

PI ARTWORKS ISTANBUL

Ipek Duben

Angels and Clowns

12 March – 25 April 2020

Private View: 12 March Thursday,

18:30 – 20:30



Angels and Clowns, detail, 2020

Ipek Duben's new work *Angels and Clowns* at Pi Artworks Istanbul looks at excesses, paradoxes, fantasies and divine myths in contemporary life in the post-truth era.

"I watch with tears and smiles the condition of humanity in the post-truth, post-fact, post-faith era. I am part of it and yet taking it in from a distance. I continue living with my old habits and stand wondering what I can do about it. My thoughts lead me to the forever present angels and clowns who look both like and unlike us, stand by us and observe us from afar. They can warn us, alert us about the good and the bad, right and wrong, and always demand our critical awareness. I feel akin to their marginality and dared to travel the world with them."

- Ipek Duben

Ipek Duben's solo show *Angels and Clowns* at Pi Artworks Istanbul will be running between 12 March and 25 April 2020. The artist holds an important place in the art world with her works on identity, gender, migration and memory which have contributed significantly to the local and global contemporary art scene. Her new work *Angels and Clowns* is built around the denial of reality in the face of growing moral decadence, material inequality, natural disasters and consequent wars and massive migration around the world.

The *Angels and Clowns* series consists of postcards which the artist has collected during her travels and transformed into mini paintings with 'clowns,' which represent sarcasm, irony and questioning, and 'angels' which keep track of right and wrongdoings in their role as ambassadors of divine justice. In these works, they play their

roles with humor and seriousness in reference to their functions and duties in social life. In today's world where fundamental conditions of human existence are no longer guaranteed, Duben's show constitutes a social critique which raises our consciousness and also promises hope.

İpek Duben's ongoing interest in social and political issues and her use of text, iconography and various formats and mediums is again evidenced in *Angels and Clowns*. Duben's love for irony also continues here, referencing her installations *LoveBook* and *LoveGame* (1998-2000) where love and violence are ironically interwoven, and *Thinking Garbage* (2004, multimedia work) where the focus is on humans turning into waste in our era of technological revolution. She used the postcard medium in her earlier multimedia work *What is a Turk?* (2004) as racism or discrimination transfer object through ethnic identities.

In *Children of Paradise* (2000-2011) the artist criticizes excessive consumption with cupids flying over and climbing around piles of consumer products, foods, gadgets, entertainment objects as they drift into the delirium of consumption. In *Angels and Clowns*, both helpless and hopeful cupids station themselves around negative social realities trying to help and to warn humans who may be oblivious to their threatening surroundings. In each case Duben's focus is on the human condition.

İpek Duben, lives and works in Istanbul. Major exhibitions include; *Social Work*, Frieze London, London, UK (2018); *Beyond Words*, 4th Mardin Biennale, Mardin, Turkey (2018); *In Via Incognito* (solo), Pi Artworks London, UK (2018); *LoveGame* (solo), Merdiven Art Space, Istanbul, Turkey (2017); *THEY/ONLAR* (solo), Fabrica, Brighton, UK (2017); *Salt Galata*, Istanbul, Turkey (2015); *Poetry and Exile*, curated by Venetia Porter, The British Museum, London, UK (2014); 3rd European International Book Art Biennale, Moscow, Russia (2014); Fifth Bibliotheca Alexandrina International Biennale for the Artist's book, Alexandria, Egypt (2014); *Mom, am I Barbarian?* 13th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2013); *Dream and Reality*, İstanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey (2011); *A Dream... But Not Yours*, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C., USA (2010); *New Works New Horizons*, İstanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey (2009). Selected collections include; The British Museum, London, UK; Vienna Museum, Vienna, Austria; The Bibliotheca Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt; King St. Stephen Museum, Szekesfehervar, Macaristan; Museum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, Netherlands; İstanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey; Vehbi Koc Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey; Zorlu Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey; Center for Book Arts, New York, USA.