

### *Fulya Erdemci's statement*

For the 13th İstanbul Biennial, we had focused on the most contested urban public spaces in Istanbul such as Gezi Park, Taksim Square, Tarlabası Boulevard, Karaköy and Sulukule neighbourhood that **are/were??** not invested with the risk of further gentrification with the presence of the biennial. Before the Gezi resistance, we had planned to carry out a number of projects that would intervene in the urban public spaces. However, when we questioned what it meant to realize art projects with the permissions of the same authorities that do not allow the free expression of its citizens, we understood that the context was going through a radical shift that would **sideline??** the reason d'être of realising these projects. Accomplishing these projects that articulate the question of public domain in urban public spaces under these circumstances might contradict their essence and purpose, we thus convinced that 'not **realizing/actualizing/materializing???**' them is a more meaningful statement than having them materialized under such conditions. Thereof, we decided to move away from the urban public spaces.

When I was structuring the exhibition before Gezi resistance, I have never intended to commission or include the spontaneous protest interventions and performances that are supposed to happen in the streets, as I believe that they shouldn't be domesticated or tamed in the institutional frames at which they are reacting. However, I was thinking that it was possible to highlight them if they were there already. So, I believe that by withdrawing from urban public spaces, thus marking the presence through the absence, we can contribute to the space of freedom, as well as to the creative and participatory demonstrations and forums, instigated by the Gezi resistance.

Our moving away from urban public spaces led to a serious challenge regarding venues, but we were able to overcome this in such a short time through establishing collaborations with art institutions such as ARTER and SALT Beyoğlu, and an independent artist initiative 5533. Furthermore, from the outset, our aspiration was to open this edition of the biennial to everyone. With the decision to withdraw from urban public spaces following Gezi events, we have managed to make this edition of the biennial free of charge with the hope of creating a publicness, which is in line with the conceptual framework of the biennial.