spaces. A bed stands at the far end of the gallery, a free flowing garment hangs from the ceiling, and the walls are decorated with framed pictures. By working almost exclusively with gold plated filament – a colour closely associated with weddings in Turkish culture – she alludes to this being the surreal marital home of an imagined young woman.

This scene, however, is critically deconstructs by taking the reoccurring motifs that are indicative of a patriarchal society that are embedded within such domestic spaces and bringing them to the fore. Motifs that signify processes such as marriage, birth, and the feeling of pride after giving birth to a baby boy regularly feature within traditional Anatolian craftwork that fill many homes but are too subtle and ubiquitous to be noticed. Yet these motifs epitomize patriarchal soft power by subtly defining two separate paths that a man and a woman are to progress down. By introducing these references Semercioğlu reveals how even private domestic spaces are not free from the understanding

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of the male as the authoritative figure whose role is separate from that of a woman's. This is further emphasized by the artist's mimicry of the aesthetic of *Capitones*: rectangular, fabric panels consisting of rows of indented buttons placed behind the desks of state bureaucrats that signify, typically male, authority.

Semerçioğlu liberates herself from the persisting dichotomy of masculine and feminine spaces by coalescing both within her production process. She takes materials from industrial production - a traditionally masculine context- and merges them with the domestic handcrafts of knitting- commonly associated with the feminine. The woven fabric has been replaced with carefully spun wire, and to the traditional process she has added industrial tools and materials.

Finally, a selection of buttons are embedded within the exhibition's works that represent the artist's most critical remark regarding patriarchal society. The buttons are marked with the names of women murdered for reasons of supposed honour. Each name bringing visibility to the lack of justice and brings a macabre reminder of what a patriarchal society can lead to.

Gülay Semerçioğlu, b. 1968. Her work can be found in numerous public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA; Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey; Farhad Farjam Collection, Dubai, UAE; Cocca Art & Design Institute, Coimbatore, India; the collection of the Centene Center for Arts and Education, MO, USA; the Papko Art Collection, Istanbul, Turkey. Recent solo exhibitions include, *Walking on the Wire* at Pi Artworks Istanbul (2014), *Variations on Line* at Leila Heller Gallery, New York (2012), and *The Line of Life* at Gallery Etemad, Dubai (2012). Group exhibitions include *Sublime Porte: An Exhibition of Contemporary Turkish Art* at the Dr MT Geoffrey Yeh Art Gallery in New York (2013); *Dream and Reality*, Istanbul Modern (2011); *Mardin Bienali, Abbara Kadabra*, Mardin Biennial, Mardin (2010) and *Istanbul Next Wave*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin (2009).

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