



WHAT TIME IS IT?

Curators:
EMRE BAYKAL, EDA BERKMEN

13.09.2019-09.02.2020

GALLERY 3 and 4

INTRODUCTION BY THE CURATORS

A decade has passed since we settled in the hundred-year-old building at number 211 Istiklal Street in Beyoğlu, Istanbul, which served as Arter's first venue. Throughout those years, we, as the Arter team, have collectively brought to life 35 exhibitions and 37 publications along with the artists and supported the production of 183 new works while witnessing political and social changes both in Turkey and the rest of the world, which had a profound impact on us all. In the meantime, we also continued to enhance and expand our collection. Now, as we move into the new building in Dolapdere designed by Grimshaw Architects, we are dreaming about the future of Arter and making plans, keeping its past in mind. All the while racing against the clock... Really, what time is it now?

So many times we ask that question to ourselves and to others every day: What time is it? Sleepily when we first wake up, reluctantly just before we leave the house, hurriedly as we try to get somewhere on time, worriedly as a deadline approaches, impatiently towards the end of a working day, exhaustedly before we go to bed... In so much as this simple, ordinary question marks the exact moment we are in, its perpetual repetition throughout daily life, its grip over the past and the future from its position right in the middle of them, and the way it maintains the unity of time as a whole by expanding within itself, devouring periods, years, and centuries came into play when we named the exhibition, which has been assembled from works in the collection.

As we are now preparing to share again with the audience, at least in part, the collection that we have been putting together since 2007, a part of which we displayed at the inauguration of Arter in 2010, and then waited for the construction of the new building to show again, one of our sources of inspiration was Cengiz Çekil's work entitled *What Time Is It?* (2008). Bringing to the fore many issues and questions, such as the pressure of time in modern urban life, the obsessive relationship we establish with the clock, the measurement of time, the power of the media to shape the times we live in, the connection we make with the passage of time particular to our location, and the relationship of a work of art with its time, Çekil's work also came to lend its name to the exhibition.

Featured in the inaugural programme of Arter's new building, the group exhibition entitled *What Time Is It?* brings together works that invite viewers to contemplate the concepts of time, space, and memory. Exploring the meanings they generate in different contexts and the interaction they establish with one another and with themes

such as everyday objects, home, personal and collective histories, inside and outside, urban rhythms, architecture, archaeology, borders and migration, the exhibition includes 44 works by 34 artists. Many of these works will also revive the institutional memory in the new space they are placed; as they may be remembered from exhibitions Arter has held in the past: such as *Frosted Glass* from Deniz Gül's exhibition *5 Person Bufet* (2011), pieces from Aslı Çavuşoğlu's exhibition *The Stones Talk* (2013) that have been adapted to this new space, and *3-D Cities* from Mona Hatoum's exhibition *You Are Still Here* (2012). Other works, on the other hand, will refresh our memory from within a much broader temporal and spatial framework: Sarkis's installation *Çaylak Sokak*, one of the cornerstones of contemporary art in Turkey, which was first displayed at Maçka Art Gallery in 1986; Hale Tenger's installation entitled *We didn't go inside; we were always on the inside / We didn't go outside; we were always on the outside*, which was shown at the Antrepo building during the 4th International Istanbul Biennial in 1995; Sigmar Polke's *Potato House* (1967) featured at the Fluxus exhibition entitled *A Long Story with a Lot of Twists* at the Atatürk Cultural Centre the very same year before the biennial; or Ayşe Erkmen's *On the House* (Am Haus), which she installed on a building in Kreuzberg for the exhibition *İskele* (Pier, 1994), and which still remains on display.

Sprawled across two galleries centred around the same atrium and visually connected to one another, as well as the urban landscape and the sky outside through an open staircase, architectural voids, and large windows, *What Time Is It?* does not follow a chronological nor a linear narrative; but rather traces the dialogue the works maintain with each other and the architectural space they inhabit, the new meanings born out of this interaction, and the different forms of associations they establish. Designed to offer both a horizontal and a vertical exhibition experience using the architectural features of the space, *What Time Is It?* also aims to build a spatial and temporal experience in which the boundaries between the interior and the exterior, the private and the public, the fictional and the real, the present and the future are blurred.

DENİZ GÜL

1982, Izmir (Turkey)



Frosted Glass 2011 [2019]

Yellow frosted glass with honeycomb pattern, TV monitor
197 x 91 cm

Frosted Glass was one of the pieces in the installation of Deniz Gül's solo exhibition *5 Person Bufet*, curated by Emre Baykal in 2011 and later added to the Arter Collection in its entirety. As in many of Gül's works, *5 Person Bufet* begins from a text the artist wrote to confront questions regarding borders, geography, inside and outside, domestic life and forms of power, language, expression, and narrative. It offers a space of experience in which the claustrophobia of intimate, enclosed, small spaces coexists with the agoraphobia of stepping out, of moving beyond oneself. The main body of the project consisted of five pieces of furniture that embodied the five characters in the text, along with the pieces of glass embellished with geometrical motifs that were placed over the space's windows. The exhibition ended with a frosted glass door to an interior space that was not possible to open. Now installed at the entrance of *What Time Is It?*, the honeycomb patterned yellow frosted glass is found at the end of a gradually narrowing, short corridor, and though it is illuminated by the ever-changing images and colours of the television silently playing, the secret of what is happening behind the glass is never revealed.

HÜSEYİN BAHİRİ ALPTEKİN

1957, İzmir (Turkey) – 2007, İstanbul (Turkey)

Defining himself as a nomad and an urban shaman, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin was interested in his art practice during the 1990s in themes like the transmission and circulation of images and objects among cultures. He produced a personal archive consisting of photographs, notes, and collected objects from his voyages, which served as a resource for his works. His installation *Capacity* brings together photographs of signs on storefronts and cheap hotels that named themselves after various cities around the world. The artist begins this project by photographing hotels in Tarlabası and Laleli that bear names like Dallas or Washington, and expands his archive to different places during his travels over the years. *Capacity* forms a visual language of belonging and exile, migration and globalization, documenting the temporary spaces that migrants often use and inhabit.



Capacity, 2003

Digital prints

139 x 847 cm

Ed. 1/3 + 2 AP

İZ ÖZTAT

1981, Istanbul (Turkey)



Constituting an Island, 2014

Video (colour, silent)

146"

Ed. 2/5 + 1 AP

In her artistic production spanning different media, İz Öztat deals with the effects and operations of memory, myth, and official narratives. She discusses how these fields define reality and fiction and establish hierarchies between them, and in so doing exercise power historically and socially. Öztat produces most of her works through long-term research, following a form, a concept, a story, or a current political agenda in order to keenly examine concepts of spiritual or physical contact, encounter, and distance in her work, both in terms of forms and the materials she uses. Since 2010, she has been working in a collaboration antithetical to time, with Zişan (1894-1970) who appears to her as a historical figure, a channelled spirit and an alter-ego. In their collaborative work, they recognize the return of the suppressed past, negotiating official narratives through the alternative possibilities offered by fiction.

Having come across Zişan's utopian short story *Cezire-i Cennet/Cinnet* (Island of Paradise/Possessed, 1915-1917), Öztat searches for Ada Kaleh, which inspired this text. Ada Kaleh, the last Ottoman territory in the Balkans in 1915, was submerged with the construction of the Iron Gates hydroelectric plant in 1968. This video installation, *Constituting an Island*, is part of a larger body of work, and it marks the absence of the island through the collective movement of canoes.

NAM JUNE PAIK

1932, Seoul (South Korea) – 2006, Miami (USA)

Considered a pioneer of video art, Nam June Paik produced various video sculptures that transformed TV sets into a medium of art by distorting their usual functions of entertainment and information. First, he manipulated and distorted the images on television screens, but by 1965, he became one of the first artists to experiment with the medium of video.

Paik's *French Clock TV* is a video sculpture dealing with the perception and measurement of time. It is composed of three TVs, a wall clock and a closed-circuit camera. The clock is hung on the wall, in the 12 o'clock position. Three TVs are installed around it at the respective coordinates of 3, 6, and 9 o'clock. Time is ticking away and the pendulum motion is live-fed into the TVs on the wall around the clock. Through the work, time becomes fragmented, fractured and materialised into its constitutive pieces. With this technological intervention, Paik transforms temporality into a sculptural video object.



French Clock TV, 1989

Pendulum wall clock, 3 monitors,
3 wooden boards, video camera with
tripod, transformers, electric cable
Approx. 260 x 140 x 200 cm

JONAS MEKAS

1922, Semeniškiai (Lithuania) – 2019, New York (USA)

Regarded as one of the most influential figures of avant-garde cinema, Jonas Mekas was interested in his works in the essence of the present time and place, though they also give weight to history and memory. He transformed little fragments of everyday reality, with very little to no interventions or editing, into a mixture of personal experience, documentary, and narration.

The video presented in this exhibition revisits places Mekas lived in Germany between 1944 and 1949. Born in a small village in Lithuania, Jonas Mekas and his younger brother Adolfas were arrested and deported to a forced labour camp in Hamburg during the Nazi occupation. They escaped eight months later, hiding in a farm near the Danish border until the war ended. They lived in a series of temporary refugee camps for four years until they arrived in New York in 1949. In *Reminiscenzen aus Deutschland* (Reminiscences from Germany), Mekas uses footage from 1971 and 1973 shot by himself and his brother Adolfas. He travels to Elmshorn, Flensburg, Wiesbaden, Mainz, and Kassel: the places where he spent five years of his life, first as a forced labourer, and later as a displaced person. With voice-over, he recounts his own story in a non-chronological manner and incorporates features of diarist cinema, presenting an intimate first-person narrative that oscillates between poetry, fiction, and documentary.

Jonas Mekas' series of photographs entitled *Images out of Darkness* are also on view in this exhibition. These photographs, taken somewhere between arrival and departure, are exhibited in a corridor, a place of passage, neither inside nor outside; they show the artist, his brother, and their friends doing everyday activities while waiting to be transported to the next camp.



Reminiscences from Germany, 2012

Video (colour, sound)

25'

Ed. 1/3 + 2 AP

Images out of Darkness, 2012

Inkjet digital prints from 16 mm film

17 pieces from a set of 24 prints;

56 x 43.5 cm each

Ed. 4/5 + 2 AP

NİL YALTER

1938, Cairo (Egypt)

Over the 40 years of her artistic practice, Nil Yalter has recorded the people who live on the margins of the secure spaces designated by the powerful. In her artistic production, she explores the struggles and living spaces of marginalised people, especially workers, women, and immigrants. After moving to Paris in 1965, the artist became involved in the revolutionary movement there, and her work from that era bears the traces of her critical approach to gender roles and norms as well as how the women's liberation movement perceives the body.

Constituting a turning point in Yalter's practice, *Deniz Gezmiş* is the first work in which she brought together found materials, text, and performance, and it is also the first work in which the artist directly addressed a political subject. *Deniz Gezmiş* is comprised of photographs and acrylic paintings on paper that Yalter created in the small room in Istanbul where she lived during the time leading up to the executions of Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Aslan. The artist rented a similar room upon her subsequent return to Paris, arranging it in a similar manner to the room in Istanbul, thus creating a space of contemplation as an "act of presence". In this series of paintings, the circular stains of acrylic and silver mark the lives of Gezmiş, Aslan and İnan on butcher's paper. The circles fade and hollow as the line of death approaches. The passage of time leading up to the executions is charted on paper in centimetres. They engrave the tragedy on both the artist's and the viewer's memory, becoming an exercise in unforgetting.



Deniz Gezmiş, 1972

6 paintings, acrylic, rubber-stamped ink and pencil on butchers' paper: 106 x 71 cm
1 panel with photographs, pencil and clay: 105 x 42 cm

VLATKA HORVAT

1974, Čakovec (Croatia)

The series *The Past Is Another Country* consists of Vlatka Horvat's interventions into historical family photographs taken in socialist Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s. The artist crops, folds, and displaces images of her mother in these photographs in order to present them in new spatial and environmental situations and establish new relationships among photographic space, setting, and the figure itself. Presenting archival and historical documents in a fragmented and restructured manner, Horvat foregrounds the illusive character of individual and social memory. In this series, the artist creates gaps and dislocations that refer to the obliteration, negation, substitution, and transformation of memories, events, and documents out of the need to manipulate and construct a coherent and continuous narrative, thus further complicating the possibilities of a historical image.



The Past is Another Country 06, 09, 03, 08, 2015

Inkjet photograph mounted on board

29.7 × 21 cm each

AHMET DOĐU İPEK

1983, Adıyaman (Turkey)

A series of black squares painted in watercolour on paper, *Black Water Records – Days* is a visual diary of Ahmet DoĐu İpek’s performance between July 2016 and March 2017, maintained on a daily basis over many months and accompanied by a pessimistic mood and social tensions. During this time, the artist dropped black watercolour on white paper, transforming it patiently into a black square only by moving the paper and without using any other tool. At the end of this meditative process, the artist had produced a series of 157 pieces. Bearing witness to the days on which they were created, each square has a different surface texture and a unique shade of black although they resemble one another.

Exhibited inside a wooden box for the exhibition at Arter, *Days* also incorporates a daily performance to be realised during the exhibition as a reminder of the performative nature of the work’s creation. Ahmet DoĐu İpek stops by Arter every evening before the exhibition closes and replaces the page of the series, pinned to the wall on display, with another one waiting in the box. Thus, *Days* incorporates the time of the exhibition, recording it like a diary and starting each day with a new page.



Black Water Records – Days, 2017

Watercolour on paper

127 pieces; 39 × 33 cm each

30 pieces; 26 × 19 cm each

FÜSUN ONUR

1938, Istanbul (Turkey)

One of the pioneers of contemporary art in Turkey, Füsün Onur's artistic practice spans more than half a century, from the 1960s to the present. Onur graduated from the Department of Sculpture at Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts in 1957 and continued her art education in the US. Her works focus on form, space, time, and the relations between these concepts. As the diversity of materials multiplied in the artist's production, her work expanded to include everyday, narrative, and even autobiographical elements. In the 1980s, Onur used ordinary, everyday materials to explore the relationship between painting and frame and between sculpture and painting, developing a highly idiosyncratic language that eradicates the borders between these categories. *What Time Is It?* includes three works by the artist from the Arter Collection.

In the first of two paintings from 1983, the canvas gains form and texture by being folded and knotted; it is pulled to the side of the frame like a curtain to reveal a white, empty landscape. In the other piece, titled *July*, Onur opens a triangular window on the surface of the canvas and then covers it with a cage of woven threads. A sewing needle with a red thread appears in the work, as though she started to stitch the cage, yet left the motif unfinished and put the needle to rest. Although the floral motifs drawn in pencil on the canvas appear to be mere sketches, the artist's name and the date on the margins indicate that the painting is actually completely finished. These floral motifs, left unpainted, reappear in a colourful crochet that ties back the hair of a woman whose face is buried in the canvas, as if looking at the back side of the painting.

Icons of Time is an installation in which Füsün Onur combines elements of light and shadow with the relationship between frame and painting, located on the border that unites as well as divides inside and outside. Though the frames in this installation don't readily reveal what they are at first glance, they resemble flimsy doors and windows. These frames, partially covered with amorphous pieces of leather used in a traditional form of Turkish shadow theatre (Karagöz), seem to have been taken from the walls where they belong and are trying to forge a new order amongst themselves in the new space where they have been dispersed.



Untitled (July), 1983

Oil, pencil, fabric and threads on canvas
87 x 90 x 8 cm



Untitled, 1983

Oil, wood, fabric and copper band on canvas
93 x 90 x 3 cm



Icons of Time, 1990

Installation with wood, leather, metal, paint

SEZA PAKER
1957, Istanbul (Turkey)



Untitled, 1981
Drawings and photographs on
canvas
3 pieces; 43 × 33 × 5 cm each

Seza Paker, who lives and works between Istanbul and Paris, completed her education at the Paris Académie des Beaux-Arts and École Camondo. Paker uses a wide variety of media such as drawing, photography, audio, and video, and she also produces site-specific installations. The concept of time occupies an important place in her works, which are loaded with references to various fields like literature, cinema, philosophy, sociology, and art history.

In this work, Paker uses three black and white photographs taken from her father's archive as her starting point. The artist uses the dresses of women posing in photographs to produce enlarged and abstracted motifs, attaching these colourful drawings, along with the photographs, to the surface of the canvas. With this abstraction, the patterns break away from the phenomenal plane imposed by the archival material; they come to life, becoming timeless. The work gestures, on the one hand, to differences in the perception of documents, photographs, patterns, and pictures, as well as the sensory effect born out of the collective usage of these media; on the other, it focuses on the depth of detail produced by these colourful and numerical leitmotifs.

REINER RUTHENBECK

1937, Velbert (Germany) – 2016, Ratingen (Germany)

Reiner Ruthenbeck began his art practice as a photographer, documenting artworks and Fluxus performances. At the age of 25, he decided to study painting under Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf. In 1968, Ruthenbeck's studies ended; he left behind painting as a medium, concentrating instead on a wide variety of sculptural materials. Ruthenbeck uses natural materials like rubber, felt, glass, metal, wood, paper, and fabric in his works, accentuating their physical properties by drawing together their contrasting elements. Through variations influenced by Arte Povera and Minimalism, he reveals the effects that differences in the size, mass, and geometry of an object have on the formal unity of the sculpture.

Heaps of Ashes V is a sculpture consisting of a sheet metal structure partially buried inside a pile of ash, rising out of the ash in the shape of a honeycomb. It belongs to a series of nine works grouped together as *Kegel und Haufen* (Cones and Piles) made between 1968 and 1979 and presented in Harald Szeemann's exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* in 1969. By using metal plates, Ruthenbeck gives a solid and geometrical form to the heaps of ashes that resist taking a fixed form without the use of a restraining mould. *Heaps of Ashes V* is not just a formal interrogation produced through ordinary, simple materials and interventions; it also carries conceptual and historical connotations. The pile smells of slag, reminiscent of the Ruhr Area (North Rhine-Westphalia) of Germany, which occupies an important place in the country's recent history, including World War II, as the traditional centre of German industries like coal-mining, metallurgy and chemical production. It is also the birthplace of the artist.



Heaps of Ashes V, 1968-1969

Cinders, metal plate

Approx. 200 cm (diameter)

HREINN FRIÐFINNSSON
1943, Baer Dölum (Iceland)

Hreinn Friðfinnsson, acknowledged as a pioneer of the Icelandic avant-garde, produces works concerned with forms of seeing, the perception of space, and the notion of time, through subtle interventions and minor alterations to ordinary, everyday objects such as glass, mirror, foil, paper, and wire.

Atelier Sketch, displayed in four frames in *What Time Is It?*, is an ongoing series in which the artist places the almost non-existent silk threads collected from a spider web in his workshop between two pieces of glass. Using this flexible, fragile material that evokes workmanship and labour, as well as forgotten corners, forgotten belongings, and rooms that have not been entered for a long time, Friðfinnsson shares a record of the time spent in the workshop with the viewer.



Atelier Sketch, 1990-2013
Spider web, glass, wood, paint
4 pieces; 22 x 22 cm each

BİLGE FRIEDLAENDER

1934, Istanbul (Turkey) – 2000, Istanbul (Turkey)

Bilge Friedlaender studied at the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts (1958) and received her MFA from New York University (1959). While she worked with the medium of painting and the canvas, she also began exploring paper as a medium in the 1970s. In search of a new visual language, she developed her practice around handmade paper, drawings, and artist's books. In her interventions into paper, she used various methods that included coiling, looping, intertwining, tying, tearing, cutting, folding, pricking, and layering. She perceived geometric forms, such as lines and squares, as forces that continuously transform and reproduce themselves. Using materiality and spatial arrangement as a foundation, she explored ways of translating and incorporating the gestures and vastness of nature into her work. Her works transmit the corporeal connections made and found within nature's cycles, flows, geometries, and forces. Translating the Paleolithic wall paintings in the Santian cave located in northern Spain into the folds of handmade paper, the artist traces the legacy of the first image makers of our kind. She thus creates a miniature memento that layers the memory of her own experiences in the cave with the memory of those who came before her.



Untitled / Hand Symbols from the Cavern of Santian, 1978

Parchment, ink

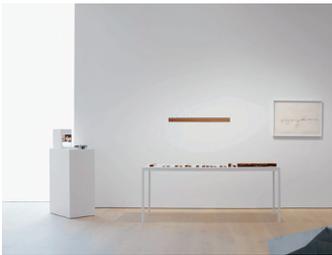
8 x 8 cm

CEVDET EREK

1974, Istanbul (Turkey)

The concepts of rhythm and measurement lie at the foundation of Cevdet Ereğ's works and site-specific installations, which investigate the units, structures, and forms that guide our perception of space and time. Displayed in *What Time Is It?* from the Arter Collection, *Ruler Day Night* and *Ruler dOCUMENTA (13)* are works the artist produced for two international exhibitions, and they harbour clues about how Ereğ's practice relates the artwork to the artistic and the spatial contexts in which it is situated. In 2007, Ereğ produced his first ruler, which begins with the year of his birth. Since then, he has continued to make rulers to mark and interpret successive events and relationships drawn from a wide spectrum that ranges from the temporal units of day, night, week, and year, to individual and social turning points, and to historical ruptures like coups and wars.

Ruler Day Night consists of black and white rectangles that measured the length of days and nights during the 12th Istanbul Biennial. Since the biennial dates were in the autumn season, during which the nights gradually grow longer, the black areas corresponding to the night on the ruler expand as they continue toward the right, while the white areas shrink, resulting in a timetable that visualises the duration of the biennial in terms of days and nights.



Father's Timeline, 2007

Pencil and marker on paper
50 x 71 cm

Ruler Day Night, 2011

Ruler; 6 x 100 cm
Ed. 1/5 + 1 AP

Studio, 2005

Video (colour, sound)
0'12"
Ed. 2/5 + 1 AP

Ruler dOCUMENTA (13), on the other hand, is a series of ruler prototypes Ereğ produced from a tree chopped down just before the exhibition opened in the city of Kassel in Germany. The rulers have not been given their final shape, and because they are displayed alongside the log from which they were obtained, they signify the potential to be duplicated in the future. Using the Second World War, during which Kassel was torn down, as a starting point, the artist wrote '1945' in pencil on the growth ring visible on the first segment of the tree. Subsequent years, marked usually at five-year intervals, depict when editions of documenta – a symbol of post-war Germany's reintegration into the modern West and art – were organised.

Father's Timeline, one of Ereğ's first works to deal with the concept of time, explores collective history through critical personal turning points. The artist first draws a line beginning from his father's date of birth, and asks his father to indicate important dates in his life on this ruler. This timeline forms an individual history, successively aligning numerous births, deaths, occupational turning points, and translocations, while also bearing witness to the political history of Turkey.

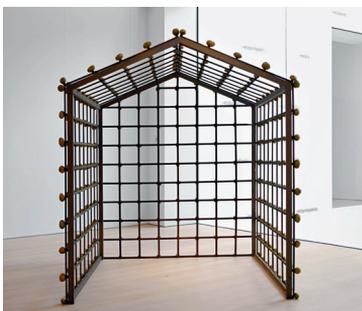
In the video work *Studio*, which is projected on a small screen in the form of an infinite backdrop atop a pedestal, Cevdet Ereğ plays the rhythm of an imaginary timetable, reducing it to musical notation.



Ruler dOCUMENTA (13), 2012
Pine wood, pencil
1 block: 55 × 35.5 × 4 cm
17 pieces; 35 × 4 × 1.5 cm each

SIGMAR POLKE

1941, Olesnica (Poland) – 2010, Cologne (Germany)



Potato House, 1967

Construction made of wooden slats,

paint, potatoes

240 × 200 × 200 cm

Growing up during the post-war era in circumstances defined by extreme social and economic constraints, Sigmar Polke developed a critical attitude toward forms of authority, classification, and the transformation of routines into rules. His approach to art-making was experimental, provocative, and multi-layered. While still a student at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, Polke, along with Gerhard Richter and others, founded Capitalist Realism in 1963, as an ironic reference to the art of state socialism and a critical response to the Pop Art of the commodified Western world. By focusing on artistic production that focuses on everyday subjects and viewing the world of goods and consumption with ironic detachment, Polke intends to create art for the people on the street rather than for the cultured middle class.

Kartoffelhaus (Potato House) is a five-sided latticework cage made out of wood and fresh potatoes nailed to every joint of the lattice. Consumed as staple food in post-war Germany, potatoes are a recurring element in Polke's practice. He was fascinated by their self-reproductive capacity for growth, sprouting over their entire surfaces and in all directions. Architecturally, the construction echoes a West German middle-class garden shed, whilst the pitched roof points to an American house with a white-picket fence. The structure is neither a uniform enclosure, nor an exposed cage since it is missing one wall. Polke introduced the potatoes as a humorous irregularity to this otherwise perfectly geometrical, house-shaped structure.

MARIE COOL FABIO BALDUCCI

Marie Cool, 1961, Valenciennes (France)

Fabio Balducci, 1964, Ancona (Italy)

Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci have been working collectively since 1995. Executed in the exhibition space or on video recordings, their work tackles the possibilities of non-hierarchical relationships among humans and material elements. Using tangible and intangible tools like light, A4 sheets of paper, tape, pencil, salt, and water, Cool's hands present a sequence of gestural acts based on repetition and temporality. These gestures are presented by Cool, usually all day long without stopping, between the opening and closing times of the exhibition space.

In *Untitled, 2004. Sellotape, table*, Cool sits before a table that has a strip of stretched tape loosely attached to it. Lifting it up and down, she gently and slowly traces the line with the breadth of her hands. Cool's action, seen consecutively from two camera angles – the front and the side – creates and continually transforms the abstract geometrical space between the tape and the table. With her unwavering focus, Cool seems to be trying to measure, negotiate, and equilibrate the borders of an invisible territory.



Untitled, 2004. Sellotape, table 01, 2004

Untitled, 2004. Sellotape, table 02, 2004

Video (colour, silent)

2'21" and 2'12"

Ed. 2/3 + 1 AP

SARKIS

1938, Istanbul (Turkey)

Çaylak Sokak (Çaylak Street) borrows its name from the street in the Talimhane district of Istanbul, where Sarkis was born and raised. With its images belonging to the past, childhood, the home, family, and growing up, this installation is one of the cornerstones of both Sarkis's art practice and the history of contemporary art in Turkey. Its heart beats at the centre of *What Time Is It?*, setting the rest of the exhibition into rhythm.

Sarkis settled in Paris in 1966. When he came to Istanbul 20 years later in 1986 to install his exhibition at the Maçka Art Gallery, he wanted to build his work out of his personal memories of his family house and the street where he was born and raised. Each object in *Çaylak Sokak* is borrowed from that house and that street, and they all share a common history: a cobbler's workbench belonging to his Uncle Simon, with whom Sarkis worked as an apprentice when he was a child; a tube radio borrowed from Aunt Siranuş; the enamelled bathtub in which the children of the family bathed for years, after which it was used to grow tomatoes; his father's shoes, the vulture figurine that was always present in the house since his childhood. The magnetic tapes connecting them are audiotapes from Tarkovsky's film *Nostalghia*. When *Çaylak Sokak* was invited to the *Magicians of the Earth* (1989) exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris after its first presentation in Istanbul, Sarkis installed the work on a wooden platform there, with identical dimensions to the layout of the Maçka Art Gallery, in order to convey the memory of the original place where it was first shown. The platform in the exhibition at Arter is similarly formed in accordance with the dimensions of the Maçka Art Gallery, but placed in reverse in the space, like in a mirror image.

Sarkis always revises the relationships formed between his works and the space in which they are placed. Within the scope of the opening programme of Arter's new building in Dolapdere, *Çaylak Sokak* is displayed together with the installation entitled *An Icon* (2010) and the film *Çaylak Sokak at Çaylak Sokak* (2010) from the collection.

After being displayed in Paris in 1989, the objects in the *Çaylak Sokak* installation were returned to the house where Sarkis was born in Istanbul, remaining in that house until the work became part of the Arter Collection. In the film *Çaylak Sokak at Çaylak Sokak*, Sarkis recorded the life of the installation in the house.

An Icon, another installation which accompanies *Çaylak Sokak* at Arter, was staged for the first time at the Yapı Kredi Kâzım Taşkent Art Gallery in 2010. In this work, the family house appears this time as a large scale architectural model coated with gold foil, consisting of empty spaces. Two more elements complete the installation: industrial black fans hanging above our heads, blowing with a roar like airplane propellers, and a sentence written on the wall, evoking in neon-blue a shared image of war: "Carpets hung like thick curtains on the windows at night protected the lit-up house from the planes."



Çaylak Sokak, 1986 [2019]
Installation

**In the Beginning, the Bread
that Swims, 12.12.1997**
Video (colour)
3'12"

**Çaylak Sokak at Çaylak Sokak,
26.07.2006**
Video (colour, sound)
14'38"
Ed. 1/2

Icon, 29.8.1995
Watercolour and pencil on paper
29.5 x 22 cm



An Icon, 2010
Wood gilded in 22-carat gold,
blue neon, black fans

GÜLSÜN KARAMUSTAFA
1946, Ankara (Turkey)



Mystic Transport, 1992
20 movable metal baskets, satin quilts
90 × 60 × 45 cm each

Gülsün Karamustafa's work *Mystic Transport*, installed on Arter's terrace as part of *What Time Is It?*, was displayed for the first time in 1992 at the 3rd International Istanbul Biennial. This work, which consists of twenty wheeled metal baskets containing quilts and can be moved by visitors, is related to the concepts of migration, identity, and belonging, themes at the centre of the artist's practice. These metal containers are reminiscent both of porters' baskets and shopping carts. The colourful satin quilts inside them are favoured dowry items that can be spread over beds and mattresses or hidden away in chests. Even though they evoke a sense of privacy, they present a social landscape of Turkey from the 1960s to the present.

Configured in multiple ways by the actions of the visitors who move the baskets, *Mystic Transport* interrogates the visual codes of "foreign" culture marked as kitsch or crude, with its brightly-coloured quilts, as well as the visual codes of the informal and cheap laborers that come from outside the city. The placement of the installation on the terrace also brings Dolapdere, where Arter's new building is located, into relation with the work. Dolapdere has frequently been used as an intermediate stop or a springboard for migrants during the 1960s and 1990s, when domestic migration to the city accelerated. A similar situation is pertinent today for those who migrate from abroad. Though the conditions and timings of migration change, *Mystic Transport* continues moving on its wheels, burdened with the pressing issues of timelessness, displacement, and nomadism.

ERIC HATTAN

1955, Wettingen (Switzerland)



Unplugged Series

Basel, 15.11.1999, 15'35"

Beirut, 13.10.2011, 7'38"

Buenos Aires, 30.11.2003, 18'37"

Cairo, 11.1997, 15'06"

London 1, 14.12.2005, 15'15"

New York, 27.02.2001, 7'45"

Paris, 23.08.1998, 19'13"

Reykjavik, 10.05.1999, 18'46"

Istanbul, 8.09.2019

Video (colour, sound)

Ed. 1/3

Incorporating media like sculpture, installation, video, and performance, Eric Hattan's practice is based on everyday life within the context of the habitualised architectural and social codes of public space. The artist uses mundane objects and raw materials like boxes, clothes, and furniture by turning them upside-down or inside-out in his video works, installations, and interventions. Seeking ways of breaking the order of things as well as ways of challenging bodily and perceptual limits, Hattan creates sculptural constructions and unexpected situations.

Unplugged is an ongoing series of video works that Eric Hattan has been producing since the mid-1990s. In this series, he recorded his own performance of turning packages he found in cities he passed through inside out. Performed in hotel rooms, the videos present a close-up of the artist's hands gently turning a package inside out, as well as the sound of his transformation of the packages. This gesture, which exchanges the interior and the exterior of everyday, simple objects, also allows the artist to present an archive of consumption habits and visual design elements in different cities. *Istanbul*, the most recent piece of the series, was produced by the artist for this exhibition at Arter and has been added to the Arter Collection.

AYŞE ERKMEN
Istanbul (Turkey)

The majority of Ayşe Erkmen's projects, whose solo exhibition *Whitish* is featured in the opening programme of Arter, are closely tied to the space, situation, and time they occupy. The place and environmental context in which she works always becomes part of the work; they begin to belong one another, as though something borrowed from that place (a measure, a form, a motif, a story, a possibility...) has been restored to the place from which it was taken. In her projects, Ayşe Erkmen incorporates unexpected directions and intervals, architectural and environmental scales, and distances and proximities, into the experience of the artwork. *On the House* (Am Haus) is one of Erkmen's works that is closely tied to the places where it is exhibited and as a consequence cannot be identically repeated anywhere else. Initially conceived for the façade of a building in Kreuzberg, Berlin in 1994, where it remains today, the work is displayed on the façade of Arter's atrium for the *What Time Is It?* exhibition. *Am Haus*, which Erkmen made with suffixes that are completely useless when left on their own and need to be combined with a verb in order to gain functionality and to express meaning, harbours countless expressions regarding the past, the present, and the future, all without telling a clear story. Rather than asking here what **might** have happened, what **might** be happening, what **might** happen (ne ol-**muş**, ne oluyor-**muş**, ne olacak-**muş**), the work triggers us to think instead about the context it occupies. In the book of the same title that accompanies the artist's solo exhibition *Whitish*, curated by Emre Baykal, Erkmen talks about the work: "*Am Haus* is one of my more functional works (...) For the German residents of the neighbourhood, they present a new aesthetic by means of their different alphabetical characters, with their dots and tails. At the same time, they also present the Germans with a tense, a mode of time that they haven't experienced before, that isn't in their language and thus isn't in their culture, that they might not ever be able to grasp. For the Turkish immigrants living there, on the other hand, it expresses a language that they can understand and speak, transforming into sentences that only they can complete."



**On the House (Am Haus),
1994 [2012]**
Suffixes made of plexiglass

SERGE SPITZER

1951, Bucharest (Romania) – 2012, New York (USA)

When Serge Spitzer, who passed away at an early age in 2012, displayed *Golden Carpet* for the first time at the 4th International Istanbul Biennial (1995) curated by René Block, he raised it several meters from the floor to the drum of the dome of Hagia Eirene Museum. It was installed in such a way as to appear hidden in the dome, only accidentally visible. The work can be considered a continuation of Spitzer's *Prop Piece* series shown previously in Berlin and Düsseldorf. But considering the relationship that carpets have with the local culture, traditions and history of Istanbul, the work broadens its context, acquiring new meanings and associations. Following its inclusion in the Arter Collection, *Golden Carpet* was exhibited in *Starter* (2010), the opening exhibition of Arter's building on Istiklal Street. There, it was raised above the glass doors at the entrance and shown in relation to the street. This time as Arter's new building opens, Spitzer's carpet is installed on a high windowsill in the atrium.



**Golden Carpet (Istanbul Prop Piece),
1995**

Gold-coloured carpet

Rolled: 35 × 400 cm

CENGİZ ÇEKİL

1945, Niğde (Turkey) – 2015, İstanbul (Turkey)



What Time Is It?, 2008

Screenprints on newspaper spreads

The first 48 pieces from a series of 112

56 x 75.7 cm each

Cengiz Çekil is one of the pioneers of contemporary art in Turkey. He became acquainted with conceptual art when he went to Paris on a state scholarship in the early 1970s. Having gone beyond conventional materials, he continued to produce works with everyday objects and found items, incorporating the concept of time and its social and political dimensions into his work until his passing in 2015. In Çekil's installations, we often encounter wristwatches, table and wall clocks, and their internal mechanisms as the material of his work. Here, however, the work we encounter is formed around the repetition of the interrogative sentence *What Time Is It?*, a work that is on display for the first time since it entered the Arter Collection after the eponymous exhibition at the Yapı Kredi Kâzım Taşkent Art Gallery in 2008. Using screen-printing to reiterate this everyday question on the pages of newspapers, aligning it with the headlines, Çekil creates a record of the political history of Turkey. *What Time Is It?* invites the audience to contemplate the power of media to shape the times we live in.

VOLKAN ASLAN
1982, Ankara (Turkey)

Volkan Aslan frequently appropriates and transforms found objects and images for his work, making them part of his artistic production. His work *Concern* is a wall installation that accompanies the audience as they walk up or down the stairs between the third and the fourth-floor galleries where the exhibition is taking place. The artist found these coloured, felt figures of Jamaican origin at a second-hand shop in Istanbul; they had been previously used in churches to teach children the history of Christianity.

Before it was incorporated into the Arter Collection, *Concern* assumed different colours and sizes and compositions for various exhibitions. In the context of *What Time Is It?*, Aslan places these found figures in a new context, creating a landscape that can be read from both directions. Left to the viewer's imagination, the narrative of the installation is open to change and differs from person to person.



Concern, 2005-2019
Site-specific wall installation with found felt figures
and paint

AL (ALFRED EARL) HANSEN

1927, Queens, NY (USA) – 1995, Cologne (Germany)

Al Hansen is one of the protagonists of the American Fluxus and Happening movement. The materials used in his works are the remnants of consumer society and its throwaway ethos, collected by Hansen during his daily forays and encounters. These works do not just provide clues about the artist's personal and artistic environment; they also document and offer commentary on social life in the 1960s and 1970s.

After participating in John Cage's classes along with Dick Higgins and Larry Poons, Al Hansen founded the New York Audiovisual Group in 1958. The group staged Happenings in public spaces, coffee shops, and alternative exhibition spaces across Manhattan. For Hansen, the urban and artistic landscape of these years is what produced New York. *Architecture for the Year 3000* contains his interventions on maps of Manhattan. Hansen's map projects continued with other works that intervened in the maps of Berlin. Hansen offers a utopian proposal to atone for the ecological damage humankind has wrought by resettling all of humanity in a tower built out of consumer waste that will rise higher in conjunction with increases in the population and its garbage.



Architecture for the Year 3000, 1979

Pencil, ink, felt-tip pen on paper

2 pieces; I: 253.5 × 60.5 cm, II: 255.5 × 60.5 cm

ASLI ÇAVUŞOĞLU

1982, Istanbul (Turkey)

Oscillating between truth and fiction, Asli Çavuşoğlu's work frequently collaborates with different disciplines for replications, reproductions, and enactments, signifying the things that are neglected or ignored by representations that rely on official discourses and assumptions.

The artist brought the installation *The Stones Talk* to life for her solo exhibition at Arter in 2013, based on 71 artefacts discovered in various archaeological excavation sites in Turkey. These objects were deemed either "insignificant" or "incomplete", and thus classified as "study pieces" by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Çavuşoğlu produced replicas of the "study pieces" she chose, and "completed" them for this installation. Though she relies on the classical methods of archaeology, she is not bound by them. She uses a fragment to build a rough draft of the whole, yet opens this method up to new associations and visual possibilities; she combines the study pieces with new shapes of her own design, made from different materials like ceramic, rubber, epoxy, plexiglas, felt, volcanic stone, leather and foam. *The Stones Talk* highlights the potential that archaeological remains considered worthless by official historiography offer in questioning how historical narratives and meanings are produced.



The Stones Talk, 2013

34 objects selected from a series of 71 pieces made of copies of archaeological artefacts and various materials

BARIŞ DOĞRUSÖZ
1978, Istanbul (Turkey)



Interstices, a dizzying array of combinations, 2018
47 sculptures from balsa wood painted in black
Ed. 2/5

Since he moved to Beirut in 2015, Barış Doğrusöz has been producing a visual lexicon by encoding specific types of architecture. The artist has collected an inventory of military artefacts called “pillboxes”, concrete guard-posts situated around sensitive institutional, military, and private buildings alongside roads, bridges, borders, and contested territories. These structures are often camouflaged to conceal their locations and to maximize the element of surprise. They may be part of a trench system and form an interlocking line of defence. Observing the ubiquity of these artefacts, the artist approaches them as though they are “extropic masks”: in other words, as optical devices that remain open, that never close, and that strictly obey military logic. He has undertaken a process of indexing the loopholes in these structures, known in military architecture as “embrasures.” Whether in Lebanon, Syria, or Palestine, embrasures incarnate the physical representation of territorial limits as well as the controlling presence of a volatile force. Through these three-dimensional wireframe structures, Doğrusöz composes complex abstract partitions out of the constantly shifting geopolitical situations of the present. The wireframe structures project a shadow play of geometrical vectors that cannot be held, caught, or trusted. These shadows evoke the process of movement involved in writing, introducing something vital to the mechanisms of meaning by using the intangible to signify a tangible presence. Doğrusöz explains that the “piece works towards deciphering the loopholes’ physical presence as everlasting spatial data in a game of prequels and premonitions.”

MONA HATOUM

1952, Beirut (Lebanon)

Born into a Palestinian family in Beirut, Mona Hatoum makes use of her past experiences and feelings concerning loss, displacement, disorientation, and estrangement as a source for her production. Shaped through the many years the artist has spent deeply excavating the complexities and contradictions that are nurtured by the present state of the world, these works open up layers of paradoxical meaning by bringing together various formal and visual elements in unexpected ways, starting from the artist's own body and expanding toward other borders that we call home or country.

Previously exhibited as part of *You Are Still Here* (2012), curated by Emre Baykal, *3-D Cities* is an installation of maps showing the cities of Baghdad, Kabul and Beirut on three table tops connected by wooden trestles. The concentric circles Hatoum cuts into the the map resemble craters, producing elevations and depressions in the map's surface. These three-dimensional forms seem to indicate sites of seismic disruption, bombed-out areas, or construction sites out of which new architectural structures rise. The positive and negative cuts Hatoum delicately engraves on the maps of these war-torn cities are reminders of the ways in which destruction and reconstruction are intertwined.



3-D Cities, 2008-2010

Printed maps, wood

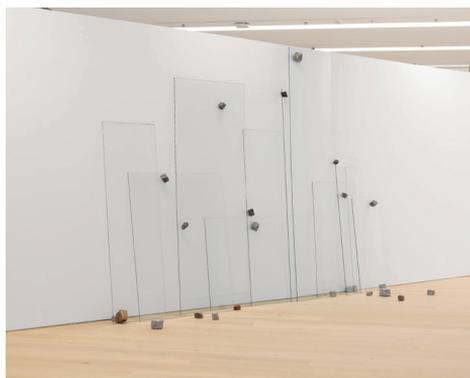
Ed. 5/5

ALICJA KWADE

1979, Katowice (Poland)

Producing installations and sculptures that engage the boundaries of physical reality, Alicja Kwade challenges our modes of perception by utilising different fields of knowledge, such as physics, philosophy, and astronomy, in her work. She is interested in universal concepts like gravity, movement, balance, and time that shape the relationships the human body forges with the world in which it lives.

Resistance is an installation made of stone and glass, two materials Alicja Kwade often uses in her practice. By combining these two materials, Kwade articulates two different connotations of the idea of resistance; one of these belongs to the field of physics, the other to politics. Stone, seen from both a historical perspective and across different geographies, is the unchanging tool of street resistance against state oppression. Kwade's sculptural installation, resembling a barricade made of glass, implies the fragility and tension inherent in the act of resistance.



Resistance, 2010

Stone, glass

600 × 300 × 50 cm

MICHAEL SAILSTORFER

1979, Velden (Germany)

Michael Sailstorfer's works, often referred to as expanded sculptures, are interested in concepts like transformation, space, movement, and inertia. *Maze 19* is part of his *Maze* series, comprised of large-scale canvasses that include maze puzzles, solved without much precision. Though the artist usually creates three-dimensional objects, with the *Maze* series, he reflects his artistic practice back on a two-dimensional, flat representation of space. He finds images of mazes on the Internet and applies them onto the surfaces of specially prepared canvasses coated with newspaper clippings, ink, acrylic, or iron and copper. With swift gestural strokes, the artist marks his journey into the puzzle with spray paint, allowing the viewers to witness the process of an artwork's creation, from conception to realisation, incorporating its progressions, regressions, failures, detours, and successes. Associated with amusement and spirituality over the course of history, the maze has been seen as a symbol of seeking self, the loss of one's bearings, and the repetition of individual choice. Imprinted on newspaper clippings that conjure up notions of contemporaneity, global issues, political controversies, and environmental catastrophes, the maze in *Maze 19* can also be interpreted as a reflection on the difficulty of finding direction in one's life in the present.



Maze 19, 2011

Newspaper cut outs and spray paint on canvas
190 × 230 cm

SİNAN LOGIE

1973, Brussels (Belgium)

Sinan Logie established the independent city research institute Center for Spatial Justice with Yaşar Adanalı in 2015. He is also co-author of the book *Istanbul 2023*, in which he and Yoann Morvan discuss the transformation and destruction Istanbul has undergone as they walk around the city. Logie, whose ongoing skateboarding practice has shaped his perception of the city and architecture for many years, deals with themes of freedom, body, movement, and speed in terms of modern architecture and urban planning, using these themes to create abstract city landscapes and architectural constructions.

The ongoing series *Fluid Structures*, which began in 2000, consists of digital drawings and prints, juxtapositions on photographs, sculptures based on architectural models, and oil and ink paintings on canvas and paper. By bringing together abstract painting and modern architectural traditions, Logie interrogates two fundamental questions in architecture: building a structure and directing fluidity. He explores the present instantiations of these two concepts that mark each other's boundaries and studies how to traverse the distance between them. The two works in this exhibition are from his series *Phase 12*, in which he focuses on mobile, variable, and permeable spaces that cannot actually be built or experienced but can be imagined on the canvas surface through the use of pictorial elements like lines, stains, and colours.



**Fluid Structures (Phase 12),
2016**

Oil on canvas
211 x 151 cm



**Fluid Structures (Phase 12),
2016**

Oil on canvas
140 x 205 cm

HALE TENGER
1960, Izmir (Turkey)



"We didn't go outside; we were always on the outside / We didn't go inside; we were always on the inside", 1995-2015

Wooden guard house, printed matter, radio, barbed wire fence, sound
Approx. 910 x 570 cm

By exploring issues related to identity, patriarchal culture, and social tensions caused by acts of violence and conflict, Hale Tenger points to the political and cultural problems of Turkey in her work, with a focus on both its historical and contemporary political climate. Drawing on the contrasts between internal versus external, life versus death, and presence versus absence, Tenger's artistic practice also incorporates sound as an important element.

Placed in Arter's atrium in a makeshift diagonal position, neither inside nor outside, Hale Tenger's installation *We didn't go outside; we were always on the outside / We didn't go inside; we were always on the inside* was originally conceived for the 4th Istanbul Biennial. Tenger who used a guard's cabin she chanced upon during a site visit to Antrepo, the main venue of the biennial, as the basis of this work. She has reproduced the installation 20 years after its first exhibition, remaining faithful to the original.

Hale Tenger's installation explores contrasting issues of inclusion and exclusion as well as inside and outside. Surrounded by barbed wire, the interior walls and windows of the wooden booth are covered with old postcards, posters, calendar pages, and landscape photographs. This small, isolated space creates a fictional outside world from within its boundaries through the various landscape images from unknown places. The empty tea glass left on the table and the Turkish classical music playing on the small radio create the impression that someone occupying the booth has just left. Laden with associations of being both temporally and spatially enclosed or cooped up, the installation's own boundaries complicate the distinction between inside and outside.

MAC ADAMS

1943, South Wales (UK)

Using photography as a means of production, Mac Adams combines conceptual art with storytelling to create photographs from his stories and stories from his photographs. *Double Split* is a triptych that composes a three-part sequence out of a crime incident, visually recording the passage of time concerning the event. The uncanny behaviors of the man carrying something like a baseball bat in his hand and the woman lying motionless on the side of the road in the next sequence draw our attention to what is going on in order to solve the mystery. Shadows and natural light, tree trunks, and the bend in the road are illusive encounters in a suspended narrative constructed by the viewer. These three intertwined sequences follow one another like the images in a photo-novel, or like the succession of still images to produce the moving image in a film. At the same time, *Double Split* is caught in a loop; it is plunged in uncertainty, with neither beginning nor end.



Double Split, 1978

Triptych silver print black and white photographs

76.4 x 94.6 cm each

Ed. 3/3

HARUN FAROCKI

1944 Nový Jicin (Czech Republic) – 2014, Berlin (Germany)

Harun Farocki, one of the most important artists of the essay-film genre, graduated from the Berlin Film Academy in the late 1960s and produced more than a hundred films and videos. He was also the founder and editor of the famous film magazine *Filmkritik* (1974-84), and made significant contributions to the field of media theory as an author, educator and activist. Focusing on the impact of military technologies and political propaganda strategies in shaping the moving image, Farocki reconstructs found footage and deconstructs documentary images, and in so doing, invites spectators to escape from the state of intellectual and visual lethargy imposed on them by long-term interaction with mass media.

The two-channel projection *Counter-Music* (2004) was conceived as an inventory of reality and as a reflection on film through film. It juxtaposes footage filmed in Lille with material recorded by a security camera to ask whether, and how, in this day and age, it is still possible to portray a day in the life of a city. Farocki cites and draws references from historical films like *Der Mann mit der Kamera* (Man with a Movie Camera, Dziga Vertov, 1929) and *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (Berlin – Symphony of a Great City, Walter Ruttmann, 1927). By observing similar activities then and now, Farocki compares two different realities offered by the media: images that document history, recorded by an analogue camera, and those recorded by security cameras in the present.



Counter-Music, 2004

2-channel video projection (colour, sound)

23'

Ed. 3/3 + 1 AP

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