

Placebo Effect

November 6. - December 18. 2004

Artists:

Köken Ergun
Berat Işık
Ahmet Ögüt
Erkan Özgen
Serkan Özkaya
Sener Özmen

Works in the Exhibition

Video Program

EXIT, Sener ÖZMEN, 2003
STOP! YOU ARE SURROUNDED, Berat ISIK, 2004
WHAT A LOVELY DAY, Ahmet ÖGÜT, 2004
ADULT GAMES, Erkan ÖZGEN, 2004
OUR VILLAGE, Sener ÖZMEN, 2004

THE TURKISH MONUMENT THAT CARRIES ELEVEN WATERMELONS, Ahmet ÖGÜT/
Serkan ÖZKAYA, 2003.

COLORING BOOK, Ahmet ÖGÜT/ Sener ÖZMEN, 2003

Video Projection

UNTITLED, Köken ERGUN, 2004.

Placebo Effect is an exhibition of artists from Turkey.

The Video program "ABES,"** underscores a trauma in times of post-trauma. These short films, rough and sharp around their edges, register a sense of loss and radical behavior. A young man tries to pull himself from a ruin, panting, only to find himself in there again; a man is spot-searched on a desolate country road; young kids in black ski masks occupy a playground in a rough neighborhood and engage in games that recall military training; a man with a spraying device puts gasoline to define a border and fires it up; two girls lip-synch to a rebel song and are battered and bruised as the song goes on...

In just a few pages, a mock children's coloring book produced by Ahmet Ögüt and Şener Özmen takes on the complex realities of South Eastern Turkey. It casts a bitter and absurdly humorous gaze on engrained habits, planetary media influences, daily realities like the security forces, and exasperating living conditions.

Ahmet Ögüt and Serkan Özkaya's sculpture focuses on the punch line of a crass, juvenile joke, frozen, ad infinitum as a faux-monument.

In Köken Ergun's video projection, a young man tries to cover his head with a scarf that is suggestive of the Turkish flag. Elegant and effete, he tries various versions until the exercise begins to collapse. He breaks into gentle tears over his failure in looking to his liking.

It was the emptiness of the work THE TURKISH MONUMENT THAT CARRIES ELEVEN WATERMELONS, a sculpture that conceals its deficit, reflected in the great void of what the joke rotates upon (the penis), led me to name the exhibition "the Placebo Effect." It may as well have been a false promise and too late a promise, had it not been for the impossible offer that is conscious of its own incongruence. This is a show of men, and I think it shows.

Vasif Kortun

**ABES (A hmet, B erat, E rkan, S ener), a term which means "ridiculous," was coined by Sener Özmen to describe the density of artists from Diyarbakir, Turkey's largest Kurdish city. The term emphasizes commonalties of approach and not the regional geography of ethnicity. This is not to say, however, that issues of geography and ethnicity do not motivate these artists.