

Press release:



Phil Collins, *Baghdad Screentests*, 2002, DVD, 47 minutes.

Undesire

April 18 - May 17, 2003

Curated by:
Vasif Kortun

Public opening reception:
Friday, April 18, 6-8 pm

Works by:
Fikret Atay
Phil Collins
Inci Eviner
Dan Perjovschi

Undesire, as a title, is definitely an unintended deception. The word misses the anchor that retains meaning. Inspired by "undesirable", it connotes the uneasy feelings one has for that which is unwanted, disliked or rejected. The works exhibited in *Undesire* evoke tensions often found in a relationship of conflict – especially in this time of war – although perhaps it is a bit romantic to treat an exhibition like a space of representation.

The Kurdish artist, Fikret Atay, lives in a town called Batman, located close to the Iraqi border. Batman is a miserable oil producing town with the highest suicide rate in Turkey. Several weeks ago, Kurdish officials stretched a net across the atrium of the dinky mall to stop people from taking a dive onto the marble floor. Batman is not batman, this is not Gotham city. This is a town that carries the legacy of George Bush Sr.'s 1991 war; the extraordinary security measures, the unspeakable murders perpetrated by the cronies of the State. Fikret will show two low-tech videos: one of a "war dance" and the other of two kids in a kind of strange song and dance unlikely in an ATM booth.

Another Turkish artist, İnci Eviner, digitally imposes images of kids on large wallpaper – a format encountered in an interior space. These innocent-looking figures are shown with explosives rigged to their chest. The work *Explosive Heart* is docile and domestic except for the fact that those live-bomb bodies are inscribed at home.

Baghdad Screentests, a portrait video by Irish artist Phil Collins, was first screened in Tiran, Albania in December 2002. Feeling a bit ashamed about looking people in the eye who cannot look back, the viewer watches the quiet individuals who are trying to fill the gap of silence with their glances. The video is a traveller's work in the sense that comprehension of a climate comes after the initial perception of a climate. The exhibition will also include a slide show of drawings by Romanian artist, Dan Perjovschi, updated daily to humor us just a little bit.



Dan Perjovschi, *graFITi*, power point slide show, 2003

A color brochure containing an essay by the curator will be available free of charge. Please contact **apexart** for further information. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11-6.

Vasif Kortun is the director of Proje4L Istanbul Museum of Contemporary Art and the Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center. He was chief curator and director of the Third Istanbul Biennial (1992) and the founding director of the Center for Curatorial Studies Museum, Bard College (1994-1997). His writings and interviews over the last three years have been included in such magazines as *Flash Art*, *Art Asia Pacific*, *Art Journal*, *New Art Examiner*, and *Contemporary*, as well as many exhibition catalogs. He is on the Bush Global Advisory Committee of the Walker Art Center and is co-curator of the 2003 Biennial de Córdoba, Argentina. For more information on Mr. Kortun please visit www.apexart.org/kortun.htm.

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