

Nevin Aladağ

Vibrating Images

Opening: Friday, 26 April 2024, 6 – 9 pm

Exhibition: 26 April – 22 June 2024

Performance *Activating the Vibrating Images:*

Friday, 26 April, 7 pm

Saturday, 27 April, 3 pm

It would be easy to read Nevin Aladağ's *Vibrating Images* as painting after the end of every form of medium specificity, as the proverbial "painting in quotation marks". Because these works—basically wall objects—primarily stage those external markings that invoke painting as a media form and container. Whether in large, medium, or small format, they all come in a shadow gap frame that underlines the works' pictorial quality and brings it to the fore even more. The strong, but consistently flat-even paint application and its mostly organic and wave-like, but sometimes almost fractally broken form can also be understood as the result of subjective decisions, just as they cross out the subjective in the sense of an immediate expression with rigor and sobriety. And finally, these wall objects reminiscent of paintings come with embedded percussion instruments, screwed-on mouthpieces, dangling bells, or sound holes strung with strings that reveal their second nature as resonating bodies—and thus as literally hollow vessels, which can be set in motion in this or that specific way. So, when these empty forms, these hollow bodies, begin to "vibrate" both literally and figuratively, then painting clearly resonates within. But is it really the determining component, the keynote, so to speak?

Admittedly, Aladağ has been exploring the principle of painting for a while now. Since 2017, she is working on her series *Social Fabric*, collages made from various carpets of different origins and meanings presented like paintings on the wall. These works make use of geometric abstraction as well as ornamental design approaches and call upon the carpet as a social place of encounter and carrier of certain cultural specifics. Undoubtedly, this series resonates in *Vibrating Images*. But it is a different major strand in Aladağ's previous work that seems to be stronger here: the preoccupation with sound, body, and space, first in photo and video works or performances, later mainly in sculptures and installations that can be activated—and now in pictures. During roughly the last ten years Aladağ had, in about that order, first modified antiquarian furniture pieces so that they lead a parallel existence as musical instruments—chairs with strings, tables with bells, stools with drum skins—before she began to create her own sculptures that bring different musical instruments together in one and the same body and can be played by several performers simultaneously: sound, here, is created from a resonating body that is activated together. And finally, Aladağ

focused on the room itself by placing rhombic shapes covered with drum skins or instrument strings stretched in open frames into the corners of the room.

If this sequence of series of works is now continued with *Vibrating Images*, then what applies to the old sound works also applies to these new ones: They are always simultaneously artwork and sound generator or body, are furniture or sculpture and instrument in one—neither nor, always both, at least two, and sometimes even more. Interestingly, however, it is precisely the moment, when the idea of a “painting on the wall” is introduced into the equation that it becomes apparent how much painting—now: the media category—seems to force its way into the picture with just the few markers mentioned at the beginning; how much, in other words, it wants to take on the role of to the dominant in the chord. But is such a media category—even in its self-reflexively conceived “expanded” variant, as it made the rounds again a good 10 to 15 years ago—no longer just a distant echo, a quiet afterglow among many? Ultimately, yes. And yet, it still seems to apply to painting today, what was stated back then in view of the general dissolution of media boundaries: that painting, as easily recognizable as it is in its “artfulness”, is a kind of meta-marker standing in for art itself. In this respect, one could indeed understand these “vibrating images” as literally setting media categories into vibration, into motion. However, all of this could also be approached in a somewhat more relaxed way, rather less categorical and more temporal: then it would be precisely the dimension of the instrument, the opening up of the visual to an immateriality of sound, which enables a much more complex intertwining of presence and absence, that creates a permeable space in which the spirits of the past also come into their own. They are allowed to take the stage again to sing their piece. And then leave again once it’s over.

—*Dominikus Müller*

Nevin Aladag lives and works in Berlin. Her internationally renowned oeuvre has received numerous awards and has been shown in solo exhibitions at the Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg, DE; the Hayward Gallery in London, UK; the SFMoMA in San Francisco, US and most recently, the Max-Ernst Museum in Brühl, DE. Aladag has taken part in numerous international group exhibitions and Biennials such as the 57th Venice Biennale and the 11th Istanbul Biennial or documenta 14 in Kassel and Athens.

Her works can be found in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR | Collection Sheikhha Hoor al-Qasimi, Sharjah, UE | Collection Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, AT | Collection Vehbi Koc Foundation, Istanbul, TR | Busch Reisinger Museum | Harvard Art Museum, New York, US | DeKaBank, Frankfurt, DE | European Investment Bank Art Collection, Luxembourg, LU | Harn Museum of Art, Miami, US | He Art Museum, Guangdong, CN | Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, TR | K11 Art Foundation, Hong Kong, HK | Kunsthalle Hamburg, DE | Kunsthalle Mannheim, DE | Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, DE | Kunstsammlung NRW,

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