

Atalay Yavuz

I could stay up all night and make mistakes, and none of them would count.

When one subject questions another there is a chance to gain insight into that other. Suggestive or not? Did curiosity kill the cat? I believe the paintings and drawings of my dear old friend Atalay Yavuz provoke a sense of wonderment that makes viewers question what stands before their eyes. Atalay has no sketch, idea, or subject in mind when he begins to paint or draw. His compositions on canvas and paper are free-flowing gestures of paint and graphite. Viewers are invited to speculate on the ambiguous forms in these resolutely non-representational works, by relying on subjective associations.

I first met Atalay as a sculptor working mostly with everyday materials like sugar, coffee, chemicals, make-up remover or ultrasound gel, to name a few. His sculptures would transform over time and often evoke ironic takes on the cycle of life: birth, death and decay; sleep, dreams and nightmares. In essence, all materials seemed to be living organisms. In 2018, Atalay began to focus on painting and drawing.

It was my pleasure and a lucky twist of fate that I saw Atalay's two-dimensional works when I spontaneously visited New York and his studio last January. Abstract by nature, the images are pulled into figuration. Once Atalay notices a recognisable shape he abstracts the form. He resists deciding on a shape and refrains from depicting anything definite. Just like Atalay's earlier sculptures, his paintings and drawings have changing and ephemeral qualities that make them dynamic. As Atalay works at night, the works act as "nocturnals".

Sometimes cartoonish optical illusions seem dramatic or unresolved as though dreamscapes, an amalgamation of forms, familiar or forgotten. Others evoke a child-like fantasy in my view. His works can appear convoluted. Then again, on further inspection they are pristine, mesmerising and puzzling. At times, visions appear to have sounds, inky brushstrokes, dark delineations and echoing scenes. Streams of consciousness unravel and unfold in his works.

Atalay uses lyrics from Turkish pop songs that are full of meaning and can be easily misconstrued to title his paintings and drawings. They hint at the artist's origin as well as his witty humour. The titles are arbitrarily assigned to the works.

Born in Sakarya, Turkey in 1988, having lived in Istanbul and completing his studies in pharmacology, Atalay began working as an artist in the 2010s. Solo shows include: *"how to make the perfect creme brulee"*, 510 W 27th St, New York, 2018; *Atalay Yavuz*, Protocinema, Istanbul, 2014; *SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICXPALIDOCIOUS*, Marquise Dance Hall, Istanbul, 2014. He studied at the Universität der Künste, Berlin in 2014-16 and since then, Atalay lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Enjoy the serpentines and the sardonicisms! Text by Grazia de Colle, friend of the artist, curator of the exhibition. We love the night. Joan Didion might have too. Sunglasses, or not.