

PI ARTWORKS

Pi Artworks London: **Nezaket Ekici**
 “(AFTER) LOVE AT LAST SIGHT”
 Curated by Shaheen Merali
 14.12.2013 - 25.01.2014

(After) Love at Last Sight is a retrospective of works by Berlin-based Turkish performance artist, Nezaket Ekici. Curated by Shaheen Merali, it will encompass a selection of video works of iconic performances alongside photographs and stills from the last 13 years. The exhibition will also feature a three-day performance of her iconic work – *Emotion in Motion*, transforming part of the space of the Pi Artworks London gallery over the 11th, 12th and 13th December, with her finale during the exhibition’s official opening on the 13th.

The exhibition opens to the public on the 14th December but we encourage visitors to come by and see Nezaket in action on the 12th should they wish for a special preview!

It was after reading Charles Baudelaire’s poem, *To a Passer By*, that Berlin-based philosopher Walter Benjamin came upon the concept of love at ‘last sight’. The poem served as a catalyst for Benjamin to examine further the mundane encounters that occur within the crowded streets of large cities, and how these fleeting connections with other people – a glance, a moment two eyes lock – are often both our first as well as our last sight of them. As Benjamin later described: “the delight of the city-dweller is love – not at first sight, but at last sight,” or rather, “the final farewell that coincides with the moment of allure.” It is this notion of living in cities, fast becoming the chosen place for millions of people around the globe in which to co-habit, gather, work, shop, travel, see, love and hate, that creates a gross mixture of emotions. We experience a brief moment of love, of desire, before it is surpassed by the next event, for the city acts like a revolving door – on entering the next portal, we forget our last encounter.

It is with these ideas in mind that **Pi Artworks London** presents the **first solo exhibition** of works by **Nezaket Ekici** (born 1970, Kirsehir, Turkey). Few cities can claim to be as large, active and busy as London, and “the performance works of Ekici are neither illustrative of desire nor estrangement – rather, they are processes. Often exhaustive in their duration, they use humour, energy and repetition to create a vision that unfurls a border. At times her performances verge on the painful to watch, absurd encounters that allow the artist to reach a place she calls “creative spaces”. Explains Ekici, “I aim to create art where all of the elements are connected together to form an absolute work of art.” Indeed, it was the Stuttgart-based philosopher Andreas Dammertz who wrote: “Performance is perhaps the only art in our modern times that is able to describe the fast turning world. Performance, having the same speed as the world today by focusing on the moment.”

Within Ekici’s creative spaces many alluring moments come to light – secrets are unveiled, fragments released, layers of fetish exposed and slapstick disturbs cultural heritage. In the hustling, bustling and ever-speeding urban environment in which we live, it is through the performative realm that we are allowed the opportunity to understand some of the evolving and ever-revolving realities that we call living. Performance presents us with a moment to establish an emotional bond with our muse, even as she disappears – we see her passing by, and love her at last sight. Yet the memory of the moment, this moment itself, remains in place of, and as our muse.

At Pi Artworks London, (After) Love at Last Sight will present over **13 years of performance works** as **videos** accompanied by **photographic** works of varying scale, including *Emotion in Motion* (2000), *Blind* (2007), *Madonna* (2008), *Tube Dolomit* (2009), *Border Inside* (2011), *Human Cactus* (2012) and *Disappear* (2013). The earliest work, *Emotion in Motion*, first realised in 2000, will be performed by the artist in the gallery over three days and its relics will remain in the space with a video performance from its fourth venue in Milan (2002). *Emotion in Motion* is also currently on permanent loan

at Istanbul Modern, where it is on view on a permanent loop. During the performance Ekici covers an installed living space filled with personal objects and accessories with kisses. The trace of her lipstick forms a patina of affection – or is it consumption that she exposes? The work conveys many layered meanings, but what strikes us is how an act, normally associated with love and greeting, has been twisted into a never-ending moment of torture in Ekici's valiant attempt to cover the whole space. Emotion in *Motion is a powerful process that reminds one of pain as well as delineating the duress of love* and its universal worship. The walls, furniture, objects and even the artist's clothes all turn lipstick-red, a triumphant memento mori of desire and perhaps, just perhaps, also the beginning of the end of love at last sight..

***This text is based on the curatorial essay by Shaheen Merali, which will appear in the exhibition catalogue.*

Notes to Editors:

Nezaket Ekici (1970, Kirsehir) studied under Marina Abramovic at the Hochschule fur Bildende Kunste Braunschweig, from where she received her Degree in Fine Arts (2001-2003) and MFA Degree (2004) respectively. Prior to this, she studied sculpture at the Akademie der Bildenden Kunste, Munich (1996-2000) and received an MA in Art Pedagogy and Art History in 2000 from the Ludwig-Maximilians Universitat in Munich. Select solo exhibitions include Islamic Chapel at the Stadtische Galerie, Ostfildern Germany and Personal Map, to be continued... in cooperation with Marta Herford, De Bond, Cultuurcentrum Brugge, Belgium (both in 2013). Ekici is the recipient of numerous awards, including project grants from the Goethe Institut in Ghana (2012), Thessaloniki (2011) and Tbilissi (2009). Her work can be found in both public and private collections, including the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada, Samdani Art Foundation, Bangladesh, Istanbul Modern, the Koc Foundation Contemporary Art Collection, Elgiz Museum and Marta Herford Museum.

Shaheen Merali is a curator and writer currently based in London. Between 2003-2008, he was Head of Exhibitions, Film and New Media at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, where he curated several exhibitions accompanied by key publications, including *The Black Atlantic; Dreams and Trauma- Moving images and the Promised Lands* and *Re-Imagining Asia, One Thousand years of Separation*. In 2006, he was co-curator of the 6th Gwangju Biennale, Korea. Upon leaving Germany he curated several exhibitions in India and Iran before embarking upon a period of extensive research and consultation on the conservation and production of a major exhibition of the International Collection of the Birla Academy of Art and Culture in India (January 2012). Recent exhibitions include *Refractions, Moving Images on Palestine*, P21 Gallery, London; *When Violence becomes Decadent*, ACC Galerie, Weimar and *Speaking from the Heart*, Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam. In 2014 he will co-curate the 4th *Mediations Biennale*, Posnan, Poland.

Pi Artworks was founded by Yesim Turanli in 1998 in Istanbul and for the past 15 years, has been introducing Turkish and international artists to the primary market. Since its founding, Pi Artworks has been committed to showcasing the best of Contemporary Turkish and international art to Istanbul's growing art scene, alongside providing an international platform for its roster of artists to showcase their work. The gallery is located at the famous historical Misir Apartment in Istanbul and in October 2013 Pi Artworks London opened on 55 Eastcastle Street, in the heart of London's bustling Fitzrovia with a group exhibition *Pi: Housewarming*, presenting some of its key artists ahead of series of solo shows.

Exhibition: "(AFTER) LOVE AT LAST SIGHT"

Location: 55 Eastcastle Street, W1W 8EF, London/UK

Open for Press Preview: 12 December 2013

Private Preview: 13 December 2013, 6:30-8:30

Dates: 14 December 2013 – 25 January 2014

Hours: 10am - 18pm (Except Sundays)

For press information and images, please contact: Anna Wallace-Thompson: awt@piartworks.com, (+ 44 207 637 8403)