

Cultural CONNECTIONS

GOKCEN ALTINOK • EBRU ARDA • SARIT COHEN • HUSEYIN SAMI



COWRA REGIONAL ART GALLERY

INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to present *Cultural Connections* at the Cowra Regional Art Gallery, in association with the Cowra Festival of International Understanding. Each year, the festival features a different guest nation, with Turkey the guest nation in 2011.

The diverse cultural and personal links with Turkey of the four selected artists – Gokcen Altinok, Ebru Arda, Sarit Cohen and Huseyin Sami – is a unique aspect of the project, however, it is a heterogeneous exhibition as well as a lively and stimulating display of outstanding creative focus.

The broad range of media represented: painting, printmaking, ceramics and (stop motion) animation offer a unique mix of artwork with personal and formal artistic concerns.

The exhibition was not predetermined and during the research stages, I met with the artists to select their works for display. I would like to thank them for their collaboration and support during the final development of the exhibition. Special thanks also to the Embassy of Turkey for their support.

Brian Langer
Director, Cowra Regional Art Gallery

Cover images:

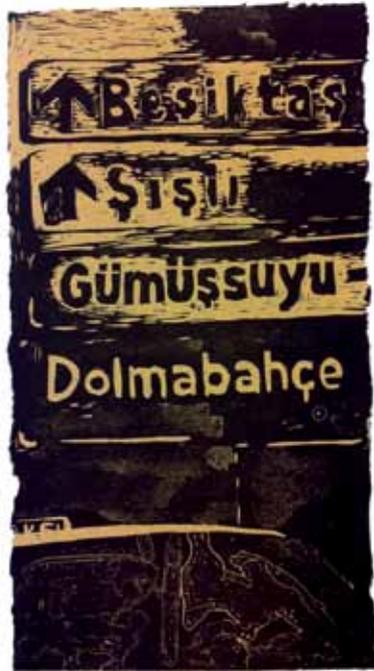
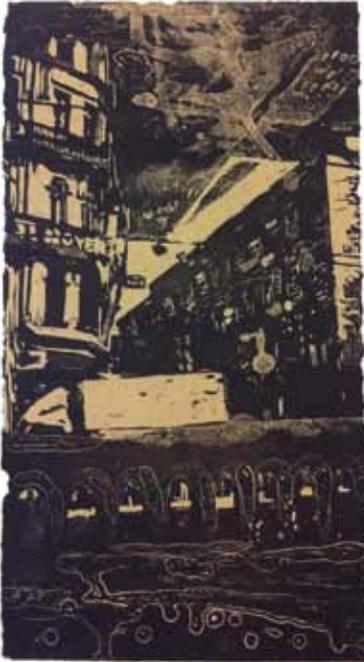
Top left:
Huseyin Sami, *The Pink Peak* 2007, acrylic on canvas 101 x 76cm
Image courtesy the Artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery Sydney.

Top right:
Sarit Cohen, *Landscape of the desert – vases* 2010
Porcelain slip cast, transparent glaze and oxides
Image courtesy the Artist.

Bottom left:
Ebru Arda, *Bir Fincan Kahve* (Cup of Caffeine) 2009
Hand drawn animation, 2mins 30secs
Image courtesy the Artist.

Bottom right:
Gokcen Altinok, *In Istanbul no. III* 2007
Lino relief on rice paper 93 x 63cm
Image courtesy the Artist.

GOKCEN ALTINOK



Left: *In Istanbul no. I* 2007, lino relief on rice paper 93 x 63cm.
Right: *In Istanbul no. II* 2007, lino relief on rice paper 93 x 63cm. Images courtesy the Artist.

Gokcen Altinok is from a Turkish and Australian background and currently lives in Sydney. Gokcen has a Bachelor of Fine Art (BFA) from the College of Fine Art (COFA) in Paddington, majoring in Printmaking. She is a member of an artists group called 'dirty hands printmakers'. She works intuitively and touches on the themes of connection and displacement within a cultural and abstract framework.

In 2006, Gokcen made a trip to Turkey for the first time. Her experience of interacting with her heritage and family origins was a great inspiration in capturing the texture and vibrancy of the land itself. The works in the exhibition relating to her trip include a re-interpretation of the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul, as well as other historic landmarks that she came across for the first time.

To explore the duality of cultural influences throughout an art practice can be a difficult task for an artist to avoid. These experiences act as a roadmap to how I navigate my way through life....The abstract and biological inspire my imagery when linked with personal and contextual accounts that together result in a form of metaphorical expression. These sources represent my personal investigation and exploration of how I see myself as an allegoric entity ...I love creating works where the human senses play a major role, where I can touch, feel and see the process come together onto the sheet of paper. Gokcen Altinok.

EBRU ARDA



*Bir Fincan Kahve (Cup of Caffeine) 2009, 2mins 30secs hand drawn animation.
Still image courtesy the Artist.*

Ebru Arda was born in Istanbul in 1984 and currently lives in Sydney. She studied film and performance art at the College of Fine Art (COFA), Paddington graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in 2009 majoring in Time Based Art. During her studies at COFA she took a year off and went back to Istanbul in order to re-connect with her culture again. Ebru's experimental films are influenced by her interest in frame-by-frame style (stop motion) animation.

The film *Bir Fincan Kahve (Cup of Caffeine)* in the exhibition is a short stop-motion experimental animation that consists of charcoal drawing, along with other mediums close to charcoal. The work invites the audience into a world of superstition and adventure, driven by the art of coffee reading from a tradition centuries old.

SARIT COHEN



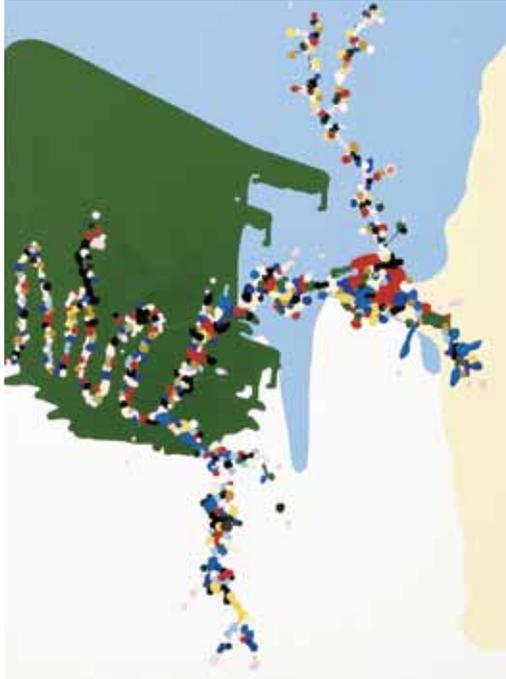
Strength – flat plater 2008, Porcelain slip cast oxides hand built.

Sarit Cohen was born in Beersheba, southern Israel and is of Turkish and Indian decent. She has lived in Australia for 25 years and currently lives in Canberra. Sarit has a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Ceramics) from the Australian National University and Graduate Diploma in Education from the University of Canberra.

Of all the plastic arts, ceramics is arguably the one that most overtly references the practices and traditions that constitute the rituals of everyday life.

These activities cross-cultural and historic boundaries and the expression of these is what concerns Sarit Cohen in her intensely personal yet universally embracing art. Her simple forms are exquisitely populated with applied designs and carved motifs which speak of a range of sources – Islamic architecture, the Hebrew language, Chinese decorative symbols – to name a few. Cohen's inclusion of this complexity of signs and simplicity and directness of form, beautifully and subtly encompasses her own life experience. Peter Haynes, Director ACT Museum and Galleries.

HUSEYIN SAMI



Welcome to Tomorrow 2007, acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm.
Image courtesy the Artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery Sydney.

Huseyin Sami was born in the UK and is of Turkish–Cypriot decent and currently lives in Sydney. Huseyin has a Master of Arts from Sydney College of the Arts and in 2005 he won the prestigious Sydney College of the Arts Travelling artists scholarship worth \$28,000, which allowed him to do a post-graduate year at CCA Kitakyushu in Japan. Huseyin Sami's practice reveals a highly individualistic oeuvre and mode of working that stems from a repertoire of pictorial codes and ideas that pertain to the activity of painting. He has formulated a unique language with the medium of household paint, which aids him in addressing the question of how and what to paint. Sami's work explores the possibilities inherent in the painted process, combining activities that explore a mixture of authorial intention and chance within the action of painting, constructing a sense of experimentation, process and play.

LIST OF WORKS

Gokcen Altinok

In Istanbul no. I 2007

Lino relief on rice paper 93 x 63cm

In Istanbul no. II 2007

Lino relief on rice paper 93 x 63cm

In Istanbul no. III 2007

Lino relief on rice paper 93 x 63cm

Bosphorus One 2009

Collagraph on paper 30 x 42cm

Bosphorus Two 2009

Collagraph on paper 30 x 42cm

Bosphorus Seven 2009

Collagraph on paper 30 x 42cm

Alternate Transformations Gold Series

Untitled I, Untitled II, Untitled III 2009

Collagraph with gold pigment on paper
76 x 56cm

Along The Way 2007 (Triptych)

Collagraph on paper 117 x 87cm

The Journey 2007

Collagraph on paper 63 x 93cm

Untitled I 2007

Collagraph on paper 28 x 23cm

Untitled II 2007

Collagraph on paper 28 x 25cm

Ebru Arda

Bir Fincan Kahve (Cup of Caffeine) 2009

hand drawn animation, 2 mins 30 secs

Sarit Cohen

Placement – plate 2010

Celadon glaze oxides and carving

Light a candle for Peace – plate 2010

Celadon glaze oxides and carving

Landscape of the desert – vases (nine) 2010

Porcelain slip cast, transparent glaze and oxides

Salad bowls (three) 2010

Porcelain slip cast transparent glaze and oxides

Cups (three) 2011

Porcelain slip cast transparent glaze and oxides

Strength – flat platter 2008

Porcelain slip cast oxides hand built

Rightness – flat platter 2008

Porcelain slip cast oxides hand built

For Life – flat platter 2008

Porcelain slip cast oxides hand built

Displacement – flat platter 2008

Porcelain slip cast oxides hand built

Huseyin Sami

The Pink Peak 2007

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

Welcome to Tomorrow 2007

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

Untitled (untitled) 2008

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

Early Morning Blues 2008

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

I know that you know 2008

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

The Eternal Triangle 2008

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

Love luck luster [sic] 2008

Acrylic on canvas 101.5 x 76cm

EXHIBITION DATES 12 MARCH-10 APRIL 2011

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