

# TODAY'S ZAMAN

## Contemporary miniatures celebrate 'ordinary heroes'

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Seven contemporary artists from Turkey and abroad reinterpret elements of the traditional art of miniatures in an ongoing exhibition in Istanbul's Gallery Zilberman.

In "Minor Heroisms," curated by Nat Muller, artists Burçak Bingöl, İmran Qureshi, Aisha Khalid, Hayv Kahraman, Azade Köker, Femmy Otten and Extrastruggle – aka Memed Erdener – depict stories of ordinary people, in opposition to one of classical miniature's staples: tales of epic events in the lives of significant figures such as sultans, vicars and warriors.

"From life in Mughal and Ottoman courts to Persian mythology, miniatures usually depicted the lives of rulers, heroic battles, epic events and major events. Big stories, for big characters, full scale. In 'Minor Heroisms,' both scale and the size of the frame are clipped and expanded," reads an online reconstruction of the exhibition on the gallery's website. "The work looks like heroic virtues and everyday struggles and instances of resistance that make up the larger socio-political fabric," explains the text.

Bingöl takes a human miniature from the 17th century, which is on a life panel in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and an Ottoman vase in the starting point for her work "Unfinished Resistance" in "Minor Heroisms." The scene in the miniature depicts a picnic in a garden where one cannot differentiate where the courtesans on clothes or pottery ends and where the actual garden starts. Located just a meter away from the miniature, we see Bingöl's vase, which is in typical Ottoman style, containing a drink of clay. It is hard to understand whether the drink is going left, to the one of the vase being to give a shape to the end of the drink. It is that Bingöl is linked from God that she also used as a devotion for her vase.

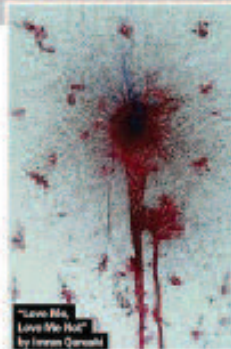
"In May 2013, Gezi Park became the backdrop of a series of protests against the ruling government as a protest against police in Gezi Park, one of the last green spaces around Istanbul. Citizens used fire as a coping mechanism against the police in Gezi Park, and the police violently intervened. Soon the protest turned into broader demonstrations against the government. That led to the 12/15 and the situation in Turkey has deteriorated on every front. The Gezi protests, like the grass seeds on the vase, led their invisible mark or Turkish society," Muller says. "The movement's question of what this means to the large one is an uneasy one," says Muller. "The relationship between things visible and the material it's made of."

"Another work relating to the political situation in Turkey is from Extrastruggle, known for his colorful and often question-provoking and satirical. "We



"Unfinished Resistance" by Burçak Bingöl

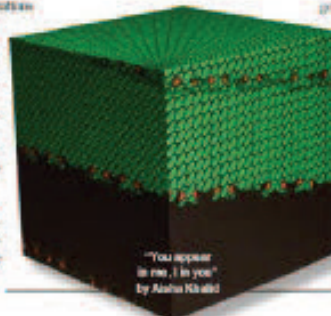
Artists Burçak Bingöl, İmran Qureshi, Aisha Khalid, Hayv Kahraman, Azade Köker, Femmy Otten and Extrastruggle – aka Memed Erdener – depict stories of ordinary people in the exhibition 'Minor Heroisms,' curated by Nat Muller



"Love Me Not" by İmran Qureshi



"We Will [re]build This Nation Over/Over" by Extrastruggle



"You appear in me, I in you" by Aisha Khalid

"will [re]build this nation over" for work that directly refers to a widely illegally found and leaked recording of a phone conversation of a Turkish businessman, known for the crime syndicates his company has been under the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government. "For the exhibition, the artist has created a well-known but neglected political comment, clandestinely recorded and gone viral on the Internet in calligraphic script adorned with beautiful Ottoman motifs," the curator explained. "Several predominantly ornamental motifs from Ottoman calligraphy and motifs in Extrastruggle's version of a globe painted with lip-like wavy lines. Thought to have originated from Buddhism, Chakras represent power and to overcome a 'self-filling' goal. This reinforces the artist's double visualization of the

quote, once in its original Turkish and once in English translation," Muller explains. "Extrastruggle (Qureshi and Khalid) both billed as prominent members of the neo-minimalist" by the gallery, present a collection of traditional techniques into a contemporary miniature. Qureshi's work on gold leaf canvas, in which floral patterns engulf over the paintings' surface, create a medley of beauty and distraction, while Khalid's motifs gain spirituality through three-dimensional objects and abstraction.

Imran and Otten tell a clearly necessary story in the site-specific recreation of her 2011 installation "New Myth for New Family," influenced by classic Indian mythology and Persian miniatures, with Köker's work borrows from Ottoman miniature. Haysi Elshah is perfect for classical tradition between gold and red. "Minor Heroisms" is on display until Oct. 24 at Gallery Zilberman.