

*à traduire en GB*

# INFORMATIONS PRATIQUES

## EXPOSITION

DU 1<sup>er</sup> MAI

AU 12 JUILLET 2009

maison Folie Wazemmes - 70 rue des Sarrazins Lille - 03 20 78 20 23

du mercredi au samedi, 14h > 19h

dimanche, 10h > 19h

Entrée libre

## VISITES GUIDÉES DE L'EXPOSITION

Des **visites de groupe** sont proposées du mercredi au vendredi matin.

N'hésitez pas à prendre contact avec Aline Lyoën (médiatrice culturelle)

Pour tout renseignement et réservation : 03 20 78 97 87

## MENTIONS?

## REMERCIEMENTS?

## PROGRAMMATION MFW



# MFWEXPOS VISITOR'GUIDE

*visuel?*

# GLOBAL MOCKERY

MAISON FOLIE WAZEMMES  
1<sup>st</sup> MAI > JUILLET 12<sup>th</sup> 2009



Ville de Lille

## exhibition GLOBAL MOCKERY

visuel exposition

Organized by Platform Garanti Contemporary Art (Istanbul) in the context of lille3000 - Europe XXL, «Global Mockery» is the first large-scale exhibition of works by artist Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin after his passing away in December 2007.

Presented on the two floors of the maison Folie Wazemmes, “Global Mockery” includes critical installations and videos by Hüseyin Alptekin from the 1992 version of the wall installation Heterotopia, stop-motion photographic works to Incident-s, a compilation of videos presented in the Turkish Pavilion of the Venice Biennial in 2007.

Many of the works in the exhibition, such as the over-sized cheap oil cloth Karakum (Black Sand) bag, pay witness to Alptekin’s acute interest in the human condition after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the enormous human traffic as well as the migration of authorless images that followed it. Karakum embodies an intercultural travel log where the Camel cigarette logo is transformed into the adornment of a cheap bag in reference to the part of the world where the exotic potpourri of Central Asian and Middle Eastern imagery that brands the Camel cigarette packet was originally taken from.

On the other hand, Heterotopia presents a plane of anonymously rendered images and found objects of history and contemporaneity, juxtaposed and set in friendly tension alongside one another.

The exhibition also includes a series of recordings from the extremely engaging conversations of the artist who often preferred to share his thoughts in speech rather than text.

Platform Garanti (Istanbul) houses the archive and library of Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin. The institution is also engaged in a comprehensive study of the artist’s career and life.

## HÜSEYİN BAHRI ALPTEKİN - BIOGRAPHY



### HÜSEYİN BAHRI ALPTEKİN

1957/Ankara - 2007/Istanbul

After pursuing graduate studies in aesthetics, the philosophy of art and sociology at the Sorbonne, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin remained in Paris as a photographer for Sipa Press in the 1980s. Steeped in European philosophy, semiotics and post-structuralist ideas emerging in France during this time, Alptekin returned to Turkey at the end of the decade, where he taught the philosophy of art.

In 1990, Alptekin began to make art, fusing associative images and objects in bric-a-brac installations. Befitting a philosopher turned artist, his oeuvre is not unified stylistically, but by an ambitious set of themes.

Alptekin took part in numerous international exhibitions including the Istanbul Biennial in 1995 and 2005, the Bienal de São Paulo in 1998, the 2002 Cetinje Biennale in Montenegro, the Tirana Biennial in 2003 and 2005 and Manifesta 5 in 2004. Along with numerous international residencies, Alptekin won a UNESCO prize for his work in the Cetinje Biennale, and the M. Mulliqi Prize at the 3rd International Exhibition at Kosovo Art Gallery, Prishtina, in 2005. As a curator, Alptekin organized exhibitions and events in Istanbul, Tirana, Havana and Helsinki, including cultural activities during Istanbul's 1996 Habitat II NGO-City Summit.

Between 2000 and 2004, Alptekin headed the Sea Elephant Travel Agency (SETA), a non-profit, artist-run collaborative space in Istanbul that sponsored artists' residencies and seminars. Sea Elephant served as an umbrella for Alptekin's numerous international, collaborative ventures, including "B-fact: Black Sea, Baltic Sea, Barents Sea," a platform for Balkans art, and "BRG: Bunker Research Group," an ongoing collaboration between Scandinavian and Turkish artists initiated during the 2003 Tirana Biennale.

Alptekin represented Turkey in the Arsenale at the 2007 Venice Biennale with the installation *Don't Complain* (2007), where he screened 14 different videos made from hundreds of assorted snapshots, taken on his travels around the world, that he called Incident-s inside five wooden huts. *Don't Complain* brought together disparate geographies through the images, connecting places as far apart as Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro.

## HOTEL SIGNS



The beginning of the series *Hotel Signs* was inspired by photographs taken by Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin during his night-time, city rambles in the early 1990s. The initial hotels he focused on were originally located in the Tarlabasi and Laleli districts of Istanbul, two areas that were completely transformed characteristically by the heavy influx of immigrants from the Ex-Soviet Republics, Iraq, Iran, and the east of Turkey. Later, Alptekin began to notice and discover this kind of establishments in the Balkans and around the world.

Alptekin considered these desperately basic hotels, which were embedded in an economy of makeshift capitalism, as representative of the massively impoverished underbelly of economic globalization.

Conferring the spirit of metropolitan cosmopolitanism, the names of the hotels came from a wide array of not-so-blooming places such as "Hotel Bagdat", "Hotel Gibraltar" or "Hotel Reykyavik". Along with their guests, who could be maverick first-generation post-Soviet businessmen, prostitutes, peddlers, regulars or those waiting for papers to access Western Europe, the names of the hotels would not offer any clues about the origins or the destinations of the proprietors or those they put up. They were for Alptekin heterotopias of people torn asunder who reinvented the city as a complex megalopolis that has no facade for mediated circulation. Thus the esoteric nature of each hotel name remains a mysterious local legend.

While the hotel signs glow in the dark, emanating hospitality and warmth, they also imply a hostility in their potentially morbid, rickety, and abated appearance. By recreating these handcrafted signs in simple shops, Alptekin not only referred to Jacques Derrida's writings on hostility and hospitality, but also reflected his own itinerant life, and his self-imposed exile. According to the artist, no one can claim they are home anymore, but everyone is home right now.

## HETEROTOPIA

The concept of the heterotopia appears in many of Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin's works. Elaborated in Michel Foucault's essay *Of Other Spaces* (1967), heterotopias are described as spaces that are simultaneously mythic and real in character. Alptekin's Heterotopias are installations, in which an amazingly diverse range of images and objects are placed next to each other. These many items have been collected from wildly different places, and appear to be coincidentally picked up from local and global circulation. They are however connected in Alptekin's works to give specific interpretations, an activity he wrote about as one of producing semantic sculptures from metaphorical textures which we all construct throughout our lives.



The original contexts of Alptekin's objects are dismantled, only to be added, connected and reassembled in a non-hierarchical relationship. These newly formed relationships, between fragmented social objects, have the potential of revealing imaginary connections, telling stories and conjuring up remembered images.

While partially transporting original cultural contexts, Heterotopia reveals a non-hegemonic heterogeneity. The work maps an exceptionally shrewd vision of extremely diverse, oddly muted and normally unmediated places, as well as different economic, social and cultural structures around the globe.

## INCIDENT-S



Incident-s are a series of short videos that were originally shown as part of the installation "Don't Complain" in the Pavilion of Turkey during the Venice Biennale in 2007. The videos were pieced together from photographs Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin had taken in various cities. Pulled together, the photographs turn into uncontrived, vernacular chronicles. The videos form an intimacy with the inexpert, unvarnished quality of the snapshots and collected images, as if to belie the artist's meticulous and deliberate weave. They are not about grand histories and glorious figures, but the unrecognized, overlooked, unglamorous, minor things, about people and situations beaming with urban myths and unwritten tales.

In Incident-s Bombay and Incident-s Ipanema, Alptekin shows two different beaches thousands of miles apart from each other; and yet somehow they have similar appearances and flows of time. The work reflects Alptekin's habit of wayward travel and his desire to bring things together, to overlap destinations, and to fold them in on one another to try and find way to be at home wherever one would go.

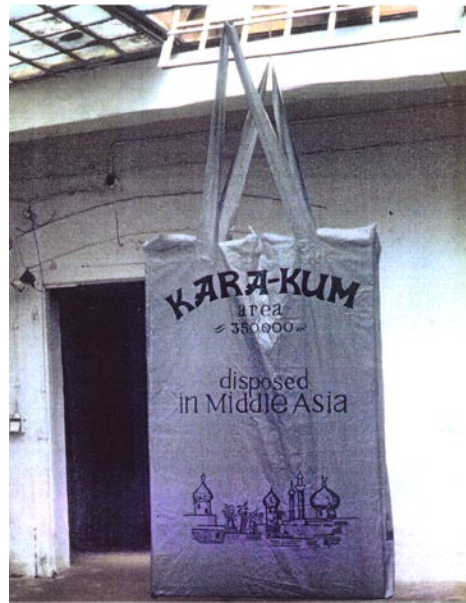
The movies, Incident-s Kosovo and Incident-s Chechnya depict people holding photographs of their missing family members in their hands. According to Alptekin, we perceive lost people as silhouettes and images in photographs. Contrary to anonymous clichés in the media, Alptekin shows the photographs of the families with the images of the disappeared accompanied by a song of Jay-Jay Johanson singing about a lost and distant love. Relentlessly unrelativizing, Alptekin's aim was not to make a political comment about the war but instead to relay the missing in their unique subjectivities.

Incident-s Blankets, consists of photographs of blankets from different places around the world. The colored motifs of blankets, some with images and others pure ornament, appear as an extension of the private entering into the public domain as they hang from buildings and balconies. These extensions of intimacy are manifestations of humble class and cultural habits across the globe. Alptekin's Incident-s do not only represent modest aspects of being, but the artist rewrites 'The History' within the brackets, only adding more thing"-s", and more versions of "the history-s".

## KARAKUM (BLACK DESERT)

Appropriation and re-appropriation is a recurring theme in the works of Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin. He was deeply inspired by authorless images and material objects floating in the popular cultural sphere from one continent to the other. Not only are the makers and creators of these things unknown, but they borrow from each other at will frustrating any attempt to make a genealogy of their transformation. Karakum was produced from a bag found at a make-shift Post-Soviet bazaar in Istanbul in the beginning of the 1990s. The image on the bag was an appropriation of the package of the Camel cigarette, a potpourri of Trans Asian and Middle Eastern orientalist imagery. The legend goes that the owner of the cigarette company saw a camel in a travelling circus and decided on the name because there was Turkish tobacco added to the mix of the Camel cigarette. Somewhere in the Post-Soviet space, and most possibly in Turkmenistan, somewhere changed the name from Camel to Karakum (Black Desert) that covers much of that country. By altering its scale and its features, Alptekin fed a 60s Pop Art strategy into the semiotics of the popular sphere, and allowed the object to be literally monumental. The cheap, grey oil cloth does not only symbolize exotic travel desire, but the large size of it attests more to the plight of the dispossessed and unintentional nomadism.

Karakum breaks the image/object from its familiar circulation and by adapting it into another cultural system in which the image/object begins to produce its own hybrid and heterogeneous conditions.



## WINTER DEPRESSION



Between 1994 and 1998 Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin explored depression as a social manifestation. Winter Depression was the last work of the artist's Seasons and Depression series. Alptekin believed that depression

was one of the conditions of existence both for the artist and society. According to him, depression, like art, constructed a different kind of knowledge and stimulated a certain way of living and performing.

In Winter Depression, Alptekin used one of the most iconic images of the entertainment industry. Taken during the screening of the first 3-D movie in New York in 1956 this photograph, of members of an audience wearing 3-D spectacles, serves as a classic image of the passive onlooker articulating an encounter between the depressed and the society. Also referencing the fact that this image was selected for the book cover of Guy Debord's first English edition of the Society of Spectacle, Alptekin turned it into an interminable wall-paper underscoring the social aspect of depression.

The installation Winter Depression includes a divan that was borrowed from the office of Alptekin's father who was in the medical profession. The divan does not only refer to the psychiatrist's couch, but is also a space of contemplation and healing, or perhaps of contemplation and therapy. A large salted and dried fish brought from St. Petersburg lies on the couch. The fish represents the symbolic and metaphoric depression of the artist. Alptekin often used the «displaced» fish to imply boredom, death, memory and a loss of place. Finally, the pink neon sign that reads "Winter Depression" acts as an invitation to a collective space of depression that includes the artist and his audience.



***BED SHITS***

***IMAGES TROUBLES***