

PI ARTWORKS ISTANBUL

Ahmet Civelek

Number 3: Grit

24 November – 29 December 2018

Private view: 23 November Friday,

18:30 – 20:30



Ahmet Civelek, *Sandpaper Paintings*, 2018, Sandpaper on wood panel, 20.5 x 15.5 cm / each

Pi Artworks Istanbul is pleased to present *Number 3: Grit*, a solo exhibition by Turkish-American multimedia artist, Ahmet Civelek. Centering around a concept usually quite foreign to creative artists – destruction - in these new bodies of work Civelek employs a humble, readymade, and quite contradictory material: commercially manufactured sandpaper. Civelek’s highly process-based practice inhabits the symbolic and poetic spaces in between drawing, sculpture, and installation. This solo exhibition is the artist’s third, and his first with PiArtworks.

While often imbued with deeply negative connotations, the artist sees the act of destruction as a form of creative authorship as sincere and perhaps more accessible than creation. Though born in the US, Civelek was raised in Istanbul during a time of heightened geopolitical instability. Often witnessing the precarity of daily life firsthand, as well as regular cycles of creation and destruction, the artist was simultaneously consuming Western mass media, rife with an oversaturation of images of failure and violence solely for entertainment purposes. These disparate and oppositional experiences provoked the artist to confront and synthesize certain dialectical relationships - between creation and destruction, between author and audience - as well as instigated his exploratory research into the nature of materials. Early in the development of his practice, the artists opened a space called The Destruction Company, where visitors could come and destroy different items. Over time, these explorations matured, were simplified, and became more subtle and metaphorical, leading to the body of work presented in this exhibition.

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This exhibition contains three different groups of work in the same medium, all which utilize sandpaper. Sandpaper is a material imbued with conflict and juxtapositions: it is used in the process of creation by means of its slow and superficial destruction of surfaces and objects. When implemented as designed, it can create smoothness and polish, yet it remains abrasive and potentially destructive. The sandpaper series can be thought of as a study of material properties that expose how an object can be destroyed and how to destroy it - a combination of artistic intentions and chance operations. These works include "paintings" made of a range of different grits of sandpaper in a variety of colors and textures, several sculptures, and an installation on which the audience is invited to walk, thus hastening this work's inherent need to be destroyed or destroy itself. As the audience inhabits the exhibition space and interacts with this installation, the sandpaper it is created from will simultaneously be worn down while slightly wearing down the soles of the shoes of those who walk across it, creating a new experiential work which exposes the dynamics of destruction and creation through participation.

Ahmet Civelek, b.1988, New York, USA, studied at Pratt Institute (BFA 2009) Brooklyn, USA and Central Saint Martins (Diploma 2010) London, UK. Previous solo exhibitions include: Number 2: Cycles, Entrance, New York, USA (2017); Number 1, Galerie Murlot, New York, USA (2012). Major group exhibitions and screenings include: Past Meets Present, Anna Laudel Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey (2017); close, but not touching, Biggercode Gallery, New York, USA (2017); All Fun and Games Until Someone Gets Burnt..., Manhattan Loft Gallery, London, UK (2016); O Zaman Renk!, Artnivo, Istanbul, Turkey (2016); Works: Reflection on Failure, Radiator Gallery, New York, USA (2016); Meet Me By The Tree, Oktem & Aykut, Istanbul, Turkey (2016); Scent, Dickinson Roundell, New York, USA (2015); The Frivolous Now, Alon Zakaim, London, UK (2015); Summer Windows, Garis and Hahn, New York, USA (2015); Separation Anxiety, Wallplay Gallery, New York, USA (2014); As the Eye is Formed, Parrish Art Museum, New York, USA (2013); Echo... From The Age I Was Able To See It, Koraalberg Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium (2010); subSTRATUM, Islington Arts Factory, London, UK (2010). Selected awards and art residencies include: Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT, USA (2017); Arteles, Haukijärvi, Finland (2015); Autocenter, Berlin, Germany (2013).