

## Verwunderlich, dass ihr euch wundert – aber wir tun es auch - Berlin/Istanbul \*

This audio-visual installation presented a number of transcribed excerpts of migration biographies. The work was installed in a Turkish café in the centre of Berlin - Kreuzberg, the heart of the largest Turkish diasporic community in the world.

Every migratory movement starts with an aspiration and expectation of positive change to the current situation, but none of these migratory experiences are predictable or controllable. The selected migration biographies reflect the problematic experiences of a migratory movement. It reveals the consequences on individual's lives, for example, refused asylum statuses, deportation, torture and detainment, broken families, generational and gender conflicts. This dialogical installation invited citizens and visitors to explore the everyday realities and complexities faced by the Turkish and Kurdish communities.

\* Title translation: 'Strange that you wonder, but we do as well' - Berlin/Istanbul



Wenn sie gefoltert wurden, schickten wir sie zum Arzt, um alles dokumentieren zu lassen, und wir informierten auch das Land, welches sie ausgewiesen hat, über die Situation. Wir haben leider nicht die Macht, diese Menschen zurückzusenden. Sie haben es schwer überhaupt einen Pass zu bekommen. Normalerweise kommen sie nur durch formale Eheschließungen, welche internationale Organisationen für die Person arrangieren, aus der Türkei raus. Wenn sie dann [mal] in Europa sind, erstatten sie Anzeige. Sie werden sagen 'Ich wurde gefoltert und die Menschenrechtsorganisation ist ein Zeuge', und an dem Punkt wird das Gericht von uns einen Bericht anfordern. Also schicke wir die Dokumentation und den Bericht, und die Opferanklage geht durch und so können sie dann bleiben. Es gibt ein paar solcher Beispiele.

they apply to us, is psychological. They talk about committing suicide burning themselves, etc. They come here yelling, screaming sometimes; completely schizophrenic because they have been torn away from a life they are used to and thrown here with no one to help them properly. They collapse in every way. If they have a strong family structure, then of course they have a better chance in getting themselves together again and then there are people who are used to being deported. And they will find one way or other to get out again. These two cases are out of the ordinary though.

*There is a group named ProAsyl\* in Frankfurt. There are cases in their website about people who have been deported and then returned because they could proof they were tortured. How does this process work? Who helps these people document the fact that they have been tortured? How do they get back?*

When such applications come to us, we inform the proper organisation depending on what people have suffered. If they have been tortured, we send them to the doctor to get everything documented and treated. We also let the country that deported them, know the situation. We have no power to send these people back, of course. It happens in a roundabout way. They have a hard time getting a passport, too. They usually get out of Turkey by formality marriages arranged by international groups or with fake names. Once they are in Europe they make a claim. They will say 'I have been tortured and the Human Right Organisation is my witness'. At that point, the court will want a report from us. So we send them our documentation and report, and the victims application goes through so they get to







Okulunu bitirmesine fırsat verilmediğine dair bir anısı vardı. Bir ara bana anlatmıştı ki, Türkiye'yi, kendisini aldattığı ve geleceğini kararttığı için çok suçluyordu. Zira, HADEP adlı Kürt partisinin çevresinde bir Kürt olarak daha aktif faaliyetlere katıldıktan sonra okuldan atılmıştı. N.'de veya M.'de bir yürüyüş vardı. Her halükarda orada göze batmış ve sonrasında okuldan atılmış; bu da, yüksek öğrenim görememesi anlamına gelmiş. Bu durum onu tümünden çıkırından çıkarmış. Bu, o Odise'nin de (savrulmanın da) başlangıcı olmuş. Tahminimce, Almanya'ya kaçışının önhikayesi buydu. Orada amacına ulaşamayacağını, gelişemeyeceğinin farkına vardı. Bu, ailesi için büyük bir hayal kırıklığıydı. Zira, anladığım kadarıyla, M. ailenin büyük umduydu; bu durum bir çocuk için de ağır bir yüküdür. Babası, aileden sadece M.'nin tarlada çalışmamasını diretiyordu. Öylesine yumuşak elleri vardı ve solgun yüzlüydü ki, diğer Kürtler gibi sert ve güçlü olmadığı için kendisini çok ezik hissediyordu. Atletik, güçlü genç erkek ideali. O, bunu tam yerine getirmede. O, hassastı ve solgundu.

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Piştî dema dibistanê dema leşkeriyê hat û wî leşkerî tamam kir. Min wêneyeke M. ku bi mîtralyoz bû, dît. Ez gelek ecêb mam. Bê ku rojeke xwe vala derbas bike, wê yekê dikir, dixwast zû ji wê derê derkeve. Li nêzikê behra reş, li derdora R. dikir. Bawo dixwast ku M. bixwîne û bibe karmend. Dixwast ku ew di nav sistema tirkan de serkeftî be û bê qebûlîrin û vê yekê, li gor ku goya du birayên wî li ba PKKê bûn û hatibûn kuştin ji, dixwast.

Die haben ihn durchgefüttert. Sobald es warm genug war, musste er angeblich auf dem Balkon schlafen, weil es dort zu eng war.

Da gibt es so eine Erinnerung, dass er seine Schule nicht beenden durfte. Er hat mir irgendwann erzählt, und das wirft er der Türkei sehr vor, dass sie ihn da so betrogen haben um seine Zukunft, denn er ist von der Schule geflogen, nachdem er sich als aktiver Kurde in dieser Umgebung der HADEP\*, einer kurdischen Partei, engagiert hatte. Es gab eine Demonstration in Nusaybin oder Mardin. Auf jeden Fall ist er dort aufgefallen und man hat ihn von der Schule geworfen und das bedeutete, dass er nicht studieren konnte. Das hat ihn vollkommen aus der Bahn geworfen. Das war der Anfang von dieser Odyssee. Ich vermute, das war die Vorgeschichte für seine Flucht nach Deutschland, er hat gemerkt, er kommt da nicht ans Ziel, er kann da nicht weitermachen. Das war eine große Enttäuschung für die Eltern, weil so wie ich das verstanden habe, war der Mehmet die große Hoffnung der Familie, was auch eine schlimme Belastung für ein Kind ist. Der Vater hat darauf bestanden, dass der Mehmet als Einziger aus der Familie nicht auf dem Feld arbeitet. Er hatte so weiche Hände und er war so blass, worunter er später so gelitten hat, dass er so gar nicht zäh und kräftig war wie die anderen Kurden. Das Ideal, vom sportlichen, kräftigen jungen Mann. Das hat er nicht so erfüllt. Er war sensibler, er war blass.

Nach der Schulzeit kam der Militärdienst und den hat er absolviert. Ich habe ein Foto gesehen von Mehmet mit Maschinengewehr. Da war ich ziemlich erstaunt. Das hat er gemacht ohne einen Tag frei zu nehmen, er wollte so



I also entered Germany with a different name, and my residency permission I was given was for this other name. And then I was not able to do something about it.

I went to England in 1993. I also applied to immigrate to England with my real name. I had health problems there. I jumped of a bridge and broke my feet in London.

I went in 1992 and in August 1994 I went back to Germany. Afterwards I had an instinct to go and stay somewhere in the Soviet systems.

So I went to the Czech Republic. I stayed there for 4.5 months, than went back to Germany again. Last of all I applied for immigration in Switzerland. In 1997 I stayed for two years then my application was declined. I could not find a lawyer to oppose the decline and then they decided to deport me. They asked me if I preferred to be sent back to another country, but I was stubborn 'I say no, I'll go back to Turkey'. So they prepared a visa for me at the consulate and then I came back to Turkey.

I did not go back to Germany. I was staying in Switzerland under my own name. I was staying with relatives. Now I want to go back to Germany. I applied to the German Consulate. Stating that I have been residing in Germany under this other name. But my real name was this. So they told me to send them this information in print, so I wrote it down and faxed it to them. Then I got a letter signed 'Daimler', which said I could not go back to Germany. I wanted to go back to Germany. You have to deal with a lot of stuff in Turkey. I am used to a European way of living and there is not many jobs offered here. If I had a job, I would have some income



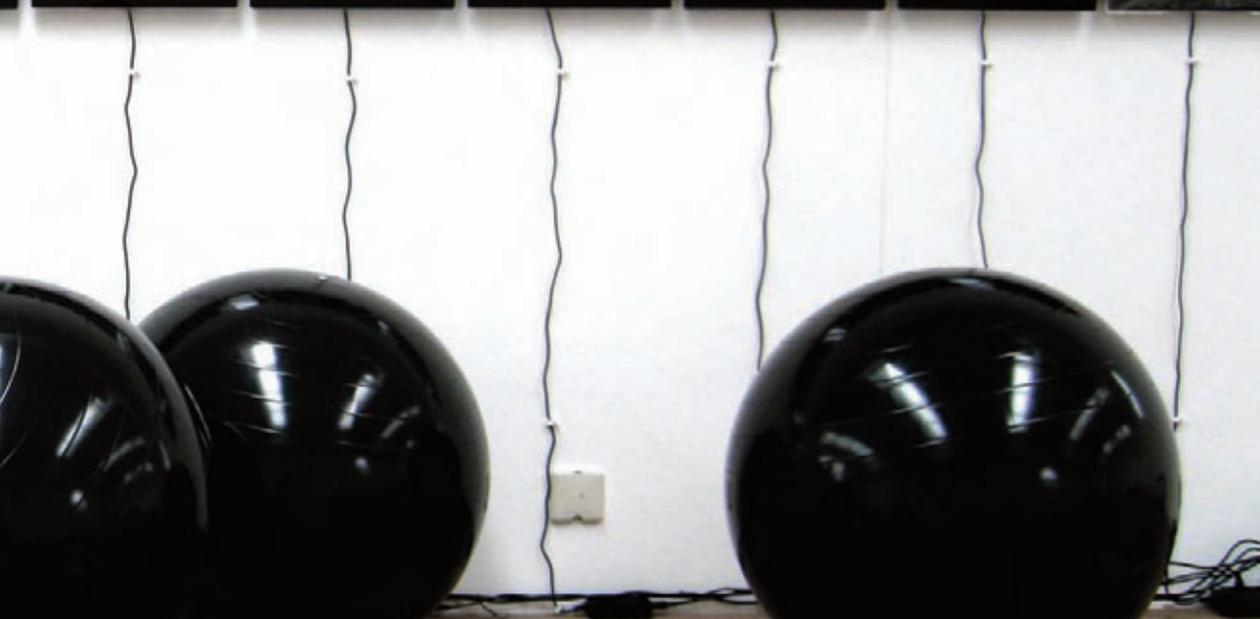
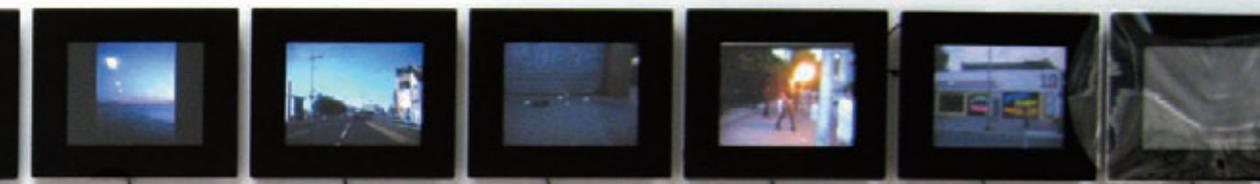
## Themen, die nicht zählen, Orte, die nicht wichtig sind.\*

This installation is generated from excerpts taken from the artist's extensive archive of ordinary life and everyday observations. The piece is a multi-media installation consisting of 18 sound tracks, 175 films, and 986 images originating from the Balkans, Germany, Turkey, Thailand, Burma and Ireland.

The artist understands each geographical location as conditioned by history; material qualities, movements, activities and narratives. What happens on a daily basis in a particular place is the key observation for her archive of everyday life. Wherever travelling she observes life in that specific locus of activity. 99.9% of our lifetime seems to be filled with trivial memories, we forget them. They often appear to be banal, ugly, or boring. We prefer to emphasize the exciting details. We speak about the special dinner, the fortunate incident, or bad luck we had. Since 2003, the artist has been observing migratory cultures. What happens between leaving and arriving, the normality of an individual life – a life lived in a new space?

\* Title translation: Subjects that don't count. Places that are not important.















## Prospect

This multi-sited video installation explores migrant journeys from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. Nearly 6,000 immigrants have died on the frontiers of Europe since 1988. Among them 1,883 have been lost at sea in the Sicilian Channel between Libya, Tunisia, Malta and Italy. Migrants pay unscrupulous smugglers 1,500-2000 Euros to travel from North Africa. The journey can take more than five days in dangerously overloaded wooden fishing boats inadequate for the task.

Prospect is a metaphoric journey filmed in the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Malta, and the in-between spaces of a harbour and a former school; a refugee centre in Malta, where Hakim and Sadik have found temporary refuge, after being rescued from the sea by the Maltese Navy. The third narrator Warsame has been more fortunate and has managed to leave the island and continue his journey to Dublin, where he lives in a small room on the North Circular Road.

Warsame and Hakim narrate their perilous journeys from Somalia and North Africa to Europe. This first-hand account is a powerful testimony of forced migration across some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world.

The vantage point of the camera places the viewer in the position of sub-Saharan migrants travelling through endless miles of shifting sands and floating on turbulent waves in the sea.

The anonymous and threatening force of nature, a landscape of endless sand dunes and rolling seas is juxtaposed with the intimate lives and temporal homes of the three migrants. Warsame's narration is an articulate and critical reflection of both his personal journey and the predicament of similar people caught in the stasis of European migration policy.







## Dialogue: Prospect

### Hakim

So what are we supposed to do? We try to manage with life, you know, to see whether we can have a place, like you know. If you are even poor, it is better to be a hungry free man than being an appointed slave. Yeah, so in this case we find out we are no longer free men we were rather appointed slaves, so we have to look ahead in life, cos we hope that one day it may be better.

Imagine, I didn't know how to drive a boat but because I was desperate to travel, you know, I claim to be a captain. Imagine thirty people's lives in my own hands, why? I didn't know how to drive the boat. It wasn't easy, see for someone to become like an immigrant, or something, trying to leave his own country to go to another man's country, it isn't a day's task it's a big task. So you have to come across a lot of hardship, a lot of difficulties, even trying to battle with death. So in this case, if a fellow just tried to reach a place or a land, I think that very people have to be really welcomed because he suffered a lot.

(Laughs) I left Libya by boat, you know, it wasn't all that easy, we left around dawn time about three o'clock in the midnight. Then we left with the contact, you know, with little pieces of bread, with water. We thought maybe from Libya to Europe is just close because if you look at it on the map, it looks like maybe we do some two hours or three hours, you'd be there. About one hour after we started our journey it was when we realised it was so far, and at that time we regret it, we could not go back, or we could not go forward. Because from Libya to here [Malta] at least you have to get about five hundred litres of petrol but we thought this was so short so we took just two hundred litres of petrol, so in the middle of the sea it was were our petrol got finished. Imagine you are hanging on the sea, not knowing how to swim. There you are in a boat, there you are (laughs), you don't know where you are going, your driver or your captain now is just the waves of the sea. The waves will blow you left, and blow you right and blow you wherever it feels like, so in the end if you come out alive, who did it? I think it's god, you know.

And the boat, everybody on the boat is afraid, imagine people travelling with bigger ships across the sea, then you not being lucky - to travel in a canoe, this is just a little small fishing boat. Then you have to travel some kilometers, which you don't even know across the sea, so everybody's heart is panicking, people are afraid, you know, people are praying, some are shouting, some are crying, some are regreting it, even me I regret it when I was in the middle of the sea. But I didn't



know that was how it was, but you know, it's not easy, it's not easy to travel the way I travelled. We didn't know where we were going and we thought if you were [travelling] from, you know, Libya, the first place you see is Italy. When we started the journey we were aiming to go to Naples or Sicily, but at the end we realised that the people who came and save us were from Malta and you know, they came, they took us, gave us medication and then after they took us to prison, they imprisoned us for a year! Imagine! I didn't know what I did, you know, I thought before someone could be put in a cage or something that very person would have to be criminal ...