

## Atalay Yavuz

PROTOCINEMA | ISTANBUL

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*Strata*, 2014, Atalay Yavuz's intervention in the convenience store Özge Bakkaliye is before anything else a timely gesture. Produced through Protocinema, an itinerant art organization that provides artists with opportunities to develop their work's site-specifically, *Strata* sees Yavuz's practice blossom in a collaboration that blurs boundaries between utilitarian and art objects. The work is a clear Plexiglas box filled with light-blue Ultrasound gel, placed just behind the shop's street-facing windows. Taken out of its medical context, the gel is here employed by the artist to produce a Minimalist aesthetic, and yet knowledge of the substance's conventional function when treating patients adds a layer of humanity to the otherwise innocuous shop. Moreover, as Istanbul increasingly becomes a site of exponential construction-based growth, the demolition of old buildings is a daily sight. Özge Bakkaliye thus holds a symbolic position in the throbbing heart of the city, functioning as an independent market among boutiques and coffee pubs. Atalay treats this environment with respect, intervening without disrupting the daily functioning of the place.

Inside Özge Bakkaliye, Atalay has also installed *Prozac*, 2013—Prozac syrup poured over a reflective surface. The antidepressant turned mirror becomes a critique of self-imagination in the age of medicinal enhancement. The very idea of seeing one's image through Prozac is both eerie and funny—after all, I'm sure many have wondered more than once whether life would be better with the pharmaceutical. Where better to ponder this than in the familiar space of Özge Bakkaliye?



Atalay Yavuz, *Strata* (detail), 2014, ultrasound gel, dimensions variable. Installation view.

— Merve Unsal