

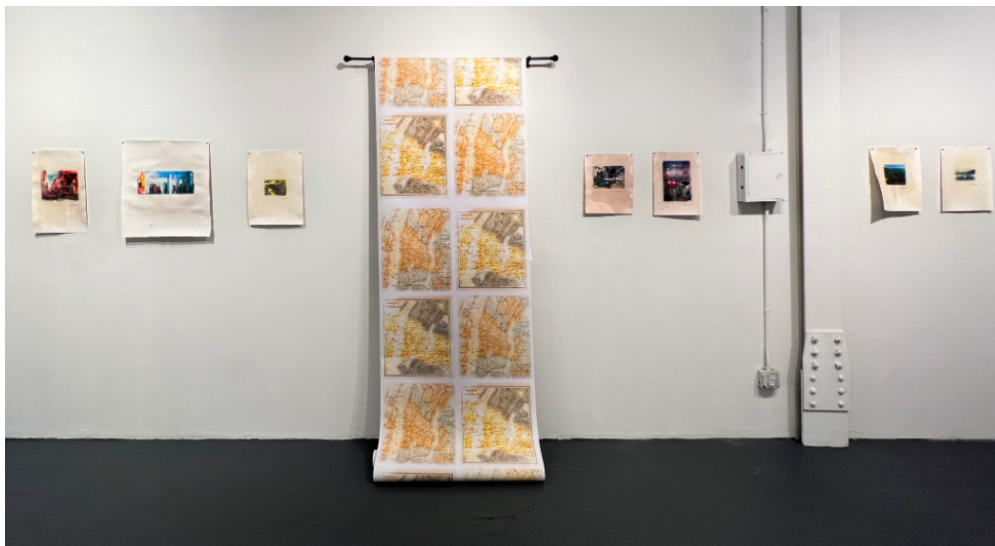


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"THE BEST ART IN THE WORLD"

Citra-Acid Dreams: Tulu Bayar at Amos Eno Gallery



Tulu Bayar. Installation view "Twine," 2023. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

By ANNA MIKAELA EKSTRAND December 28, 2023

Edward Said's "Between Worlds" describes himself, the post-colonial academic, as straddling two worlds without finding belonging in either. Bayar's solo exhibition overcomes Said's dilemma of displacement—center and periphery—simply by coming to terms, accepting comfort and discomfort and multiplicities. In the poetic and meditative work on view at Amos Eno Gallery (<https://www.amoseno.org/>), Bayar has moved away from being "out of place" and embraced multiple places as her home: Turkey and the U.S., more specifically Istanbul, New York, and Lewisburg.

The solo exhibition "Twine" brings together work the artist created in 2023 comprised of smaller Citra acid prints, oversized inkjet scroll prints, an installation alluding coffee and tea drinking to Italo Calvino's continuous cities, and a burlap wall sculpture. The exhibition holds nostalgia, busyness and stillness and is a rhythmic meditation on place.

Interestingly, by evoking the energies of the places and how she feels within them, Bayar manages to convey to the audience her sense of security, or holding of ground, within the two countries.



Tulu Bayar. "At Odds with One Another," 2023. Citra Transfer Print on cotton paper with liquid paste. 14.5 x 5 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Eighteen Citra acid prints from the aggregate of the exhibition; their titles allude to disjointedness and attempts at assimilating, overcoming, clawing, surviving—and, I dare say thriving. “At Odds With One Another,” for instance, shows an apartment building with four colorful umbrellas suspended mid-air, falling—playful for its surreality. But there is something sinister about the image black wisps of ink obfuscating other parts. The colors are poignant and the aesthetic and texture of the print make it feel like they are ripped straight out of a book. The illustrative quality is intriguing as it harkens back to illustrated novels. The upper part of the piece is aggressively scratched at the top and it seems that the artist is simply making her mark.

The artist writes: "The citric photo transfer technique symbolizes the imprint of memory on the self, and the images themselves form a collage of moments that have shaped my immigrant path." Bayar has amassed a vast archive of digital photographs from the U.S. and Turkey in this series, which lay the foundation for these works. The works are then overprinted with a liquid paste created from soil, sand, water, and vegetation from the locations. Importantly, for this body of work that unites land bodies and identities, the Citra acid technique is both sustainable and environmentally friendly.



Tulu Bayar. "Present Marks," 2023. Citra Transfer Print on cotton paper with liquid paste. 7 x 5 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

In "Present Marks" Bayar uses the printed page as a stage to converge elements from the places she calls home: scenes from busy New York and Istanbul streets ornate with American and Turkish flags printed over each other. In both her cultures, Bayar finds a similar fascination with flags. A decidedly calmer work, "Follow the Magic" depicts a lone figure surveying the New York City skyline, from a Brooklyn vantage point. Perhaps it is the artist seeing her future in the 'city of dreams.'

Most striking in size are “Connections,” “Evil Eye,” and “Tale of Two Cities.” These three prints are installed as scrolls hanging vertically from the wall. “Evil Eye” in vibrant purples and patterns creates drama in the room—on its left “Metaphor” the surreal installation centered on the ceremony of quotidian tea and coffee drinking. On white trays installed flat against the walls tea and coffee cups, some on saucers, and mugs are installed protruding from the wall. The artist has culled them from both Istanbul and New York. They are not particularly ornate in their design, but rather regular. However, as the title alludes, they become a metaphor for togetherness, convening, and relaxation, and the bustling cities of Istanbul and New York where tea and coffee are served close to every establishment, another similarity that the artist emphasizes.

Divergent in form and material is “Self,” the crumpled-up piece of burlap. It is beautiful and delicate, funnily it does not feel out of place, rather durable, stable, and a fixture. Burlap can be made out of twine, a catch-all term for durable string, but twine can also bind things together—speaking to how Bayar’s life metaphorically binds Turkey and the U.S. Understatedly, this charismatic sculpture crowns the exhibition, I imagine it announcing: “I am here to stay.”

Tulu Bayar’s solo show Twine was open at Amos Eno Gallery on 56 Bogart Street through December 3, 2023. WM



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Anna Mikaela Ekstrand mediates art through writing, curating, and lecturing. Her art criticism is published in Cultbytes, BOMB, Artspiel, and Artefuse, among others. Her latest books are *Assuming Asymmetries: Conversations on Curating Public Art Projects of the 1980s and 1990s* and *Curating Beyond the Mainstream* both published by Sternberg Press in 2022. She is co-curator of The Immigrant Artist Biennial 2023: Contact Zone and the organization’s Associate Director.

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