



Halil Altındere, *No Man's Land*, 2012

Cappadox 2015 Contemporary Art Aftermovie



The dust is sandy and the stone is light and crumbly; looking at the erosions that wrinkle it, you feel you could break it with your fingers. Then you raise your eyes and see the towering snowy peak of Argaoi, and it truly seems strange how the world changes.

George (Yorgo) Seferis

"Cappadocia Struck" is the title of the exhibition, which is realized as a part of the Cappadox Festival with the participation of 15 artists, collaborators and researchers. It takes place at the Uğhisarlı Çarhacı Mustafa Effendi Konak (Mansion) Building 'Complex' in Uğhisar, Cappadocia through May 16—31, 2015.

With its extraordinary geological structure, monumental landscape and unique rock architecture as well as its multilayered history dating back to the Neolithic period, Cappadocia is an exceptionally laden place. Furthermore, the region is undergoing a complicated process of transition from a largely agricultural model of life and livelihood to a tourism based economy. It requires long-term observations and diverse research to understand these interesting but also complicated structures and situations. Therefore, the exhibition has been composed step by step parallel to our process of understanding this intense geography.

The artists, collaborators and researchers invited to "Cappadocia Struck" are Ayşe Erkmen, Cevdet Erek, Christoph Schäfer, Hera Büyüktoktaş, Jörn Körmeling & Charlemagne Palestine, Maider López, Murat Germen, Murat Şahinler in collaboration with Can Altınler, Engin Bükre & Yakup Çetinkaya, Nilbor Güreş, and Özge Özgüçü Akkuyu & Emin Naci Akkuyu. Opening up a space for conversations on the artistic imagination's forms of engagement with a particular place, the Cappadocia region, the artists will share their initial impressions in diverse artistic gestures ranging from research on Cappadocia to site-specific and context responsive installations, from minimal interventions in nature to contemporary art interpretations on music and sound.

Artistic Gestures

Like the exhibition, the projects of the artists are also pointing at a state of becoming. Hence, we named the artists' productions for the exhibition's gestures because gesture refers to immediacy, spontaneity and incompleteness that, in turn, coincide with the artists' responses to Cappadocia. Rather than a finalized work or conceptualized image, the artists brought out their artistic gestures in between conception and production to introduce their ideas. Furthermore, Giorgio Agamben describes gesture as something that opens up the sphere of ethos: "What characterizes gesture is that in it there is neither production nor enactment, but undertaking and supporting. In other words, gesture opens the sphere of ethos as the most fitting sphere of the human." [2]. Etymologically ethos also means "accustomed place" as well as the principles associated with it, so we conceive the artistic gestures in connection with a particular place and hope to convey the ethos of Cappadocia through the exhibition.

The artists created new projects for the exhibition that focus on the geography, architecture and settlements as well as the ways of dwelling in the region. There are two projects taking place outside the exhibition site, coming in direct contact with the geography. The project of Ayşe Erkmen intervenes with the Uçhisar Castle, the peak point and the biggest fairy chimney of the region. By placing colorful spheres / balls into the holes at the Uçhisar Castle, she creates a contrast with the organic form and monochrome color of the fairy chimney and orients our attention to its sculptural form, scale, and the natural and cultural processes that shaped it. Maider López, on the other hand, planned a performative action to take place during trekking at the Zemi Valley where 28 people stand on 28 hills, and then the same people occupy only one hill to give a human dimension to the landscape formed with many hills, thus making visible how people relate to each other and their surroundings. Maider López's two additional projects are also related to the geography. While *Disappearance* visualizes our very experience in these specific geographical conditions, *Moving Stones* refers to the invisible changes in the landscape. Another project in the exhibition directly connected with the geography is Özge Önderoğlu Akkuyu & Emin Naci Akkuyu's research on the flora of Cappadocia. When she moved to Nevşehir, as a gesture of making Cappadocia her new home, Özge started to take photographs of the plants in the region and this effort eventually turned into a research.

Murat Şahinler and his collaborators Can Altınler, Engin Büke and Yakup Çetinkaya focus on the geological processes and transformation of the region that resulted in the current physical environment. With a pseudo-scientific, theoretical language larded with humor, they propose a sort of "modeling" through interventions to everyday objects and a video collage, while Christoph Schäfer creates a video and drawing installation in a rock-caved space rendering the imaginary everyday life of the caves as a speculative history of the "beings" who dwelled in them. Through the work, he reads the cave city as a practical critique of urban planning. Alternately, Herra Büyüktöçşyanın departs from an actual historical case pertaining to the Greek community who were forced to leave their homeland in line with the population exchange treaty signed between Turkey and Greece in 1923. Based on the inscription engraved at the entrance of Serafim Rizos' mansion in Sinasos (known as Mustafa Paşa today), the work takes its title from the last sentence of the inscription "And never belongs to no one" making reference to the myriad of peoples who dwelled in Anatolia.

The projects of Nilbör Güreş and Murat Germen address the current socio-economic conditions of the region. In her research visit, Nilbör Güreş comes across an accounting book in a souvenir shop run by a community of women producers from the region. She not only commissions special knits and embroideries for her sculptural installation but also asks for the accounting book to present it as a part of her installation in order to offer a perspective on the operational model of a grassroots economic organization in its most basic and essential form. Murat Germen, on the other hand, questions the alienated image of Cappadocia created by various forms of consumerist culture that over-emphasize the "extraterrestrial" geological structures and topography of the region, and explores the possibility of an alternative way of seeing.

The soundscape of Ughisar Cappadocia is a part of Cevdet Ereş's sound *Ornamentation - Ughisar* that explores the acoustic character of diversity of spaces in the venue that exemplifies the hybrid architecture of Ughisar, where different modes of architecture such as rock-carved habitats and stone buildings co-exist. To his pattern based rhythms, Cevdet also introduced voices and sounds of pigeons, which have been a culturally and economically crucial element in the region for centuries. Taking part in music festivals, the exhibition also features a work that reflects on the form of music as a conceptual and experimental commentary inspired by Pythagoras' monochord, which is based on counting a chosen length (do, re, mi). John Körmeling invented the Frgischord, an extension of it with two keyboards, where the tunes are based on two registers; counting area and volume. When John Körmeling asked Charlemagne Palestine to play the Frgischord, it was a provocative challenge for Charlemagne to explore the unusual tunings and intervals that the Pythagorean approach introduces to a traditional harpsichord. Following the first one in Rotterdam, Charlemagne's second performance with the instrument will now take place in Cappadocia.

As Yorgo Seferis writes in his notes on his travels to Cappadocia in 1950's, it is strange to contemplate on how the geography is changing across the land extending in front of Mount Argaeus. "Cappadocia Struck" intends to share our "romantic" awe in the face of this special geography, while commenting on the different modes of perceiving and experiencing it in our time.

[1] George Seferis. *Three Days in the Monasteries of Cappadocia*. Trans. by Peter Mackridge. Istos Publishing. Istanbul 2013. Pa. 17

[2] Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History, the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron, Verso, 1993, p.140

Photo Gallery



Playlist

