

That from a long way off look like flies
31 May – 2 July

Alora and Calzadilla, Daniel Bozhkov, Aslı Çavuşoglu, Calin Dan, Elmas Deniz, Lala Rascic, Nedko Solakov.

The ambiguity of the term 'normalization' led Platform to initiate a series of exhibitions, events and discussions, which responded to the notion and title of the program via a process of trepidation and enquiry. These ideas were developed in stages, with two exhibitions entitled *Art For...*, a namesake exhibition *Normalization* and the penultimate, solo presentation by Oliver Ressler *Alternative Economies/Alternative Societies*.

Art For strove to discuss the conditions and consequences of an era of so called 'art for export'; *Normalization* erred on the side of the sociological with a range of commissioned responses and presupposed tendencies towards the theme; Oliver Ressler's stance was both economical about issues of the political imaginary, radicalization of democracy and divergent social changes and anthropological; the final proposition: *That from a long way off look like flies* will conclude the program with an environmental and psychological approach referencing systems of urban and rural ecology, rejuvenation, cleansing and redemption. Works by seven artists have been selected to present a circuit of transitional moments, located between destruction and repair, alienation and recognition, culminating in references and descriptions of the ultimate contained environment - the island.

In *Normalization* works by artists who will also participate in the 9th Istanbul Biennial were introduced. This strategy, which aims to form a relationship to practice rather than singular works, continues in *That from a long way off look like flies* with the inclusion of artists Daniel Bozhkov and Nedko Solakov. Daniel Bozhkov's *DARTH VADER TRIES TO CLEAN THE BLACK SEA WITH BRITA FILTER* (2000) is the record of a performance by the artist on the Black Sea coast, in the town of Burgas, Bulgaria. The image is a statement of hope even in the knowledge of inevitable failure. *On the Wing* (1999) documents a series of playful texts stencilled on the wings of LUXAIR airplanes by Nedko Solakov. A distraction for Solakov's fear of flying and for other passengers, each text preludes a larger narrative, offering a means of escape and a way to gaze beyond the immediate reality: *Dear passenger, somewhere down over there, behind the second mountain, on the left bank of a tiny river, is a little hill. In that little hill there is a little hole and in that little hole lives a little mole. Frankly, she would love to be in your place right now – almost 10,000 meters above the ground...*

La La Rascic, who is currently on residence with Platform's Istanbul Residency program supported by the American Center FoundationnRP, has been dissecting issues of travel through visa requirements, airport checks and passport documents. From this research she has created *The Invisibles*, a family story of alienation, albeit harbouring and eventually making use of the ultimate guise for escape. In the video

Sample City (2003) Calin Dan expresses another experience of estrangement brought on by rapid environmental transformation of Bucarest. Impersonating a Romanian folk character and carrying a door on his back, Dan explores the multi-layered reality of the Bucharest cityscape, becoming a migrant architecture endlessly wandering through the city. The more ethereal drawings and sculptures by Elmas Deniz propose an entire disengagement with reality, moulded together by a series of micro-environmental misunderstandings.

The 'island', viewed as an internal system and a projected final destination, provides a meeting point for the other works in this exhibition. Two works propose this moment of future salvation, an exploration of the real island Vieques in *Returning A Sound* (2004) by Alora and Calzadilla and its ulterior 'other' illustrated in a composition of images and narratives by Asli Çavuşoğlu. Vieques is an island off the mainland of Puerto Rico that has been used by the U.S Military and NATO forces to practice military bombing exercises. This process of demilitarization, decontamination, and future development are brought to attention in *Returning A Sound* by a motorcycle driver who moves through the island, the muffler on his bike replaced by a trumpet to produce a loud resounding call. Vieques' is in a period of transition between destruction and recovery, whereas Çavuşoğlu's fictional islands are formed by intrinsic modes of evolution, reliant on invented strategies of ownership, their unrecognized state reflecting real geographic situations, as much as those imaginatively composed.

Normalization

Alternative Economies/Alternative Societies

Oliver Ressler

Normalization

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

Art For... (one and two)

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

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.