

One Must Continue

2019 is the 10th year of the Young Fresh Different exhibition... Gallery Zilberman —or CDA-Projects, as it was known then— first realized this series of exhibitions in 2009 with an eye towards creating a platform for emerging new works in the field of visual arts, getting to know and introducing new artists, and fortifying its own artistic network.

Within the past ten years, the number of submissions to this open call-based project has been approximately 3000, while the number of artists whose works have been exhibited is 136. Young Fresh Different, which is organized as the last exhibition of each season, has been taking place in the gallery's Mısır Apartmanı space for the last nine years, accompanied with a catalogue.

The space reserved for young artists in Istanbul's art scene is relatively wide. Young Fresh Different is concurrent to a number of artist prizes and exhibitions. Some of these projects that are realized by state institutions, galleries or private initiatives are still ongoing, while others have disrupted. In this country largely defined by interruptions and instability as if they are weaved into the fate of the land, I think the space that is consistently provided to young artists by Zilberman Gallery shoulders an important responsibility within its own framework and mission, and I wholeheartedly hope that this exhibition series continues for many years to come.

When I came to Istanbul in 2010, our serendipitous encounter with Moiz Zilberman first made me one of the artists represented by the gallery, and later, its artistic director. This position, which was important and necessary for me to continue my artistic production, facilitated my involved relationship with this project. During my time at the gallery, I was directly involved with the development of this project which had been initiated one year prior to my arrival. As such, I have had the opportunity to get to know each of the participating artists closely.

Although not all of the selected artists for the previous nine exhibitions continue to make art, looking back at the preceding editions as a member of their selection committee since YFD3, I am happily recognizing how consistent the selections have been from the number of participating artists who seem to continue their artistic output with the same motivation today.

These exhibitions are singularly important in the lives of young people who want to become artists. And things do not become easier once one has been selected as a 'young artist'. It is an issue onto itself how one will be able to continue being an artist when you become one. How does one remain an artist? Where does this inner dialogue feed from, and what does it conflict with? How does one generate the motivation required to keep working as an artist?

Artists need such great moral and tangible support in order to continue this particular state of existence and work, which is remarkably difficult to maintain. The artist's inner negotiation with his/ her materials, subjects and conflicts can only widen, deepen and enrich to the extent that it finds its course of stream. In the current atmosphere where state-funded support is negligible to none, where almost all activities are facilitated through private funds, finding this particular space can get at least as complicated as making art. While issues regarding how privately-funded structures function and how support mechanisms operate among a sensitive network of relationships remain to be

discussed and interpreted, their very possibility of survival within the prospect of a fragile future is questionable.

This is a good time to re-evaluate Young Fresh Different, now as old as its progenitor, on the 10th year of this gallery which has made great strides during its lifespan. It has been exciting for me to come together with these artists whose work was previously shown in this selection, who are perhaps less young than they used to be, but still remain as different and productive as ever. This exhibition has been a wonderful opportunity to both showcase their new work, as well as hearing the artists' own account of their time in the art world, which was made possible with their own motivation.

As the curator of One Must Continue, I determined the model of this exhibition as one that mirrors the development of the previous editions. YFD10, which is an overview of its own history marking its tenth year, was shaped around its own concept; the open call of the previous years was replaced by an open invitation. We developed the content by selecting works the artists are currently working on, or from the projects they proposed to exhibit. With this edition of the exhibition series, I wanted to follow the group exhibition format of the previous renditions and devise a concept where each personal narrative, rather than just works, came together in all their similarities and differences to underscore the subjective nature of expression itself. Since the exhibition was both concerned with the concept of YFD as well as the respective positions adopted by the artists, I merely assumed the role of a facilitator in the flow of the process. The artists themselves decided on what they wanted to exhibit.

There are so many strong artists in YFD's history, so the hardest thing was to select the exhibition roster. I wanted to include as many artists as possible in this special exhibition. Bearing the limits of the exhibition space available, I ended up with a list of artists whose works I was deeply inspired by and continue to follow. My personal meetings and exchanges with the artists showed me how similar the issues and considerations were, along with the passion to create. As the curator, I continually looked for ways to share the creative process of the exhibition with the artists themselves. It was my priority to be a part of the process as far as my opinion and feedback were needed and desired. It has been such inspiring and enriching experience for me to closely witness the individual approaches and inner dialogues of the artists.

This publication, which is an extension of the exhibition, aims to go beyond the works included in the exhibition and open up an unmediated space for the inner worlds of the artists; it is an attempt to visit this singularly personal —and private— realm. In this way, this catalogue is a bit of an excavation aiming to reach towards creative minds and uncover moments of insight in all their commonalities and differences.

I invited all the artists to write about what it means for them to remain an artist and to continue as personal essays. They all happily agreed to do it. I wished for all of their inner dynamics as well as different aspects of their creative process to be shared and recorded as a transcription of the here and now. I made it a point to not give them any directives as to the format and content of these texts, in order to preserve their subjectivity. I merely told the artists that they could freely describe a moment or experience which had a definitive effect on their drive to continue as artists, or provide an evaluation of the conditions and emotions that either motivated or demoralized them. As I was sincerely interested in their sources of inspiration as well as the fields they were nourished by, I asked them to write about these issues as an exercise in thoughts or feelings.

In the end, exhibitions end; publications remain. I view the texts provided by YFD artists as invaluable remnants of the present period, and I believe their personal power of expression go beyond the vocational language and will serve as better sources in due time.

Artistic production requires continuity and accumulation the most— constant production, constant thought, constant trial and error. As such, the subtitle of the exhibition, as artist Zeynep Kayan quoted Samuel Beckett in her own essay, is: one must continue. Artists must continue to produce and strive to achieve the inner balance required for this.

As an artist, I am also personally invested in how this continuation will evolve in time... What will be awaiting us when we become older artists? Moreover, will anything at all be waiting for us?

In order for artists to achieve continuity, it is clear that we not only need working artists but also a healthy and robust system with all of its many components intact, as well as a sound culture policy... Continuity is not only a necessary policy for artists, but it should also be adopted by institutions to fortify resistance, belief and above all, permanence, not only for the artists, but themselves.

These have been the guiding thoughts and principles behind Young Fresh Different 10: One Must Continue, which has thus far been a reliable resource for artists to build their continuity on. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of the artists that keep on producing as well as Zilberman Gallery, who provided the base for this productivity, and believed in it for ten years... We do not know what awaits us in the future, but today, perhaps one simply needs to continue...

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