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## In Delicate Ceramic Objects, Burçak Bingöl Captures the Alienation of Turkish Society

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Cultural and personal histories are intertwined in the work of Turkish artist [Burçak Bingöl](#). By deconstructing familiar items from everyday life and casting them in richly decorated ceramic, she inserts a layer of distance between the viewer and the object, creating room for contemplation. At the same time, the object is deconstructed and reconstituted in such a way that meaning and reality are convoluted.

In a recent exhibition at Istanbul's [Galeri Zilberman](#), the artist referenced the late 19th-century Turkish novel *Araba Sevdası* by Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem. The book is a complicated love story that captures the concerns of a nation at a moment of change in the face of modernization. In the show "A Carriage Affair" (named for the English translation of the book's title), Bingöl evoked this tension between tradition and progress in a series of small sculptures and works on paper. At the center of the show was the six-and-a-half-foot-high ceramic sculpture *Cruise* (2014), cast from the front of a real Istanbul street-paving truck. Its details—spark plugs, shock absorbers—were richly painted in cream-colored glaze with the entire surface decorated with colorful decals of traditional Turkish motifs.

In her ceramic works, Bingöl blends art and craft, using traditional technique and imagery to create unlikely and thoroughly modern forms. These pieces are caught in a type of in-between space: between delicate, historically "feminine" material and aggressive, "masculine" forms. Here, history is celebrated and simultaneously subverted.

No matter the medium, many of Bingöl's works are densely patterned, reflecting the artist's own interest in decoration while also referencing traditional Ottoman and Islamic motifs. There are more personal symbols, too, like a mandala representing a spiritual journey. With her unique blend of imagery, the work speaks to Turkey's complex and multicultural history and its sometimes uneasy situation at the crossroads between East and West, past and present.

Given her multifaceted artistic interest in—and interpretations of—her nation's cultural heritage, Bingöl is a fitting representative for Galeri Zilberman at the [Contemporary Istanbul](#) art fair, where *Cruise* will be on display. "I copy an object and transform it into something foreign and unusual," Bingöl has said of the work. Even when the source is a real object, "by breaking it into pieces and decorating it with traditional Turkish motifs, I am able to convey the great sense of alienation our society faces."

Visit [Galeri Zilberman at Contemporary Istanbul 2014](#), Booth Nov. 13th – 16th.

Explore [Galeri Zilberman and Contemporary Istanbul on Artsy](#).

