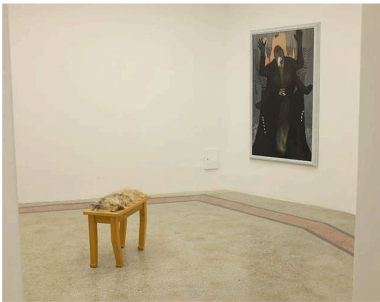


## Works from Young Artists Biennial exhibited at Kasa Gallery

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*The 17th International Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean will be held in Milan from Oct. 22 until Nov. 22. Works by Gökçen Dilek Acay and Gökçe Er that were selected for the biennial are on display at Sabancı University's Kasa Gallery in Karaköy until July 15*

Founded in 1984, the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean creates a meeting point around the "mare nostrum" between young European and Mediterranean artists located in European cities. The first edition of the biennial, held in Barcelona, featured works from artists living in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, France and Yugoslavia. The biennial aims to become a platform for young artists between the ages of 18 and 30, and this year, it will be held at La Fabbrica del Vapore in Milan starting on Oct. 22 and concluding on Nov. 22. More than 900 artists from 21 countries working in different fields, including literature, visual arts, design, music, architecture, performing arts, theater, fashion, dance and music, will convene for the event, which will feature a special project titled "Motel Trogir: Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" by artists from Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and the U.K.

Gökçe Er and Gökçen Dilek Acay, two artists from Turkey, will display their works during the biennial. Thanks to Kasa Gallery's "Right to Milan: 17th Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean Turkey Selection" exhibition," however, we will be able to see those works before the biennial audience.

Gökçe Er is one of the artists whose works are on display at Kasa. Born in 1982 in Çorlu, Er studied painting at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and obtained her Masters of Fine Arts degree at the same university. Part of her master's education involved studying at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna in Italy. Her collage "Vegetative State" is on display here, alongside "Riotous," "Remembrance," "Symbol-Asa" and her "Watchers" series.

Gökçen Dilek Acay, born in 1983, studied Media Art at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and obtained her fine arts diploma from Bauhaus University, Weimar where she is now continuing her graduate studies. Her works are featured in the collections of Istanbul's Arter and Pilot galleries, and she spent this year in different residencies in South Korea, Spain and France.

Acay told me how her works were picked by the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean. "Over 35 artists applied and the jury chose two artists at the end of the selection process," she said. According to Acay, exhibiting their works before the biennial was an excellent idea. "With the exception of the 'Animal Furniture,' these are all new works not exhibited anywhere before. I think it a good exercise to see how different art forms are harmonized together."

"Animal Furniture" is among the most striking works on display at Kasa. A furniture installation produced with dog hair, designed wood and a motor, it seems like a critique of the accepted ideas about inanimate objects and living creatures, as well as an attempt to disrupt the dichotomy between object and subject.

"I wanted to create an object that can also be a subject," Acay explained. "The stool can seem like a living creature that breathes before our eyes. But it is just an illusion. We all know that it is not an animal. There is no animal inside that fur. Stools are among the most used objects in life and I wanted to contrast these things. I wanted to reverse our understanding of animals and objects. Humans have power; they can decide on the value of things and about life and death issues. I don't like this hegemony, and I wanted to challenge it in my work. My 'Animal Furniture' is not only a chair, since it is

breathing, and it is not only an animal since you can sit on it or eat it."

Another work by Acay, "Hirsch," welcomes the viewer at the entrance of the exhibition in what can only be described as an uncanny manner. Made of porcelain, the sculpture is presented alongside a hidden smoke machine. At the entrance of the gallery, a layer of white smoke envelopes the viewer as she looks at the gallery space, trying to discover the source of the smoke.

"I made a last minute decision to include 'Hirsch' in this exhibition," Acay said. "I insisted on including it, and the curators liked the work when I presented it to them. Conceptually, it kind of fits with the rest of the works on display. I have a feeling that through this work, the atmosphere of the space becomes crucial to understanding the concept behind it. It is installed in the first room and if you get caught in its smoke, you will partly lose your view. As an audience member, you don't know where the smoke comes from. You will begin discovering works on display only after this starting point. Like in a nature museum, all works will compete for your attention there. This is managed through clean light and silence. The smoke forces the viewer to swing between cleanliness and the secrets of the wilderness."

"Shaping DNA," another delicate work by Acay, uses human hair on paper and is presented as an ongoing project. Using human hair and natural patterns, it deals with the scientific subject of genes through an extremely fragile material. "I found human hair to be a very impressive material," Acay said. "It stores lots of information about mankind, such as our genetic code. Scientists can collect the 'history' of a person using human hair. It can be sampled, processed and analyzed. A scientist can study mineral levels in a hair sample; it is a sacred box. Hair is part of your body, your whole life, but you cannot open this sacred box yourself. Only someone else can interpret it for you. This is why I started working with it."

"Imaginary Fossils," an installation featuring 11 made-up fossils produced with soap base and human hair, is a more tongue-in-cheek work that emphasizes the culturally and ideologically produced nature of archaeological research and our relationship with ancient history. "I was trying to create a connection not only with the cultural aspect of archaeology, but also with very early evolutionary history," Acay explained. "My work is not only concerned with a particular place or a local context, it is about all mankind: The beginning of life, the earth, molecules, atoms, homo sapiens, their history ... It is about the history that has been lost or forgotten. The delicate soaps in the 'Imaginary Fossils' installation reflect our forgetfulness. I think we all have a kind of existential amnesia about who we are and about how we can be better." ■