BACK TO FIRST POSITION as a cultural observer with an artistic eye Berlin-based artist Aladag investigates human settings and develops non-narrative stories, conceptual interactions and performative interventions. She is always interested in conditions of living together, shared spaces, musical elements and rituals that connect people.

Aladag grew up in Stuttgart until her early twenties before going to the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. BACK TO FIRST POSITION is her first major exhibition in her home city, Stuttgart. Aladag’s solo project at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart brings together a compilation of ideas, which come back to where they were first born or have their roots promoting its title. The exhibition title is borrowed from an earlier installation (2007), shown at Skulpture Galerie, Berlin.

Revising the piece for the architectural structure at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Aladag installs motorcycle rear-view mirrors engraved with extracts of lyrics from different German and English songs. The installation creates a dynamic route in the exhibition space, and proposes a link to the physical experience of driving meaningfully listening to these songs.

In Aladag’s video piece NIGHTDANCE (2004) two boys play with toy cars, and due to the Oriental music playing in the video, the cars can be directly associated with belly dancers. A boy is mostly recognized as an instrument identifying with masculinity by boys, and in this video, the toy cars adopt a moving behavior in terms of defining their territory. The music reconstructs this gender code creating irony on how gender roles are reproduced in society. Brining formal aspects of any basketball playground with different forms of carpets, Nevin Aladag designs another conceptual crash between diverse cosmologies of culture.

BACK TO FIRST POSITION is a collage of elements from various oriental carpets that represent the architectural-commercial product from Middle East. Whereas it reflects the borders and patterns of the city, a North American invention and one of the most famous sports exported from the USA.

For the video installation VOCAL PARADE (MIZANNÉ) (2005) Aladag spoke with the residents of Naunynstrasse from Kreuzberg, Berlin, and the result is an edited video as an aural choreography of materiality that is played back or re-performed by an actress looking through the window. As a collage of public statements or short stories, it creates a conceptual base for developing a collective and poetic text about the city, its hidden history and subconscious memory. As the first part of a series of video works, CITY LANGUAGE [sic] (2005) is an audial-poetical postcard, that speaks through the interactions of musical instruments with the wind, water, architecture and pigeons. As an orchestral collage of different sound-samples from traditional instruments with an artistic approach of experimenting on how everyday life and urban reality sound in Berlin, the work portrays the possibilities of living in the city as a soundscap.

VOICE OVER (2006) depicts a drum in the middle of a park in Winter when it is raining. The photographic image represents a fragment that is not only an image, but also an image that represents sound. Looking at the drum under the raindrops brings allows us to imagine the sound from the rain that falls on the drum. Another installation that silently represents the physicality of music, is reproduced for this show: NEVIN KIRINC MÜCK NOLL (A LITTLE BIT OF MUSIC NOLL) (2005/2007). Different objects that you can find around an after-hour party such as a broken mirror ball, an old guitar and used stockings come together to rack ‘n’ roll.

Her outdoor installation KUNSTHÄLFTE is also reproduced for BACK TO FIRST POSITION – after Istanbul, Berlin and Nice – but this time, it can be considered as a direct reference to Stuttgart’s socio-economic profile. Considering the location of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart in Stuttgart West, and its neighbors such as offices, banks and business school, and its history as a factory, PRESENTLY is urgently communicates with outside, with the street, with the city as an ironic monument of risk and failure with its direct references, which are custom-made materials such as a suit sewn together with a shirt, a tie and shoes hanging upside down as a public sculpture.

During the process of an intense dialogue with the team working at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, and after several research visits to Stuttgart, Aladag has clearly taken the pre-determined process of her solo exhibition, BACK TO FIRST POSITION as an opportunity to develop a monographic perspective on her practice in collaboration with Adnan Yiliz. The selected works' reproduction and installation have been based on defining basic tracks and significant directions in her work.

Aladag positions the exhibition space as a studio where she can continue her conceptual experiments with diverse materials; her poetic language, and the documentary value in her work are uniquely combined together in this show to invite the audience to look at the works at the city–where they were created.