

WENTRUP PROJECTS

Nevin Aladag

Pattern Matching

Opening: November 12, 2010, 6-9 pm

Exhibition: November 13 – December 22, 2010

When patterns don't match

by Adam Szymczyk

Can patterns match? The title of the first solo show of works by Nevin Aladag at Galerie Wentrup, Berlin, suggests—indirectly—that they could. The term “pattern matching,” which the Turkish-born German artist borrowed from the language of computer science, is generally (if somewhat cryptically) described as the act of checking some sequence of tokens for the presence of the constituents of some pattern. But this procedure of pattern matching can also be extended to other areas of knowledge. In genetics, for example, the identity of a human body “same as” or “different to” a known person X or Y can be verified through the molecular analysis of a DNA sample. Pattern matching, then, can be a tool of biopolitics that defines human beings as potentially criminal subjects.

The new group of works on view by Aladag, called “Pattern Matching”, encompass a multiplicity of possible directions that may seem antagonistic at first, but on second glance reveal important affinities and correspondences that have their origin in the very process of naming—the linguistic unconscious inherent to our way of speaking about reality. “Pattern Matching” brings together the seemingly disparate subjects of basketball, the famous American athletic export, and Oriental carpets, probably the most successful commercial product in the world that originates from the Middle East. Setting differences aside, let's consider these two incommensurable categories—the game and the object of everyday use—as two cultural expressions, in order to make the matching of their respective patterns possible and productive. Aladag densely filled her carpets with a collage of ornamentation while respecting the lines and color fields that define the borders and mark important points on a basketball court. The artist proposes that we consider such patterns in the widest possible sense, going beyond their visual appearance: thus, they conjure conflicting patterns of behavior, opposing lifestyles and mutually exclusive rules that give shape to social and political realities of our supposedly globalized world and its distinctly local manifestations.

By overlapping or “matching” the patterns that belong to different semantic orders—that of the “Western” game and the “Oriental” ornament—Aladag produces a soft clash of meanings. The resulting hybrid objects, made of cut-out parts of existing carpets that are

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produced anywhere from Maghreb to China, Germany to Iraq, serve as evidence of conflicting ways of being and reveal patterns that don't match: mass event versus domesticity, action versus leisure, professional athletic games dominated by men versus women's domestic work, entertainment (as a secular religion) versus religion itself, the US versus the "rogue" states (that produce carpets) and perhaps even war versus peace. The installation at Galerie Wentrup consists of four colorful carpets installed on both the wall and the floor of the gallery, thus suggesting that they can be considered both image and object at the same time. Each carpet displays a unique composition of colors and ornament, though the basic linear structure on which the colors and patterns are laid out remains the same for each piece: that of a scaled-down basketball court. Placed next to the carpets, actual basketballs, tightly wrapped in a camouflage of Oriental *kilims*, appear to have been abandoned by American giants. The size of the carpet-field does not in any way match the size of the basketballs. Meanings change, it seems, but the patterns still match, somehow.

Nevin Aladag's work has been presented in numerous national and international exhibitions. On November 27/28 her performance *Raise the roof* will be staged at Hayward Gallery, London, furthermore will she take part in a group show at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna from November 16.

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