

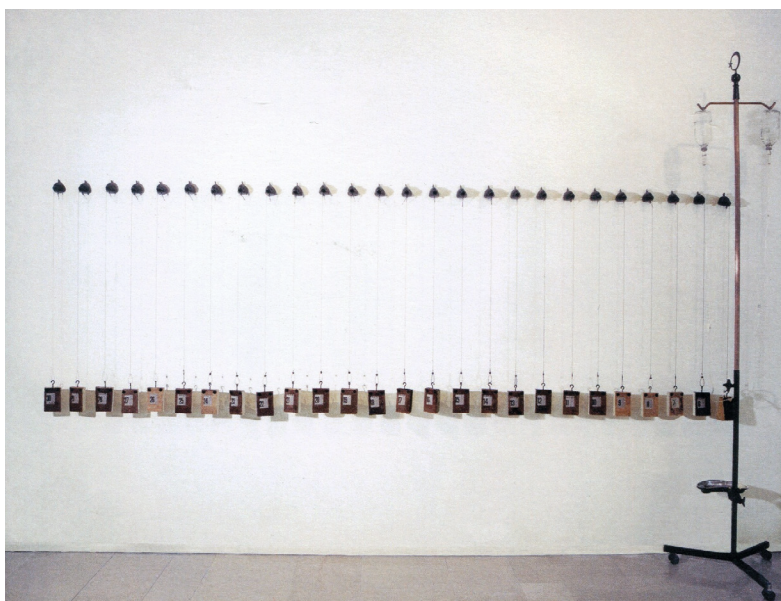
LIFE OF OBJECTS

Monographic
exhibition of works
by Erdağ Aksel

18. April—01. June 2014
Opening 17.04.2014, 7pm

Künstlerhaus Stuttgart presents the first comprehensive solo exhibition in Germany of Istanbul-based sculptor Erdağ Aksel. The exhibition, "Life of Objects" focuses on the main conceptual tendencies in Aksel's practice in addition to new video work, produced specifically for this context. Operating as a methodical survey, the exhibition is a monographic study, aiming also to develop a parallel process for the image and text production of a new publication to be launched at the end of 2014, which will ultimately bring his oeuvre together.

Since the late seventies, Aksel has been working with diverse media and with certain questions relating to the traditions of painting, land-art, sculpture, and installation. He has also played a key role as a mentor for many emerging artists and curators in the Turkish art scene as well as a critical figure during the transition of how conceptual thinking is involved with fundamental questions around materiality, politics of symbolism, history of modernity, nationalism, militarism and bureaucracy.



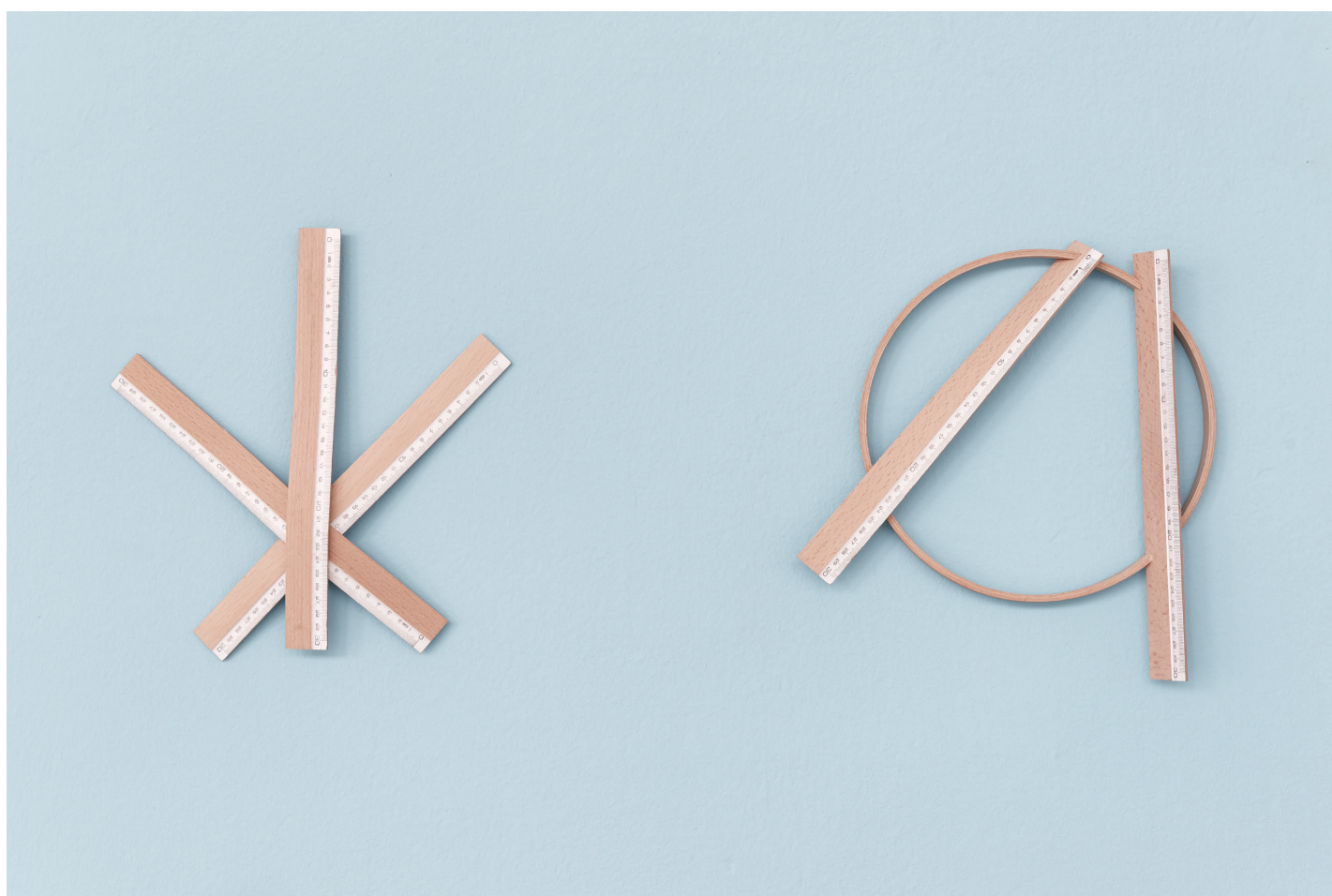
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- 1 Erdağ Aksel: This Exhibit, 1995-1996, mixed media, h. 240 cm, Courtesy of the artist.
 - 2 Erdağ Aksel: Reflection of Craft, 1999-2000, brass and iron, h. 181 cm, Courtesy of the artist and vFusun & Faruk Eczacıbaşı Collection
 - 3 Erdağ Aksel: Alice vs. Alice, mixed media, 2005. Courtesy of the artist.
 - 4 A drawing from the notebooks; from the series of „drawings of sculptures that I will not make” -with graphite l on paper.
 - 5-6 Erdağ Aksel: Plastic 1-6, series of videos, 2014 (sound editing: Baba Zula), stills. Courtesy of the artist.

LIFE OF OBJECTS

This exhibition entitled "Life of Objects" intends to emphasize the physicality of our relationships with objects and the notion of materiality regarding the social symbols and psychological associations attributed to them at different levels of perception and cognition. The selection of works follows a curatorial decision making process, which intends to release the main conceptual element in his approach; the artist mostly produces work in series with titles as chapters. The exhibition does not only reflect the transition of certain questions around Turkish modernity, politics of symbols and the transformation of national identity but also contributes to the understanding of categorization, collection, preservation and perception of objects in a certain cultural, social and political context.

The new version of an old work called "This Exhibition" which was shown for the first time in 1996, has been recently reproduced for this show and it counts down the exhibition hours/days with its process-based technique. Like an organic bodily form, the piece physically changes in time. The work is mainly composed of traditional, multi-paged "peoples calendars" hanging with wires from fish-heads mounted on the wall. Water from serum bottles injected into the paper pages of a calendar drips in sequence expanding and transforming the paper. Belonging to the same series, entitled "Retour de Force" the work, "Cihat's Second Complaint" (2010) is shown for the first time in this exhibition and is a hybrid form of sculpture composed of traditional copper elements from Islamic architecture such as the half moon or kubbe (dome) with modernist gestures- a helicopter propeller, a scarf and a hammer.

From the series, called "Objects of Hesitation" the wall-mounted sculpture "Reflection of Craft" (1999) creates a Duchampian gesture within the composition of the show. Challenging the readymade tradition through its handmade production technique, the piece is composed of a mirror, a curved shelf and a wooden crutch, each element produced in one of three different metals; copper, iron and brass. In the series, "Objects of Hesitation" Aksel explores diverse forms of indecision referring to the nature of preservation in diverse physical conditions. According to the artist, the series was born from skepticism „about the merits of decisiveness that preceded the glorification of authority.“ Shown for the first time in 2009, his series „A Calculated Loss of Memory“ -also part of "Objects of Hesitation"- arranges an installation of standard 30 cm wooden rulers that are twisted, deformed, distorted and transformed into formal gestures. Referring to the standardization, the cognition of measurement and the human desire to measure, as an inevitable phenomenon of modernity, the installation develops a scale of irrational rulers varying implying the form of an unknown, illegible alphabet.



Erdağ Aksel, 30 cm. Series I-II, 1999-2000, mixed media wall installation, size variable (Installation view from A History of Inspiration, Palais de Tokyo, Summer 2013)

A piece from the series "Objects of Beauty" entitled "Something Like That" (2005) is also featured in the exhibition with two new variations in a site-specific approach, adapted to the venue and physically related to the columns, which dominate the exhibition space. The traditional form of the faucet, that is repeatedly used in the installations is easily linked to the architectural elements in the space, such as heating and pipes and additionally references the building's history as a factory. The show includes drawing notebooks from the artist, aiming to generate a historical perspective on his research. Finally some elements from his series "Alice vs. Alice" (2005) will also be part of the exhibition. These are manipulated and distorted forms of ready-made toys, souvenirs and other objects collected by the artist as simple formal gestures.

For this exhibition, Aksel experiments for the first time with the form of video to produce a six-piece series entitled, "Plastic 1-6" in collaboration with the Istanbul-based band, Baba Zula that contributed to the sound development of the narration. Some of the elements, that belong to the series "Alice vs. Alice" (2005) and other objects that are obsessively collected by the artist such as bride and groom souvenirs, soldier toys, or dildos are melted, staged and juxtaposed with the audio re-edit of an 1950's U.S Department of Defense LP found by the artists that is a recording of militarist terminology, teaching vocabulary by the US army from 1950's, which has been translated from English to Turkish.

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70178 Stuttgart

Exhibition hours:
Wed - Fri 3 - 7pm,
Sat/Sun 1 - 5pm

Artistic Director: Misal Adnan Yıldız
Design: Fabian Schewe