

I'm Not Obligated to Do This by Taha Belal

The Trap by Gözde İlkin

30 November 2016 – 5 January 2017

Gypsum is thrilled to present two parallel exhibitions opening this November: his second show at the gallery titled *I'm Not Obligated to Do This* by Cairo-based Taha Belal, and for the first time in Egypt, Istanbul-based artist Gözde İlkin shows her fabric works in a series called *The Trap*.

Taha Belal's exhibition brings together a collection of new works that all date 2016. In *I'm Not Obligated to Do This*, Belal draws heavily from his office job to construct a web of references that crisscross and reflect around the exhibition from piece to piece. A fragment of smoky glass from a desk with family photos unintentionally stuck to it is placed in front of a piece of polished wood veneer. A catalog of tractor parts with a green gradient background on a flat yellow sheet is used as a surface for a glistening cold cement cube.

Showing discrete, modest yet slightly flamboyant sculptures for the first time, Belal continues his formal investigation of objects, images and surfaces from our daily life. Layering materials ranging from silver shards of mirror to soft plastic vinyl, Belal makes delicate composites suspended between something that feels familiar and something entirely unknown. Here Belal experiments with allowing office work to seep into the artwork and can only hope that the art seeps into the office.

In her exhibition *The Trap*, **Gözde İlkin** presents a series of artworks made out of found domestic fabrics that she has been collecting over time. İlkin deftly reworks the material with an arrangement of images, loose threads and thin layers of paint. Her artworks act as an embodiment of personal experience and collective memory and a witness to a layered understanding of identity.

The images in the series offer confrontational interactions. Spidery contours of military boots are stitched against a pale floral design, gigantic botanical illustrations take on threatening proportions and many of her figures are shrouded in a pink amorphous cloud. But her stories never quite unfold into their logical conclusion. They enact political relationships, feelings and promises that are failing to reach a solution, remaining abstract and in limbo.

Taha Belal has a BFA in Studio Art from Pennsylvania State University (2005) and an MFA from the California College of the Arts, San Francisco, USA. His work has been exhibited in Art Dubai, UAE, Modern, Valencia, Spain; MATHAF – Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha; MKG Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany; Museum for Photography, Braunschweig, Germany; SMAEK Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich, Germany and Tartu Art Museum, Tartu, Estonia. He has also exhibited in a number of art galleries in San Francisco and the UK. In Egypt, he has shown his work at Townhouse Gallery in Cairo and Nile Sunset Annex, of which he is one of the founders. Nile Sunset Annex is an evolving artist-run production and dispersion outfit for contemporary art that emerged out of the context of the art scene in Cairo at the beginning of 2013. Among other things, it has hosted exhibitions, produced publications and art objects, and experimentally collected art. Taha Belal lives and works in Cairo.

Gözde İlkin was born in Kütahya in 1981 and lived in various regions of Turkey until her university years. She studied painting in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Mimar Sinan University. From 2005 to 2006, she attended European Union Education and Youth Programs: Leonardo da Vinci Program at the RAM and Ram Foundation in Rotterdam. She completed her master's degree at Marmara University in 2008. She has participated in numerous exhibitions in Turkey, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States. İlkin lives and works in Istanbul.