



make a fuck  
I am asking



Fieldwork is the most associative practice you could relate to the methods of Derya Akay, whose projects thicken within galleries, museums, studios, rooftop gardens, kitchens, dinner tables and even suburban garages.

For “Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures,” currently on view at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Akay produced a second version of his *Cyclodrum*, an installation that stands as a large mobile-like structure from which to hang a menagerie of objects, materials and processes that are drawn from the season of its installation, the offices and storage areas of the museum hosting its presence, and his research processes in-studio.

The contents of this most recent installation ranged from citrus fruits with tattooed skins to moths and flies stuck to strands of tape found in the gallery’s basement, flowers undergoing an alkaline pickling, and bits of metal shaped through molybdomancy, a divination process of dripping bits of molten lead into buckets of cold water. Once hardened, the resulting shapes are interpreted as omens for the future; with a nod to Akay’s Turkish roots, the ritual is often used to foretell the fortunes of those who have been affected by the evil eye.

After relocating to Vancouver to study at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Akay has remained on the North West Coast. There, inspired as much by the social histories of the region’s artist-run culture as the deep material legacies found in its craft and design processes, his practice has been nurtured by the company of other local artists who are re-coding material values and quotidian life while retaining an investment in spiritual and psychic realms.

Derya Akay (Turkish, b. 1988) is an artist who lives and works in Vancouver.

Akay’s solo exhibition “Pumice” is currently on view at Del Vaz Projects, Los Angeles.

Jesse McKee is a writer and curator based in Vancouver, where he currently serves as Head of Strategy at 221A.

Image: *Painting Poetry (Scotty)*, 2016  
Courtesy of the artist

Akay’s current show with Del Vaz Projects in Los Angeles occupies the domestic space of the organization’s founder, Jay Ezra Naysan. Echoing the Farsi origins of the gallery’s moniker (from *dast-o-del vaz*, meaning “open-handed and open-hearted”), the exhibition will include a series of new box paintings, each caringly carved from various alluring woods and containing papers colored with automatic language, there to be read and sifted through before one finally encounters textured and processed surfaces beneath. These paintings are finally seen after reading and conversing with the host, the experiencing hinting at a knowledge that is not immediately offered, but rather arrived at through a process of revealing and receiving. Later this year, the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver will host Akay for a residency at their marina-side artist’s house. During his stay, he will collect knowledge about foraging, shopping and cooking from local grandmothers who, prior to settling in Canada, all lived within a 4,000-kilometer radius of the artist’s hometown, Adana. From Georgian eggplants to Moroccan stews, Akay’s experience at the residency will be simmering with warm exchanges. There is seldom a division between the public and private for Akay and his work, as each new invitation he receives allows for a further integration of the various streams that flow through his life. In an energetic spirit of coexistence, the social, the studio, the domestic and the professional realms intersect and enhance one another, the artist drawing newfound connections while remaining appreciative of their respective vernaculars. ☺

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DOMESTIC AND PROFESSIONAL  
INTERSECT IN AN ENERGETIC  
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HIGHLIGHTS