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## MISANTHROPY

**Ali İbrahim Öcal, Damla Yalçın, Eda Çekil, Ekim Zafer Acun, Erdoğan Kaplan, Gözde Mimiko Türkkan, Mesut İkinci, Nejbir Erkol, Sinan Orakçı**

Küratör: Ayça Okay

In the preparation process for this exhibition, we focused on the concept of misanthropy, born from a deep sense of alienation regarding the negative aspects of human nature and the breakdown of social relationships. This concept, which gains even more significance in the challenging times we are going through, is reflected in works that showcase a dark and melancholic perspective, where artists autobiographically question their existence and their relationships with society. All the invited artists belong to Generation Y, and the exhibition space itself is a Y-generation initiative that embraces a fresh and new perspective. Together, we question social decay, the corruption of values, and the growing distrust between individuals, approaching a profound critique of contemporary socio-political structures through the lens of misanthropy. The individual anger we feel towards the collapse of societal ethics and moral values, our loneliness and alienation, manifest collectively through artistic expression.

**Ali İbrahim Öcal's** “Aynı Ateşin İki Yüzü” series features the works “Melahat ve Ramazan” and “Fire Influx No:1,” which invite the viewer to navigate through temporal layers, drawing them into a fiery narrative with fire at the center. However, this fire is not destructive but rather serves as a reminder. “Melahat ve Ramazan,” with its bright backgrounds filled with fading landscapes and still-burning earth, presents fire not as destruction but as the emergence of suppressed memories. Öcal's figureless paintings, emphasizing the power of colors, offer glimpses into Turkey's social crises, polarization, and cultural oblivion.

**Damla Yalçın's** work “İçinde Aynı Rüzgarın Olduğu Yer” emphasizes that space is not only a physical void but also an experiential realm interwoven with social memory and power relations. The work questions the social impacts of transforming a space by questioning the demolition of a prison in Çubuk, Ankara, and the construction of a school in its place, thereby reconstructing the memory of the space with opposing meanings. Drawing on Heidegger's

ontological understanding of space, the work traces the traces of resistance in silence through the connection between past and future practices.

**Eda Çekil's** "Nine Room" is a work that questions family memory through photographs. By multiplying the traditional household structure within a mat board, the work reveals the visible ideologies present within the home. The rooms, designed like a visual puzzle, create a permeable boundary between individual and collective memory.

**Ekim Zafer Acun's** video "REFAL-YOL" takes a journey into the memory of the 1990s through popular television programs and personal VHS recordings. The artist explores traces of the dark political atmosphere of his childhood and media influences through a 1996 painting that satirizes Tansu Çiller and Necmettin Erbakan as superheroes. The video, with a stream of consciousness blending colors, sounds, and images, narrates the television culture of the era and the societal changes it reflects.

**Erdoğan Kaplan's** "Kekliği Düz Ovada Avlarlar", with its Middle Eastern references, sheds light on the socio-political dynamics of regions shaped by exploitative relationships and external interventions throughout history. By scanning cultural and historical memory like an X-ray, the work makes the seamless continuity of the past, present, and future visible. It offers a critical perspective on the unchanging nature of structural cycles in these fragile regions.

**Gözde Mimiko Türkkan's** work "How to Destroy an Artwork" transforms physical destruction of her own pieces into a mental purification. This video performance transcends the boundaries of production and representation with a cathartic gesture.

**Mesut İkinci**, with his works "Recycling" and "Untitled", questions the individual's place in society, their identities, and the performative identities shaped by societal expectations. By connecting with Judith Butler's theory of identity and Jacques Lacan's concepts of grief and melancholy, he explores the individual's struggle against social roles and their inner journeys. The "People Standing Still" series addresses the themes of loss and stagnation, symbolizing moments when life halts and personal confrontations occur.

**Nejbir Erkol's** works "The Hole Series 1, 2 ve 5" explore themes of fragility and insecurity, inspired by a mortar shell that fell just 97 steps from a home during the Barış Pınarı Harekatı, yet did not explode. The works emphasize how the concept of "home," seen as a safe space, is threatened by the random violence of war. The lives of those living along the border, constantly feeling vulnerable, are central to the piece.

**Sinan Orakçı's** “Rüyalarımın Ritmi” delves into the fragmented nature of dreams and a world where time and space intertwine. The swimmers at the center of the painting symbolize pure existence, while the artist’s three different states of sleep and wakefulness reflect inner observation and consciousness. In this work, innocence, naturalness, and an intuitive rhythm invite the viewer on a profound mental journey. “Düşlerin Yorumu” depicts a scene where the rules of logic are overturned, with a mountain, ready to explode, symbolizing suppressed thoughts and emotions. A figure about to dive into the water challenges the rational world, while the naked figures beside them symbolize pure existence. The artist, turned away on the right of the painting, observes everything, inviting the viewer to a deep inner reflection.

Misanthropy, contrary to common belief, is not only a retreat inward but also a tool for awakening and questioning. In these challenging times, as we bring our objections to societal collapse to the streets, we are ready to confront all the structures standing in our way in the search for a fairer world.