

**Ceramic and Miniature Updated**  
Suna Kafadar / June 09, 2011



Summer season in the arts scene began with many new exhibitions, some continuing until fall, and others introducing rising artists and featuring works in support of a certain cause for a short time. Two great examples of the latter case are "Cabinet of Curiosities" by Burçak Bingöl and "Tradition Now" by Günseli Kato. Both exhibitions are significant endeavors in re-thinking traditional arts—ceramic and miniature—and adding them to the visual universe of contemporary art.

"Cabinet of Curiosities" (Nadireler Kabinesi) is taking place at [CDA Projects](#) on the second floor of Mısır Apartmanı until 15 June. The title of the exhibition references a tradition in Renaissance Europe, when a cabinet referred to a room (rather than a piece of furniture) in which uncategorizable objects were collected. More rudimentary forms of this cabinet existed before the sixteenth century; however, it became popular during the sixteenth century as many monarchs took up the hobby of forming large collections of "things." In "Cabinet of Curiosities," inspired by this phenomenon, Bingöl creates her own cabinet of curiosities in which she features her own valuables: her ideas and feelings expressed through ceramic.

The first piece that grabs one's attention at Bingöl's exhibition is a ceramic table and chair at the end of the exhibition hall that appears to be standing on tenterhooks. As implied by the title "Daydreamer," the work evokes the feeling that this space is quite fragile, just like the artist's perception of her working environment—a table and chair where she cooks up her ideas. To the left of this work, there is a room half covered with floral wallpaper. Four shelves stand next to each other on the wall, each carrying an ordinary object, such as a plastic cup and a small gas bottle used in almost every house. Everything featured on this wall is covered with the same floral wallpaper, hidden in the artificial garden constructed by the artist.

In fact, throughout the exhibition, floral patterns dominate Bingöl's objects. In every room, we find a camera made out of ceramic mounted on the wall and covered with floral designs. The artist clearly wants to remind us that we are constantly monitored by various agents/objects that have become ordinary and, thus, obscure, blending in with our immediate environment. Yet, this work suggests more than that: it reflects on our own systems of thinking in which we constantly monitor ourselves, and watch our words and moves.

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One other interest of the artist is systems of production. In the next room of the exhibition we find two twisted pipe systems that seem to be deadlocked. On the other wall we find "Broken," a cluster of broken ceramic pieces representing disappointment, fragility, and dysfunction. Two video pieces titled "The Craftsman" and "The Ruinous" are shown on the adjacent wall, the first featuring the artist hard at work, constructing her pieces, and the latter showing her breaking and destroying her works. Certainly, for the artist, destruction is an integral part of the strenuous production process, which requires both mental and physical strength. Therefore, the idea of showing the "kitchen" where everything is constructed is more than necessary, especially in today's world where traditional ways of producing art is no longer popular. In fact, Bingöl's choice of material—ceramic—indicates a type of resistance to mainstream understanding of contemporary art and a brittle but solid way to adhere to the contemporary.