

# MINOR VIBRATIONS ON EARTH

BURÇAK BİNGÖL



Limited edition of 500



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## FOREWORD

*Minor Vibrations on Earth* presents a new body of work developed by Burçak Bingöl following her artist residency with Tate St Ives in spring 2022. This limited edition poem expands on the inspiration behind her subsequent exhibition through five lyrical ‘scenes’ spanning different geographies, timeframes and materialities.

Echoing the form of a kiln interior, Bingöl’s installation comprises groupings of ‘shelves’ on which various objects are stacked. Utilitarian bricks, typically used to line a kiln, act here as supporting structures. Some of the bricks are decorated with a white gloss glaze which also pools on the shelves and oozes over the edges as if still in a liquid state. Traditional Ottoman vases – Şah Vazo – are overlaid with decals of plants, seascapes, demolition sites and other images, while shards of broken ceramics are repurposed into new abstract forms.

Embedded in this display are subtle reflections of Bingöl’s encounters in Cornwall, from the artistic legacies of Bernard Leach and Barbara Hepworth to the landscapes and industrial histories of West Penwith. These influences are evident in her clay pieces; in tones and textures, a sculptural void with strings, and images of the delicate flowers in Hepworth’s garden. Often perceived as opposites, the traditional and modern, smooth and rough, whole and fragmented, are regarded with equal value. The installation appears suspended in a state of

flux, or as Bingöl describes it ‘interrupted halfway through’ – words that recall Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’s 1946 text *Beş Şehir* (Five Cities), a series of poetic essays reflecting on urban transformation in Turkey.

The term ‘vibrations’ is used by Bingöl both literally and metaphorically. These are the sounds of a building’s destruction felt viscerally in the body; on a broader level, they are the reverberations caused by the erasure of culture and collective memories. In looking back, Bingöl’s installation also reflects on the state of the present: cities, societies and values in constant evolution. Yet within this context of erasure and demise, plants and nature seem to take over, adorning ceramic surfaces and creeping up the legs of the stacked plinths, suggesting an alternative regeneration or re-forming.

We are extremely grateful to the SAHA Association (Istanbul, Turkey) for their generous support of Burçak Bingöl’s research, residency, and production for the exhibition, which is part of a multi-year collaboration between SAHA and Tate St Ives. We would also like to thank the Leach Pottery and Porthmeor Studios in St Ives for assisting Bingöl with her research throughout her residency.

Anne Barlow  
Director, Tate St Ives



Bingöl's poem *Minor Vibrations on Earth* is set in Ankara and Istanbul in Turkey, and Cornwall, UK. Bingöl connects these locations through various histories of ceramics production and her personal experience of each place. The poem considers how her artistic practice is influenced by 'vibrations' from different time periods and geographies, combining traditional ceramics with modern forms and styles. This first scene, *The Gallery*, begins the story in St Ives and contemplates states of flux and transformation.



## MINOR VIBRATIONS ON EARTH

A poem in five scenes by Burçak Bingöl

### Scenery 1: The Gallery

The space is an imaginary kiln now, interrupted halfway through ...  
The load is a transformation in progress, a situation temporal.

A midway contemplation, where parts are in fluence.  
Reducing oxygen,  
deform to reform.

An experiential fluidity,  
a moment to grasp the nature of the present.  
*Şah Vazo* is a melting pot now; it tells, learns, feels and reacts,  
after years of silence ...

Bingöl grew up in Ankara, the modern capital of Turkey. She achieved a PhD in Ceramics at Hacettepe University and studied music at Ankara State Conservatory. After spending time in New York, US, she returned to Turkey and settled in Istanbul, the ancient former capital: 'I had trouble feeling rooted in any of the cities I lived in ... and I'm still coming to terms with this place where I choose to belong.'



## Scenery 2: Ankara

*Minor Vibrations on Earth* is a moment in time.

A moment in which my body feels the rhythmic vibrations coming from the ground.

It is a destroyer crane what my eyes see, smashing my music school into crumbles; rocks, iron, dust.

Ankara State Conservatory of Modern Turkey, founded right after the Republic.

Walls disappear, memories disappear, histories disappear ...  
Once again.

The crane is proud.

Traditional Turkish ceramics are renowned for their intricate patterns and natural motifs. During Bingöl's education in Ankara, such styles were considered overly decorative while modern abstract forms were promoted. In this poetic scene, Bingöl considers her creative practice within a spectrum of cultural, historical and natural influences.



### Scenery 3: Ceramics

The earth itself.

Rocks smashed to the ground; quartz, feldspar, kaolin,  
mixed and wedged.

Persistent memory when fired;  
rest in light, rest in humid, resist time kindly.  
Yet it's fragile.

There are roses, carnations, vessels, artisans, tulips, kilns and gardens  
in Ottoman miniatures.

Pots to contain; both inside and out.  
Pots to sit in a garden, to become one.  
Some stayed home, some travelled afar  
with their never fading gardens.

Centre of life, always,  
too loaded for the Moderns, however;  
except brick and mortar and pestle.

Channeling the earth,  
history and geography.

During her residency with Tate St Ives in 2022, Bingöl spent time in the sculpture garden at the Barbara Hepworth Museum. She took images of plants and flowers from the garden and reworked these into motifs for her ceramic works. This scene, *Gardens*, contains quotes from Hepworth and is influenced by modernist experiments and natural forms.



## Scenery 4: Gardens

Is it the plants that grow too slow or is it us being too fast?  
They work in their own calendar.  
Change is slow, yet uninterrupted.

The earth gives life back to the debris;  
things fall, things grow, things rise.

Destruction and construction.  
Uninterrupted.

'B' built a garden.  
A rightful kingdom,  
*there, she didn't feel alone.*  
Pierced the boundaries of the self,  
what is normally obscured.

Tied herself *to the sea, to the wind, to the hills.*  
*A tiny camelia* is blooming now.



Bingöl is influenced by the 'vibrations' she observes between traditional Turkish ceramics and later modern practices. During her St Ives residency, she researched the history of local ceramics and the use of Cornish clays. She even went diving to excavate china clay from a lakebed, which she used in her installation *Minor Vibrations on Earth* at Tate St Ives.



## Scenery 5: St Ives

I'm a minor vibration myself among other St Ivean vibrations,  
past and present. This is exactly where I should be.

Things live vibrantly here.  
The rocks, the shore, pubs and sips.

The 700 year old murmur oozing out through the wooden  
beams of the Sloop — older than the Ottoman.  
Even the dead are alive; living in the grass,  
hissing sands, standing stones, cobblestones.

Time was never interrupted, never ruptured.  
The past is like the sea; it comes and goes but never disappears.  
Where the land ends, in flux.  
Echoing infinitely.

This too, shall pass.



## TATE ST IVES ARTIST RESIDENCY

Tate St Ives (Cornwall, UK) and the SAHA Association (Istanbul, Turkey) are delighted to work in partnership, creating residency and exhibition opportunities that build awareness in the UK of contemporary art from Turkey. Burçak Bingöl's residency and exhibition is the first project in a multi-year partnership providing workspace, accommodation, and travel for Turkish artists to visit St Ives and to develop work for an exhibition.



Ceramics' complexity and its connection to history and geography make it an abundant source of inspiration. The visual and architectural heritage of ceramics has given me the tools and the vocabulary to help me understand the forgotten past and how cultures influenced each other.

Burçak Bingöl 2022

Burçak Bingöl, born 1976 in Görele and raised in Ankara, lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey. Her exhibition *Minor Vibrations on Earth* is presented at Tate St Ives 15 October 2022 – 15 January 2023

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