

Istanbul Artist Collective

In our present day in which the art market is directly associated with rather political components, The art market in Turkey has also an important position that needs to be taken under scrutiny. The market is situated in such a place, which is politically censored, away from liberty, and a mere supporter of populism. It is an environment where only the masters of public relations can find a place for themselves, and that only the biased writers and critics or even biased curators grab corners. It is now a place that operates under the hegemony of a monopolist and roughnecking perception. For many real artists, this means being invisible and unable to make their living out of art. Artists who cannot find themselves a suitable place in the market; need to explore or create new habitats, new markets and new organisms in order to be able to breathe and make their voices heard. In a country where an average of 70% or more of the votes are for the right wing, the analyses of what we call the *problem* cannot be fairly conducted. To that crew; the issues of LGBT, the Armenian question or women's rights issues are only answered by ignoring and neglecting their facts. The problems of artists are not even at the bottom of the list. In this country, especially in the last 15 years, the process of political and sociological change paved the way for the capital to move to different hands. Now that the capital has begun to get into the hands of a conservative and partially uneducated profiles, it has had a considerable impact upon the balances of the art market. The former investor and art buyer, is in a position to avoid any unstable movement of his or her capital in this unsafe economic environment. Being decorative and copying the popular movements in the world, the young new artists who are away from any research, display their works, which are composed of elegant, bright, unsophisticated, Islamic figures and symbols. These works that were taken into account have started to be observed and supported everywhere. This is nothing but eviscerating the real artist and the description of a real work of art. This dilettantish view is a threat to all disciplines.

In the face of such problems as the infertility of the art market in this country, the inadequate means, which are presented against unfair percentages of gallery operations, the drastic decline in the art investment rates, the economic difficulty with participating in international fairs, the shutdown of some well-established galleries, the vandalist attacks against the galleries, and later on the superficiality of the choice of those vandalised galleries, the artist's struggle to survive alone leads him or her to desire to expand their territories across the world market with new hopes. Taking part in the international market is a very costly situation for galleries. Especially the recent economic recession and the subsequent decline of the Lira prevents them from taking new steps in the international arena. However, the artists, who remained completely hopeless, wanted to be more courageous and to enter the world market to pursue new solutions. I am an artist, curator and a gallery owner; I think that this is a positive and promising posture against this superficial, biased and vicious

tendency, and I believe that this is a stance that needs to be supported. By accelerating this process, I have brought the artists together around the Istanbul Artist Collective and established a system in which the capital, which is the most important element for stepping into the world market, was supplied by the contribution of the artists themselves. In order to be able to present their voices in the world market as an artist, get a confirmation of their artistic identity in several art platforms and markets in the world, take steps with the dream of a world where boundaries do not cause an issue, find themselves more liberal art environments, exhibit their works without censorship, and reach the audience who would evaluate their works with a more objective criteria, we have established this collective.

Our first stop is ARTSY.NET, the world's largest virtual art environment. We are present there as a collective, and considering the standardisation and maltreatment policies in this country, our artists feel more visible and as though they have the opportunity to meet with more qualified art audiences. In today's Turkey, this is the most necessary thing, a qualified artist and a qualified audience.

We hope that these artists' efforts and their ideals that they could reach due to their efforts, remain as a sign, which indicates that not only the individual but also the social salvation can only be achieved by means of endorsement given to Art.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who was a Turkish field marshal, revolutionary statesman, author, and founder of the Republic of Turkey, summed up everything 96 years ago: "If a nation lacks arts and artists, it cannot have a full life. Such a nation is like a person whose one leg is limp, one arm missing, who is disabled and sick. Unless a nation gives importance to arts, it is condemned to a great disaster. Many constituents are unaware of the degree of that disaster"

Bahar Adan

Founder of Istanbul Artist Collective