

On Nomadic Experiences — Questions to Atalay Yavuz and Mari Spirito

LARA ÖGEL How did it all start and how did Protocinema come to you?

ATALAY YAVUZ I don't knowMari and I started talking at openings and met thru some mutual friends. After I had the show at Marquise Dance Hall we had more to talk about because she had seen my work. We never did a studio visit because I don't have a studio. In that show there was a work called "Spirito" 2014, and Mari e-mailed me asking me to tell her more about that work and what the material was. In the US this material, dena-



tured alcohol or methylated spirits is most commonly clear and in Turkey it is purple. We talked about its properties, the fact that it is flammable and what might happen in the space if someone lit a match - would it explode?!

We were really concerned about it - could we smoke in the space or not! This happened in March and since then we were in touch talking about other works, works that I had made in the past and works in progress, too. There came this idea that since so many of my materials are regular mass produced items

INITIATIVE



PROTODINEMA

that can be easily gotten in any grocery shop or pharmacy by anyone - that it might be interesting to do an intervention in one of these places. Since Protocinema makes site-aware exhibitions - in spaces that have some kind of relationship between the work and its context, we pursued this idea. It took a long time to find the right space, talking to many kinds of shops, shop owners and now we have Özge Bakkaliye -an independently owned small convenience shop, where we will do the show.

16 Mari, what is the best part about growing with Protocinema in Istanbul and abroad?

MARI SPIRITO One of the best parts of growing with Protocinema is the same thing that we can say is best about life: the pleasure of an unfolding potential future. For example, in the beginning, in 2011 when it was founded, Protocinema made site-aware exhibitions in different places, in Istanbul and New York. In the past three years we discovered that it makes sense to make exhibitions around the world, where ever the context makes sense for the artist and their work. This fall we are doing an exhibition in collaboration with Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University with Ahmet Ögüt, called "Day After Debt" and in 2015 Protocinema is going to Mexico City + collaborating with Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo to make an exhibition with Christodoulos Panayiottou.

16 Atalay, how is working with Protocinema different or the same as other places/organizations were you have shown your work?

AY: I have not yet had that many shows, so its hard to say - I have only worked with Marquise Dance Hall, first I was in a group show and then later Ayça and Mark invited me to do a one person show. I also had work in a group show



at CDA Projects, which no longer exists, and it was a competition for artist and curators, who applied and then were put together by CDA. For me I feel relaxed because Mari and I know what we want - the best thing is communication. I know what I want to do and Mari knows what she wants to do and when we put them together we know how it works. We talked for a long time before we agreed to work together and we are both open to experimentation and risks.

16 Mari, how has Istanbul influenced you over the years, not necessarily to make a comparison between New York and Istanbul, but can you tell us a bit about the differences you found that worked in this city?

ms Where to begin? Yea, clearly Istanbul and my friends and colleagues here have made a significant impact on me, my work and my life. Istanbul has challenged me to be self-sufficient, to be resourceful and entrepreneurial. There is something else - the constant alternate perspective that I would have never imagined to exist. Its amazing to be misunderstood in ways that are simply beyond comprehension - fiction.

ms How did you decide to study abroad and how has the process of applying to schools effected your work or vision?

av My art works didn't change in this time period, I was always documenting all of my work for my portfolio. Most of the works I have made, I destroyed after, as I don't have space to store them. Since I don't have a space this effects my practice somehow - you begin to think in a different way. This is one thing that I share with you (Protocinema), you do not have a space, either. I also started to question how can I make temporary objects and what is an art object? Does it need to be stable and solid, or can it

be temporary and ephemeral? For me its like, putting the idea first, giving the idea and concept the priority and then thinking about the material. Imagine you put something here and you start to remove something out of it until you feel it is very simple and enough to carry the structure of the concept.

ms The works look like they are all about the material, that the materials are where the work starts, how is that?

av The challenge is this - it is a visual art work. When you dematerialize it you also destroy the visual and put the idea in a more important place. This creates a balance, I hope, between the idea and the material. When you see one of my art works and see what it is made of, or read the title, you do not need any other text to understand it. The material itself already has meaning from your life - you do not need any more explanation, it already has a story, for each of us. For example, in this Protocinema show, we have three works; one is "Strata", 2014, which is a narrative to create a metaphor between body/place, inside/outside and watching. It is made of a thin plexi box filled with blue Ultrasound gel. At first I wanted to just put the gel on the window, to isolate the material, but it slid off the window onto the floor. When you see the gel in a clear plexus box, you do not add any meaning to the box, the plexi is just the holder. The idea of "Strata" is about tension, disease, birth, hospitals, and uncertainty. The physical aspect of the work is about light and space. I have converted it in some way.