

ISTANBUL THE GUIDE

Dîner Noire & The Library is on Fire

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April 08, 2014



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A single patent black stiletto lies discarded on the floor. Its other half is being clutched by a mannequin who lies solemnly on a banquet table in elegant black evening wear. Around her are white plates that bear traces of jet black food. Glasses of deep red wine are left half drunk. Books are left piled between archaic candelabras; titles by the likes of Orhan Pamuk, William Burroughs, and Stephen King. Scattered amongst them all are black and white photographs featuring images from the film *L'Immortelle*, 1963, and family members of France's most famous octogenarian dominatrix, Catherine Robbe-Grillet. Also in the scene are party guests who mill around the table, complying with the dress code, *noir de rigueur*, all with the same question written into their furrowed brows; 'what just happened?'

What just happened was *Dîner Noire* – an experience composed by French artists Tristan Bera & Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster with Catherine Robbe-Grillet that took place in the newly opened House Hotel, [The Vault Karaköy](#). It was an event where 'guests were turned into ghosts in the mix of crystal, ink and screams.' Twenty-two invited guests were led blindfolded to a table, where they were read certain rules such as: no one was to leave without permission; when Catherine rang a bell everyone must stop talking; when the clock struck 12 twice they were to leave – reminders that their host was more famous for her private sado-masochistic ceremonies.

At one point in the evening, one of the guests' hands were tied with ribbon leaving the other guests to feed her the all black food of the menu specially created by House Hotel's Executive Chef, Çoşkun Uysal. Guests were

later asked to wear their blindfolds, and when they removed them found that the same guest was now lying on the table in the place of the mannequin. She remained there for the rest of the dinner. Throughout the evening, music and light changes were coordinated, and there were significant readings and musical performances.

Later the dinner table was transferred to a newly purposed space being used by nomadic art organization, [Protocinema](#). Look out for their sign on Banklar Caddesi and enter into a working electric *han* amid the neon glare. On the fourth floor is the second part of this exhibition, [The Library is on Fire 1\(c\): Haunting Glyphs](#), a travelling concept written and programmed by Charles Arsène-Henry and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster. It asks the question, ‘what if a library was to function like a novel or a film?’ and seeks to imagine a library on a journey to find its form, and unlock its potential.

Film scene directions are projected onto a wall. Books are piled on the floor and in the middle, a 3D printer whirrs away, its mechanical arm moving back and forth to create ‘glyphs.’ These shapes represent ideas from the books that surround it; the muted horn from *The Crying of Lot 49* by Thomas Pynchon, the spinning top from the film, *Inception*, a set of keys from David Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive*. They connect text with image and reality with fiction. When finished they become part of a 3D poster, described as a ‘meta library.’

These references and connections weave together wisps of intangible concepts, of events passed. Visitors may feel like they’re missing something or they have missed something, but that’s the point. The ‘fear of missing out,’ is now a feature of today’s culture of instant gratification and smart phones – an anxiety that the artists have played upon, wisps of concepts and past events hang in the air, uncertainty reigns and visitors may still leave asking ‘what just happened?’

The exhibition continues from Wednesday April 9 to Saturday April 12 between noon and 6pm. Bankalar Caddesi No. 8, Floor 4, Karaköy; P: 0541 468 0214