

Normalization

10 March – 23 April

The third instalment in a program of exhibitions, events and discussions organized under the same heading.

Can Altay, Yael Bartana, Mark Leckey, Aydan Murtezaoğlu, Phil Collins, Roman Ondak, Solmaz Shahbazi, Wael Shawky, Jalal Toufic.

Since October '04 Platform has been pursuing an art program that focuses on the multiple meanings of the term normalization, its usage, manifestation, and its political and social implications of today. The mere mention of normalization carries with it a multitude of connotations: the EU process of transition, which inevitably strives to minimize differences, unrest and discrepancies to reach a singular system; or its contrary and the desire to achieve normality, 'hope in liberation and independence. Hope in a normal life where we are neither heroes nor victims'.*

It is the very ambiguity of the term Normalization that revokes a single curatorial approach. And, although by means of different perspectives, a collection of art works in one exhibition could balance such a predicament, this alone does not absolve the curator's responsibility to also confront the preposition. Hence, Platform's response to *Normalization* has been one of trepidation and enquiry. Following two exhibitions and a program of talks and discussions, this, the third gallery presentation presents Normalization via a diverse group of works that pronounce a range of commissioned responses, or presupposed tendencies towards the theme.

Can Altay was invited at the start of the Normalization process to present a series of site-specific installations, each one re-presenting the previous exhibition in a condensed form. In *Normalization* he provides a frame and historical review of the *Art For* exhibitions and of his own work previously viewed within their contexts. In so doing he references the personal as a product and producer of normalization and raises questions relating to scale, packaging and consumption as an aspect of contemporary life, which Altay poses is itself structured as a series of instalments.

A selection of photographic works by Phil Collins, many of which were taken in places of intense socio-political conflict, collectively constitute the very fabric of everyday life more or less anywhere. While *Hip Activities* by Aydan Murtezaoğlu offers a reduction to a kind of indifference via image, a treatise on the quest to transcend the bounds of the possible, a self-proclaimed 'melodramatic parade of displacement.'

Wael Shawky presents a new video work produced while he was on residency at Platform in 2004. *Cave* features himself in a local supermarket, reciting sections from the Koran. At first glance, the video appears much like a news-broadcast, effectively blurring the lines between consumerism, information dissemination and exotica. Solmaz Shahbazi will also debut a work commissioned for *Normalization* that forms the third part of her Tehran series, which includes *Tehran 1380* and *Good Times/Bad Times*. Unlike the first two video works, *Persepolis* does not focus on the city itself, but on details within apartments, sweet memories and the construction of personal and collective narratives.

In the multi-media installation *I Am the Martyr Comrade Jamâl Sâtî*, Jalal Toufic attends to the "martyrdom" of Jamal Sati and his pre-recorded statement exposed in the works title. Toufic forms links between the installation and his lecture *Saving the*

Living Human's Face and Backing the Mortal, which he will present on 14 March at Platform.

Yael Bartana directs her gaze at activities from everyday life in Israel that are often unknown to an outsider. In *Trembling Time* Bartana captures an aspect of collective memory related to the 'Soldiers Memorial Day'. Her camera directed at cars slowing out of respect on a major motorway, and the pause exaggerated by editing, her perspective is one of a ghostly world where movement and calm merge into one. Similarly, an inquisitive form of allure haunts Mark Leckey's computer generated vision of Jeff Koons' iconic bunny in *Made In Heaven*. Observed in Leckey's own London flat, the implied camera circles the sculpture, an appropriation that positions the infamous work literally within Leckey's grasp and by means of the camera's abstract probing, creates a spectacle of a spectacle.

Finally, Roman Ondak's performance *Good Feelings In Good Times*, will periodically result in an artificial queue of people standing in line at the Platform's door. The faked queue is a reference to everyday-life and symbolises both stagnation as well as order and shared mindset. If the visitor asks 'what are you queuing for?' the response will most likely be a shrug and the reply 'we don't know' as the queue disperses.

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Can Altay - *Normalization / First and Second Parts / Haluk Akakçe, Can Altay, Yetkin Başarır, Cevdet Erek, Leyla Gediz, Hatice Gülerüz, Gülsün Karamustafa, Bülent Şangar, Seçil Yersel, Neriman Polat, Osman Bozkurt, Köken Ergun, Esra Ersen, Erkan Özgen, Şener Özmen / with the contribution of Oğuzhan Genç, Kutlu Gürelli, Sinem Kurultay* (2005), **Yael Bartana** - *Trembling Time* (2001), **Mark Leckey** - *Made in Heaven* (2004), **Aydan Murtezaoğlu** - *Hip Activities* (2004), **Phil Collins** - *selection of photographic works*, **Roman Ondak** - *Good Feelings in Good Times* (2003), **Solmaz Shahbazi** - *Persepolis* (2005), **Wael Shawky** - *The Cave* (2004), **Jalal Toufic** - *I Am the Martyr, Comrade Jamâl Sâtî* (2003).

Art For... (one and two)

Haluk Akakçe, Can Altay, Yetkin Başarır, Osman Bozkurt, Cevdet Erek, Köken Ergun, Esra Ersen, Leyla Gediz, Hatice Gülerüz, Gülsün Karamustafa, Neriman Polat, Erkan Özgen, Şener Özmen, Bülent Şangar, Seçil Yersel.

Lectures, at 6pm

Will Bradley - *Barbaric Exchange - The New England Cannibals and Normalization in Reverse* / 8 March

Jalal Toufic - *Saving the Living Human's Face and Backing the Mortal* / 12 March

Luchezar Boyadjiev - *The Visual Logic of Early Neo-Capitalism* / 15 March

Natasa Petresin - *Contemporary art for parents: Irony and the symptom of being late* / 30 March

Irit Rogoff - *The Where of Now* / 31 March

Normalization is supported by European Cultural Foundation and was conceived as part of a series of exhibitions, lectures and discussions initiated under the umbrella concept normalization. Parallel programs have been developed by Rooseum in Malmo, Sweden and WHW in Zagreb, Croatia. A joint publication will emerge from these three interpretations. Platform's Normalization program was launched on 2 October 2004 and since then the topic has been discussed with conferences by Can

Altay, Solmaz Shahbazi, Phil Collins, Erden Kosova, Vasif Kortun, Mark Leckey and Aydan Murtezaođlu. A two part exhibition *Art for...* presented a selection of work produced by artists from Turkey previously only exhibited abroad. In addition artist Nurullah Görhan from Kiziltepe- Mardin was invited to spend three months at the Istanbul Residency Program and he will be joined in April '05 by Yael Bartana from Israel.

¹ Mahmoud Darwish.