

Turkish artists add color to NY March art scene



Turkish artist Burçak Bingöl poses for a portrait with her creation for her series "Unforeseen Transformation" in this undated promotional photo.

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Early March in **New York** is all about visual art.

The city fairly explodes with the influx of contemporary art from visiting international galleries and thousands of **artists** and their works. Collectors and art lovers from all over the world are willing to traipse through the late winter snow and slush to see it all, and perhaps even tote a new canvas back home with them.

The recent 17th edition of blue-chip The Armory Show, staged on the west edge of Manhattan's midtown, is the central magnet for what has developed into a crowded orbit of smaller, simultaneous satellite art fairs in Manhattan.

The Armory Show itself, held from March 5-8 this year, kicked off its own "Armory Arts Week," a citywide program of cultural events and **exhibitions** in all of New York's five boroughs.

Turkish artists occupied some prominent real estate within several showcases. Two of the 10 satellite fairs, VoltaNY and Moving Image, featured works by Turkish artists Burçak Bingöl and Selçuk Artut respectively, and four Turkish galleries (Galeri NON, Pi Artworks, Galerist, and Dirimart) participated in The Armory Show.

Burçak Bingöl at VoltaNY

VoltaNY is the American incarnation of the original Basel Volta (Switzerland) and 2015 is its eighth edition. Held on a pier on the Hudson River on the west side of Manhattan, VoltaNY this year offered 90 international galleries, each showing a single artist's work. Istanbul's Galleri Zilberman, showing Bingöl's work, was making its VoltaNY debut.

With related floral motifs running throughout, Bingöl's 12 colorful and decorative objects "skirt the line between practicality and art," as she described them to Today's Zaman. Her "constructed museum" diorama carried a strong theme and variations, integrating notions of belonging, identity and culture, with Turkish historical references.

The energetic center was a linen dress whose floral print was transposed onto a variety of Ottoman-style ceramic vases, a trunk suitcase, a table and chair, three framed line drawings and a video. While it all seems like eye candy, it actually fools the eye; each elegantly beautiful object is imbued with its own personality and allusion.

The psychological center of the series was Bingöl's sense of discomfort as she tried to adapt herself to different cultures during years of travel between Turkey, the US and Argentina for a series of residencies. She wallpapered her room with the bright floral template to help her "find integration and get rid of my alienation."

Her video "Self-Conscious" sees her sitting (wearing the same floral-print dress) at a similarly decorated table with a ceramic vase atop. She suddenly knocks it to the floor where it shatters. Two partially reconstructed broken vases are in glass display cases, each showing the floral pattern only on the inside of the cracked edges rather than on the outside.

One of the framed works, "Broken II," is a jumble of shiny multi-colored enamel shards clumped together as if clinging to one another for dear life. "Its beauty depends on the eye of the beholder," the artist says. Aside from aesthetics, it also challenges our perception of the point at which objects become themselves, and the nature of their functionality.

This show is the third and final chapter of Bingöl's concentration on this particular project thread, which aims to blur the boundaries between the past and present as well as between museum display style and real-life tangibility. Her series of three ceramic pots, each lovingly held by two forearms and hands, each wearing delicately embroidered gloves and attached to the wall, suggests how these "handicrafts" have imagined another way to offer themselves to us.



Three prints from Turkish artist Burçak Bingöl's 2011 series "Unforeseen Transformation." Bingöl was represented by Galeri Zilberman in this year's VoltaNY fair, which ran March 5-8 in New York.