

sabo

Time Machine

03.06 - 10.07.2021

VERSUS ART PROJECT

Mine Kaplangı

May, 2021

*“There is no end
To what a living world
Will demand of you.”*

- Parable of the Sower, Octavia Butler

It's 2018, we are on a ferry from Beşiktaş to Arnavutköy with SABO. Our vision is blurry due to an exhibition¹ we are working together, I am telling SABO, with excitement, about the place we found for him. It's noisy. The sound of the sea, the sound of the ferry, the sound of the city are very intertwined, each rising with jealousy against the other, trying to attract our attention. SABO, -always- speaking in a low voice, distant from the chaos, as if the words he will use is presented to him beforehand, one by one explains to me what the subject of the installation will be: *“a virus that affects the residents of the neighborhood and a lone scientist who researches it”*.

We ended up at the door of SABO's studio, grabbing our beers with many artists and collaborators from the exhibition team. We will read on “hauntology”² within the scope of its public program. SABO's studio is also a space that speaks one at a time, very generous and has a sincere attitude which impresses without attracting attention. We crowd around a table; notebooks, SABO's notes, books scattered and neatly waiting on the table. There are paintings and drawings hanging on the wall that seem to be part of an incredible coordination, even though they seem to be adrift. Little notes, familiar names, movie titles, directors ... We look at each other at the table. I am sure in that very second we jumped to this very moment and went back, swallowed and multiplied the value of that moment. We begin to commemorate the texts, firstly a few serious sentences. Names of a few articles that are not fully read. As the conversation relaxed, a list of movies emerged. Scenes from TV series, dialogues, color palettes from movies. *Hauntology* was embodied in us as a highly visual reference. SABO wrote down in his notebook most of the films and scenes mentioned that day.

The year is 2021 and SABO is working on an exhibition about his memoir, his studio, not about the ones left behind, but the places, memories and materials that challenge us to resurrect with their ghosts.

He told me a memory *about the dinosaur under the pillow*, which he remembered from his childhood. I am sure that what he remembers has completely different references to him than what the memory revives in me, but I am left with the part where he says, “I am not sure if it really happened” while describing this memory. Memory is the most powerful mobility I could do in Istanbul; I used to live because I remember. You take notes so you never forget. You scratch

to have a trace at least on the note paper. Some draws, some writes, some paints, some mumbles. With the illusion of “memory” along with SABO’s single maneuver of sentence, I found myself tipsy, chatting with joy at a table. Which studio, which district, which sea, what sound blew over the lost places that day as we talked?

Yesterday, I passed by a bakery while walking down the street, and that smell is always on the left while walking down the slope. I closed my eyes and tried to understand, is it simit, poğaça or çatal³? In the past, I used to hold kandil simidi to my eyes like glasses⁴, create crowds from sesame seeds, and try to focus on the furthest point among those crowds. Then I would gnaw the sesame seeds and try to sharpen the image. Later when I got over this with my mom, she told me we never had such a memory, what a surprise! Was there someone else with me? Have I dreamed of it? Or have we not reached that moment together yet?

Whenever I walk past that bakery, I squint my eyes now; if you are nearsighted and your glasses are not with you, you can squint your eyes and focus further. I’m not sure if I would have accessed this information if I didn’t have glasses.

Visiting exhibitions and reading books are some of the most non-destructive, stomach-friendly and affordable methods of time travelling. The fabric that tries to preserve the memory of SABO’s studio accompanied me to Grayson Perry’s colourful, screaming carpet and print works⁵. In order not to forget, the details of the moments Perry woven on these works would take you to other time periods and I remember entering another house with each carpet. What were they cooking in that house, what are the smells in front of the window, which cigarette they smoke, the knowledge of all is hidden in their colours.

Then, as you walk out of the exhibitions and down the alleys, you see a fist stencil quickly made out of white paint. It does not make you wonder what it’s revolt is; it is just always there. It interferes with the other cries and secret loves beside him, but is not pale. When was it drawn, who drew it, what paint was used, were they hungry, what was their favourite song they were listening to while working?

Nowadays, some books are being made, pages on top of each other, as if they are not read layer by layer but toured. It consists of notes that are not a substitute for keeping a diary, so as not to forget and to remember. (SPOILER ALERT) In an exquisite scene in *Los Cronocrímenes*⁶, when the man running towards the unknown with binoculars in hand meets the unknown who glances back at him, then he understands that he can travel in time. When can we travel in time in this city? What is this sound that I hear every time I walk through this square?

what if not double but multiple
Could he said

we started to climb the stairs one by one
we are too crowded to be silent

drink milk
comes a whisper from the window
cut
from the crevice of the iron molding
i turned my head
Galata tower in front of us
Yedikule Dungeons beside us
three hundred people almost equal to one
when time wraps
your voice
shrinks
Impasse (does not come out / not heard)
must
find
another
way
To tell
almost
a
disease⁷

*Is it possible to create a slippery collective space in
memory, searching for a more fluid meaning, rather than
getting lost alone in back and forth journeys in time?*

Do you have to stop by the library? I don't understand what you're saying, you are talking like whispering?

You have to come with me when we get in.

Why can't I just wait at the cafe? I don't want to pretend to be interested, furtively.

You can do whatever you want, but you will be lost if you don't walk with me. It is quite difficult to get back where you started.

I guess you can be the only one who would want to get back to where you started.

Why? Wouldn't you try to find where you started if you went to another dimension and got lost in their mazes⁸?

It must be the last concern of anyone who gets into the library and gets lost in the mazes to be at the starting point.

Then wait here, I'm going.

The idea of time *travel* must have an addictive side. It is not important whether a portal is opened accidentally in front of us. Still I guess what is also important is when we start thinking about "time travel" apart from the potentials and possibilities. It's not like traveling to the future, to the past, to another perception of time, but more like being unable to stand the present. Wondering another possibility, not being content with the present and trying to be satisfied with the "now".

(SPOILER ALERT) In the movie "Coherence"⁹, the ordinariness of the items on the table prevents the viewer from looking carefully at them, but when we look carefully at the film frames and dive into the details as if walking through an exhibition, we see that the items on the table are different from each other in each frame. Interestingly, no *dejavu* is experienced in parallel universe references, no one can find themselves the same. Even though their bodies look "similar", we find ourselves floating between differences and fluid possibilities. For this reason, it is very enjoyable to imagine these possibilities, to travel between possible worlds and sit at those tables. Not to be misunderstood, the director has very little hope for human beings; he shows us the cruellest faces of all the characters in Coherence. But looking from a different perspective, for some reason, it relieves me of being able to remember and get back to this movie.

Some streets of Istanbul are still able to hold together all possible scenarios, the ghosts of the past and the rebellions of the future. It reminds you where you are and makes you forget within seconds. You need to focus on graffiti on the walls, memory, smells, or what you hold in your hand to get back to that moment. Unauthorized memories are painted on your body, and you wonder whether you want to wear them for a long time. Then you suddenly realize that each pattern embroidered on the skin looks like a stain from the outside, depending on the operation of another mechanism¹⁰. You close your eyes, thinking *I hope the naughty one wins*; you scratch your arm.

An anonymous letter from the unknown

Dear reader,

I thought of you today while I was taking notes on disappointment.

I am so ashamed.

¹Ghosts, See. <https://collectivecukurcuma.com/2018/04/07/ghosts-i-hayaletler/>

² *Hauntology* is a concept that Derrida mentions in his 1993 book *Specters of Marx*. In the book, Derrida mentions that what goes on between life and death cannot be understood only by life or death alone, what is in between, even what is in between all dualities, must be evaluated. In fact, perhaps what we really need to focus on is the ghosts in the spectrum that connect all the dualities of the past and the future, exist and absent, self and the other, male and female. Derrida, who often refers to Shakespeare when conceptualizing these ghosts, explores ghosts between being and not being, specifically referencing Hamlet, and recommends a new reading of Marxism with multiple souls.

³Simit (Turkish bagel with sesame seeds); Poğaç (local salty and buttery small bread); Çatal (Salty Turkish pastry with sesame seeds)

⁴ See. Mona Hatoum's 1996 dated work *Deep Throat*

⁵ Grayson Perry: *Small Differences*, Pera Museum, 2015

⁶ See. *Timecrimes* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0480669/>

⁷ See "It Sucks To Be You" series

⁸ See. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

⁹ See. *Coherence*, 2013 <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2866360/> See. Marco Donnarumma's *Corpus Nil* (2016) titled artwork <https://marcodonnarumma.com/works/corpus-nil/>

¹⁰ See. Marco Donnarumma's *Corpus Nil* (2016) titled artwork <https://marcodonnarumma.com/works/corpus-nil/>





sabo

Time Machine, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

170 x 170 cm

VERSUS ART PROJECT

www.versusartproject.com | info@versusartproject.com

Time Machine

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Time Machine, 2019

Sanatçı Kitabı

Artist Book

El Yapımı, Kalın Kapak

Handmade, Hardcover

30 Sayfa | Pages

50 x 35 cm

6 Ed.

Time Machine

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DOĞA VE DOĞA'NIN
YASALARI GECENİN
İÇİNDE SAKLIYDI:

YASTIK
ALTI
DINOZORLU



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Be Back In 10 Mins, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

164 x 96 cm

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Time Machine, 2020

Kanvas Bezi Üzerine

Akrilik ve Suluboya

Acrylic and Watercolour

on Canvas Fabric

210 x 280 cm



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Don't Give Up The Ship, 2020

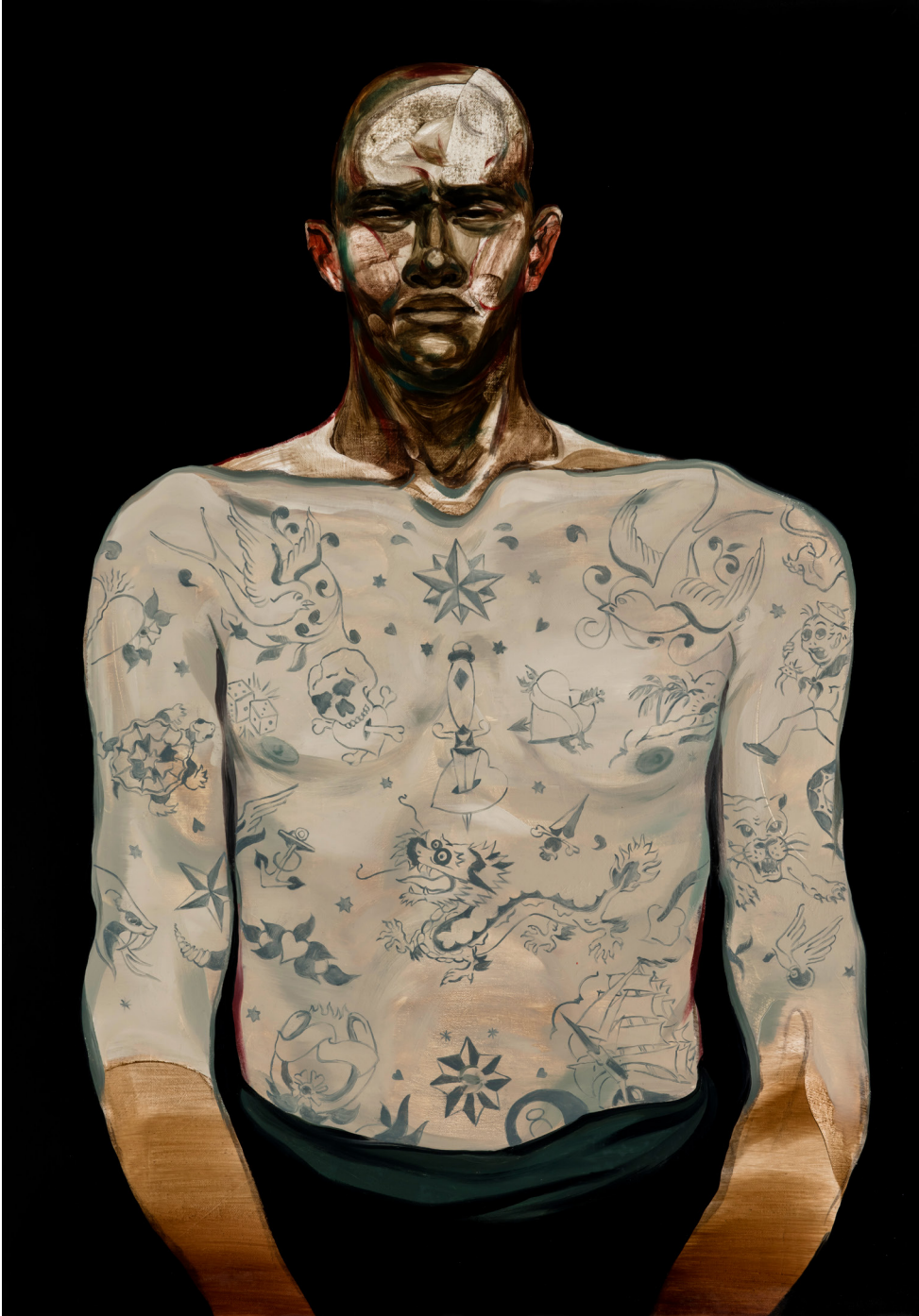
Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

100 x 70 cm

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Don't Give Up The Ship, 2020

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

100 x 70 cm

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Don't Give Up The Ship, 2020

Seramik, Sir

Ceramic, Glaze

28 x 15 cm

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Be Back In 10 Mins, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

70 x 50 cm

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Be Back In 10 Mins, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

70 x 50 cm



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sabo

Be Back In 10 Mins, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

70 x 50 cm

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Boşuna Gitti, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

50 x 40 cm



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Boşuna Gitti, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

Oil on Canvas

130 x 170 cm

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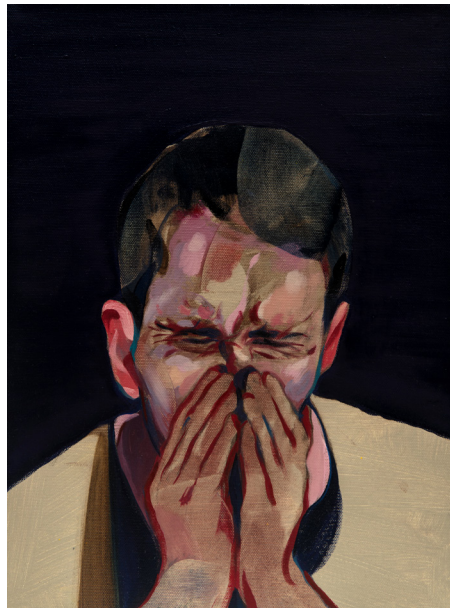
sabo

It Sucks To Be You, 2019

Tuval Üzerine Yağlıboya

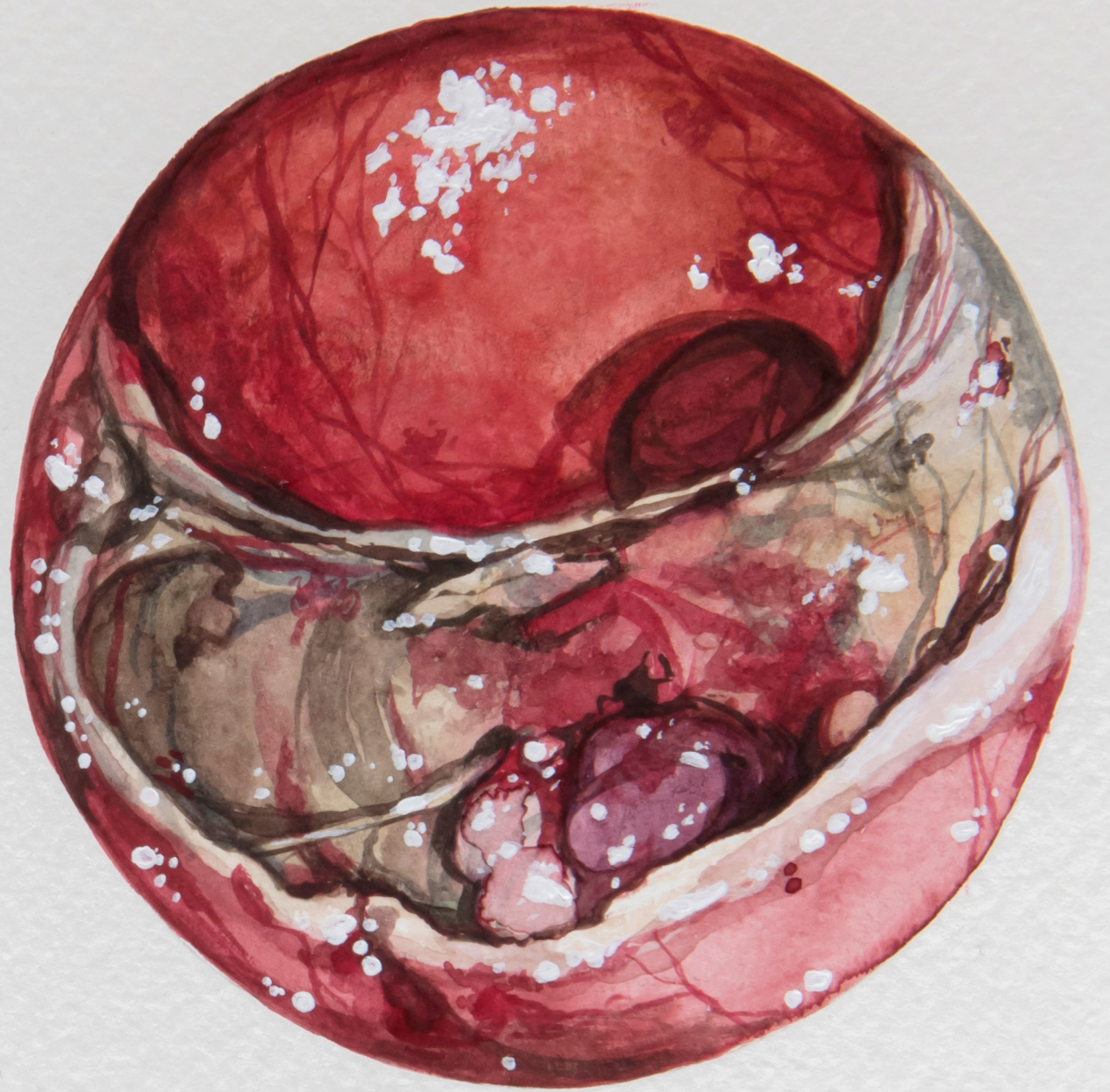
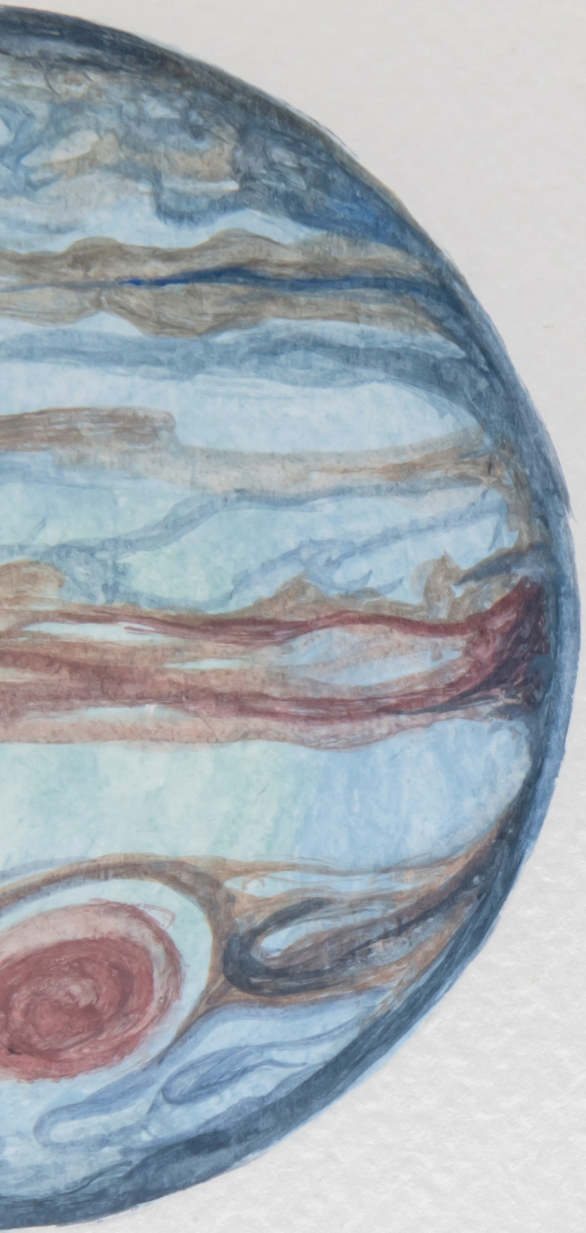
Oil on Canvas

40 x 30 cm



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Time Machine, 2020

Kağıt Üzerine Suluboya, Ahşap Çerçevesi

Watercolour on Paper, Wooden Framed

60 x 75 cm



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sabo

Time Machine, 2020

Kağıt Üzerine Suluboya, Ahşap Çerçevesi

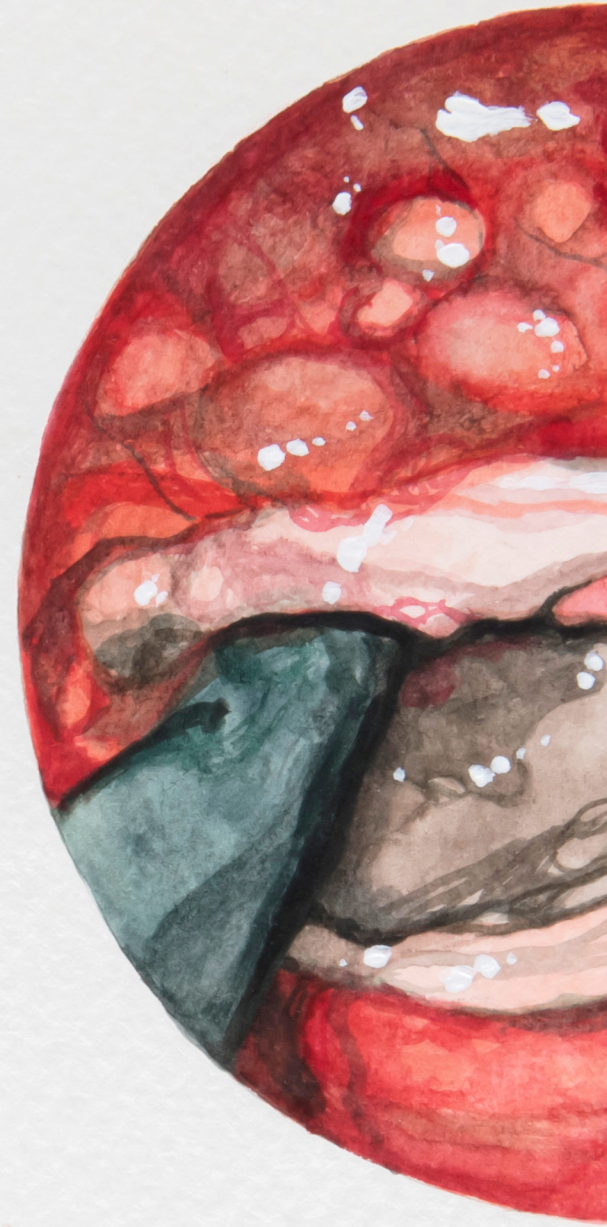
Watercolour on Paper, Wooden Framed

60 x 75 cm



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Melis Bektaş

May, 2021

“Time Machine” exhibition; involves the fiction, movement, aura and irony which you will see at every creation of Sabo. The exhibition; It is set up by raising the fist in the air, by a walk that begins from unknown, by a reaction, by the stars that have already been extinguished, by the traces that continue to be engraved on the body, by putting its history on a map, and by books reproduced away from the machine. Sabo’s sketchbooks and drawings are the starting point of the exhibition. In this exhibition that will continue the movement in your gaze and mind; We accept the synchronicity of past, present and future tenses that can be viewed at any time.

Let’s consider the places and spaces that have been left behind, transformed, destroyed and rebuilt. In the body, in the place, in the felt space; Let’s think about the time that we experience with the change of color, smell, skin. While the word “place” is rooted in Arabic as “created thing”, it means “emptiness, space” in Latin. While Sabo establishes a language for his work by playing with words and letters, he also questions our view of what he has created. Do you consider the places where you live, walk, and the planets you don’t know as emptiness, or do you see them as something created and establish a careful relationship? In his watercolor paintings, which he named “İkili Dünyalar” (Dual Worlds) in the exhibition; “I see these planets, that are lived and died in different time periods, as possible depictions of the future and the past,” he says, and invents new names that originate from the combination of star names which are coming from Arabic origin and bacteria names of Latin origin. While he is fiction, this time he activates a surprise sense and makes people watch possible stories lived in these double worlds with the method I prefer to call sound collage. A distance emerges between what you see in the video, the associations it creates and what you listen to, and at the same time a bond establishes. Being able to watch the worlds he has created in different rhythms at the same time without trying to catch any of them, while everything is happening simultaneously, turns into a ritual. The aura of these planets takes the viewer to his multiple works and the method of making Artist Book, which is also included in the exhibition.

Aura; firstly used by Walter Benjamin in his 1936 article *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin argued that ‘even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be’ located.’ He called this cultural context, it’s ‘presence in time and space’, as ‘aura’. We come across the 6-edition Artist Book, which Sabo created by staying away from the machine and that are rooted from his sketches and all reproduced by hand. They are all copies of one another, but they are all separated from each other by their auras. Just as in the video, the visuals flowing in the same rhythm and the changing sounds appear together, here you see the same books, but behind all of them some other sound plays. A line starts from a different place, different things are considered, there is a difference between the pleasure of the first and the last. While we think we are seeing the same thing, with these books Sabo starts the journey in the mind and time.

Time is relative, it changes as we move, the only constant is the speed of light. This light is what allows us to see, and sometimes darkens everything. When you think of memory as a light in time, here, what Sabo does is to turn this light on as much as he wants to show. Everything was not as you remember. Since we were born, we forget, we remember wrongly, we explain incompletely, we put it on and write it at length. Because we need connection. Life is built with connections. So, where does an artist's attitude stand in this? What kind of road is to take starting from here? Sabo hears a sound, captures a line, takes an image, remembers something he touched, then he accumulates these and hides somewhere in his art as in this exhibition, fills in some gaps and causes you to turn a light on in your own time.

Momentary thoughts, fine lines between reality and fiction, subjective desires, connections established with old and new series that salute each other have a great place in Sabo's artistic attitude. He carries the traditional practice he learned outside from the canvas and carries it beyond the peinture that the eyes are accustomed to. Every piece you see is part of a whole, none of them are alone and they are the best example of time travel. This journey is not just about going to the past and getting back here. What you see is a part of a painting he is going to make in the future, and a part of the story that he will show. We can think of the diversity of materials and methods in his fiction with reference to the Ortak Salon (2014) exhibition, as well as remembering the Paracetamol (2019) exhibition we can read the relationship of the artist's imagery world in relation with time and the familiar story he leaves for every eye that looks at the "Time Machine". The time machine takes action in the painting that gives the exhibition its name. Sabo, in his solo exhibition titled 'Time Machine'; creates a fictional cycle by using pieces from his own life with the aura of time and space; the artist's imagination reminds of the irony of time.

Sabo's productions are autobiographical and since we, as viewers, are at a relatively small point of its content, it walks the path between what we can feel and what we cannot feel, and takes firm steps towards us. "Our journey, which can evolve despite everything and manage to keep up with every environment, continues its journey with the series "Boşuna Gitti"; says Sabo. The bells have been ringing for a long time, it is not known where the road started, but it is quickly coming to an end. This walk and evolution offer a perspective that includes diversity over time. The humane gap between expectation and satisfaction, the fundamental problem of the mediated nature of our experiences, governs our movement. Mistakes begin, paths are missed, healing struggles are also entered into, but from here, we have actually walked for a long time in a layered and repetitive field. Sabo activates the idea of our roots and thenadays with the fiction of "Boşuna Gitti".

Everything animates or encodes something else. Lifting a fist in the "Be Back in 10 Min." series means something different every time. These separately lifted fists remind us of being together. To be free, we must be able to question how our own history defines us. Our history is full of familiar struggles and repetitions from other histories. Even if raising these fists involves the feeling of victory, a voice and a unity, it is also a reminder of the extinction of the world of millions of people, a reminder of our insignificance and shortness. It combines the past and conditions that multiply, reduce, dissolve and displace us, and turn them into a path that all people can take. "Burying their dead relatives, painting, doing non-beneficial actions, performing some ritualistic behaviors, all these actions mean discovering the concept of time; means placing yourself in a universe." – Hubert Reeves

Then something unexpected happens, the one that was left behind returns, the unpredictable happens, and the inner monologue comes into play. "During this journey through time and in the history of humanity, the great wars, epics, success stories, incurable diseases and tragic deaths caught my attention. The uncertainty and uneasiness of the time people are in are in the foreground in this series. I'm trying to get rid of it like it's a disease." Sabo, here, sets up a performance with every figure in his paintings with expressions without the need to make eye contact. Even if at first glance they all look like the one next to them, their actions, ways of struggle, and their methods of dealing with the difficulties they are drawn into create a geography on each face. And it reminds you that the person next to you is also responsible for the disease you are trying to get rid of.

Sabo's works reflect the aspects and orientations of his life at the time they were made. He does not hesitate to leave traces and reproduce these. They're like snapshots, capturing small parts that come across and then presenting them without judgement. Often these pieces occur without a specific context and find their own way. In any scene of life, a dialogue or a dream creates an instant enlightenment, even if it has little meaning. Just like encountering Sabo's works. This also salutes to the Epiphany used by James Joyce in his works. The names of the works, their starting points, their continuity; It is possible to say that they intersect with other disciplines such as literature, theater and cinema which feed off each other. This is how it begins to become familiar with Sabo's works.

Every time you remember a memory, it is different from the previous one, it is lacking, exceeded. We don't feel time, but what we feel is the change. In order not to get lost, we produce historical categories, look for maps, escape routes and solutions. Oftentimes support is needed. The artist creates this support within his own borders with his production. When closing a door, thinking about who or what passed there reminds us how the time passed. When Sabo leaves his space, he takes a timeline and a fabric curtain that he has worked with like a compass. "Throughout my journey, I will try not to get lost between times and worlds with this map." - Sabo

In his works, Sabo gives some signs that only those who are thrown into the world can catch. The contradiction, complexity and joy of the world seem to come from a familiar hand. Short-term thoughts, inspirations, readings, and the power of all the pieces that come together in the face of what is watched turn into what Sabo presents us. Is this disaster or salvation that we walk through? What kind of a movement is there between your struggle, your finite repetitions, your foundations and what you are trying to preserve? What is it like to exist in this time, as if it could be compared to another time? There is a power in your body, in a sentence that stays in your mind, in a memory you make, in the door that was closed for the last time. Is it too late to hear the bells as life turns into an infection? Where in time does a planet, whose light is dazzling today, but which has already disappeared, illuminate?

You meet and unite with the artist and his works in an effort to create a point of view, build rapport. Then what you see actually takes another form, that's how irony emerges. Sabo allows you to merge with his work, and you go beyond the game and meaning he established when you enact this bond. You manipulate what you see, transforming it into a form you have never encountered before. When you try to see by feeling, you find something new. The series created by Sabo turns into a ritual that will take you on a journey while standing where you are with the memories, references, ideas, a flow and rhythm he

placed in. This is the move I was talking about from the very beginning. His figures, paintings, ceramics, video, fabric map, all continue to maintain their own movement. This exhibition is not a recreation area. Sabo created this selection by blending his observations of human nature with his own. While giving signs that he expects you to find and hopes you don't see, your time travel will continue with the works whose references come from themselves.



SABO (1988, İstanbul)

Although figures play a prominent role in the work of the artist, the space and its surrounding elements contribute to the narrative as much as the figures do. Each touch on the canvas is enriching, contributing to the completion of the work as a whole.

The work of SABO is fantastical and fictional; the audience is first invited into the storyline by the figures, and throughout the journey, the spectator follows a path complemented by detailed spaces and objects. This journey is anything but single dimensional as it feeds off of the spectator's own imagination, and creates alternative storylines accordingly. Thus, the initial narrative created by the artist becomes richer in time.

SABO completed his Undergraduate studies in Mimar Sinan University Faculty of Fine Arts Painting Department. He currently continues his work and life in İstanbul.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 - Time Machine
Versus Art Project, İstanbul, Turkey

2019 - PARACETAMOL
Versus Art Project, İstanbul, Turkey

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 - Beyond Vision
Vision Art Platform, İstanbul, Turkey

2019 - Versus Art Project, Contemporary İstanbul Art Fair, İstanbul, Turkey

2019 - Paper, A Selection of Turkish Contemporary Art
Pilevneli Project, İstanbul, Turkey

2018 - (ECZANE)
Red Bull Art Around, Arnavutköy / Ghosts, İstanbul, Turkey

2018 - Positive Space
American Hospital Operation Room Art Gallery, İstanbul, Turkey

2017 - Signs of Time, 'BAHAR' (Spring)
The İstanbul Off-site Project for Sharjah Biennial 13, İstanbul, Turkey

2017 - In a Break in Life
Adahan Gallery -1, İstanbul, Turkey

2017 - YARIN
Gaia Gallery, İstanbul, Turkey

2016 - Design Bay
Contemporary İstanbul Art Fair, İstanbul, Turkey

2016 - The Mystery of Figure
Plato Sanat, İstanbul, Turkey

2016 - MASTURBATION
Mixer Gallery, İstanbul, Turkey

2015 - Alice
Maumau-Space Debris-Studio Kein, İstanbul, Turkey

- 2015 - Signs of Time
Contemporary Istanbul Art Fair, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2015 - Signs of Time, 'Cross the Earth Her Head is on the Balcony'
Pi Artworks, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2014 - Signs of Time
Contemporary Istanbul Art Fair, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2014 - ParlorParty
Gallery Tankut Aykut, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2014 - Signs of Time II, 'Outher / Dream'
Adahan Gallery -1, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2013 - First Viewing
artSümer, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2013 - Essl Art Award CEE
Tophane-I Amire, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2012 - Rome-Foggia Fine Arts University Printing Exhibition
Beyoglu Art Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2011 - Il Segno Condiviso
CKSM Art Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2011 - Rome Engraving
Izmir, Turkey
- 2010 - Artist2010
20th Istanbul Art Fair, Istanbul, Turkey

- 2010 - Mostra di Incisione
(Accademia Belle Arti Roma), Rome, Italy
- 2009 - Transform in Art Education
Tophane-I Amire, Istanbul, Turkey

ARTIST TALKS

- 2019 - 'PARACETAMOL' Artist Talk, Versus Art Project, Istanbul, Turkey
SABO, Sena, Huo RF and Burak Ata (Moderator - Ela Atakan)
- 2018 - 'GHOSTS' Artist Talk, Red Bull Art Around, Arnavutköy, Istanbul, Turkey
Bahar Yürükoğlu, SABO, Eda Aslan, Pınar Marul, Ilgın Seymen,
Collective Çukurcuma (Naz Cuguoğlu, Mine Kaplangı, Serhat Cacekli)
- 2016 - 'The Mystery of Figure' Artist Talk, Plato Sanat, Istanbul, Turkey
Mustafa Akkaya, Volkan Kızıltunç, SABO, (Moderator - Marcus Graf)
- 2015 - 'Alice' Artist Talk, Maumau-Space Debris-Studio Kein, Istanbul, Turkey
Rafet Arslan, Fulya Çetin, Itır Demir, Cansu Gürsu, SABO,
Gülhatun Yıldırım, (Moderator - Özge Ersoy, Lara Ögel)
- 2015 - Signs of Time, 'Cross the Earth Her Head is on the Balcony' Artist Talk,
Pi Artworks, Istanbul, Turkey
Sena, Burak Ata, SABO, Huo RF, Burak Dak, Nihat Karataşlı
(Moderator - Hande Oynar)

ARTIST BOOKS / PUBLICATIONS

- 2019 - Time Machine
Istanbul, Turkey, Artist Book

- 2019 - PARACETAMOL
Istanbul, Turkey, Exhibition Book, published by Versus Art Project
- 2018 - Black Book
Istanbul, Turkey, Artist Book
- 2015 - Signs of Time
Berlin, Germany, Berlin Book
- 2015 - Berlin
Berlin, Germany, Artist Book
- 2014 - Signs Of Time, Outer / Dream
Istanbul, Turkey, Exhibition Book published by Bilgi Publish Center
- 2014 - (EVE) Virus
Istanbul, Turkey, Artist Book



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