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# **Home-work:**

**a study of home at the threshold of autoethnography and art practice**

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## **Abstract**

The movement of people and the fluxes of the world create complex topographies and destabilise the location of our homes. In this practice-based PhD, I explore the shifting sense of home that this manifests. The dramatic transformation of the boundaries of home that demarcates the borders between ‘here’ and ‘there’, “us” and ‘them’ is examined through an autoethnographically informed approach, which takes the researcher’s self as a medium as well as a source of research. Based on personal experience, the changing nature of ‘home’ is studied as it is anchored into the self, adopting an approach that studies the cultural through the personal.

In this research, the methods of research are: strategies of observing, attending to the unsettling forces of the unfamiliar, documenting my personal responses on a daily basis, and unpacking some of the existing forms and practices that sustain ideas of belonging and proposing new forms of expression to this unhomey feeling. In this study, the objective is the study of the field (including the dissolving of the ground one is standing on) and the proposing new forms, new visions. This being the case, my methods come from the disciplines of autoethnography and art practice. Throughout my PhD, I aimed to negotiate the different means these two approaches work through their field that challenges the issues of representation, documentation and presentation in cultural inquiry.

This thesis explores the transformation of the sense of home and my own sense of belonging based on personal experience. It is also a contribution to the discourse that has flourished between ethnography and contemporary art over the last two decades. The project is situated at the transdisciplinary site between artistic and ethnographic disciplines and reconsiders their mutual interest in the work of cultural inquiry. With a particular focus on the moment that inquiry meets its public, I explored other possibilities of “graphy” (writing) that conventionally translates as a descriptive, textual representation in ethnography. I strived to suggest alternative forms through the ways artistic inquiry work on its field that takes this moment of encounter as a crucial part of its process. Thus, the thesis is an account of these negotiations that

complements the experiments in my art practice, through which I have explored the dialogue between the two distinctive approaches to inquiry.

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Harika Esra Oskay Malicki

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## Prologue

In my PhD I have studied the notion of “home” that defines the boundaries between ‘here’<sup>1</sup> and ‘there’, ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘familiar’ and ‘unfamiliar’. In a world of increased mobility, migrations, voluntary or involuntary displacements, “the empirical and metaphorical house, home and homeland” are in a deep and unprecedented crisis, as Hamid Naficy remarks (1999, p.6). I have inquired into this phenomenon through an autoethnographically informed research and examined the transformation of my own sense of home after I moved to the UK. I studied the disorienting experience of being away from my primary home and aimed to analyse the processes at work in the production, reproduction and dissolution of a sense of home, that inner diagram ingrained into the, “deep material of the self” (Hoffmann, 1999, p.50).

Considering the work of inquiry not only as the analysis of the field one is studying - the dissolving of the ground one is standing on (Rogoff, 2006) - but also an endeavour that involves proposing new forms, new visions, I have studied the shifting place of home by employing methods that cut across the practices of ethnography and contemporary art. In doing so, I have strived to unpack the subdued practices and the rituals instilled into my daily life, into my habitual ways of dwelling, in order to understand how these intangible practices circulate and reproduce a sense of belonging. Strategies of observing, attending to the disconcerting forces of the unfamiliar, documenting my personal responses on a daily basis, unpacking the material manifestations and practices that sustain the feeling of belonging and proposing new forms to express my changing ideas of home have been my methods. Thus, I have explored the fabric our sense of home is made of, how the endless shift between ‘here’ and ‘there’ has obliterated the familiar

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1 While the exact location of departure points and destinations blur with the endless back and forth movement in this in-between dwelling, the words “here” and “there” are not used to define fixed, set locations (i.e. Turkey, UK) throughout the thesis. Their indeterminate position implies the continuous shift and the unsettled boundaries of home.

outlines of my home, and I have searched for forms to express this unsettling experience in my practice.

In a way, my practice-based research has been a continuous border crossing between autoethnographic inquiry and contemporary art practice that aspired to contribute to the vibrant dialogue between art and ethnography that has emerged over the last two decades. Yet, not content with, “simple borrowings, importations, and accumulations of existent disciplinary perspectives, concepts, and methodologies” (van Manen, 2001, p.850), I have attempted to go beyond the mere reproduction of disciplinary tools, methods and tropes. The complexity of the experience demands us to be critical and even, “unfaithful” to our disciplines (Kristeva, 1998, p.11). Situated between the ‘undisciplined’ practices of art and the, “most anti-academic discipline” of anthropology (Ingold, 2013, p.2) my research, therefore, necessitated a questioning of the disciplinary boundaries.

This written piece provides an account of my inquiries located between art and ethnography. It elaborates on the distinctive ways ethnographic and artistic practices approach their field of study; the ways they work out the field. In this ‘home-work’, I have explored the different ways each discipline understands the work in the field, and the distinctive orders of attention each discipline employs in this work. This text addresses issues emerging in this discussion and interweaves the theoretical underpinnings of my inquiries with my personal accounts.

On one hand, the text is written in a descriptive, explanatory, informative mode narrating my inquiries into the field of home. I elaborate on the context of my research and my research approach. In this sense, it is a retrospective look that describes the work I have undertaken throughout my PhD. On the other hand, the text entails also a prospective look alongside the retrospective one: the writing follows the questions that emerged over the course of my inquiries that opened new relationships, new paths to expand upon further. Thus, this text is not merely a documentation of my inquiries that find their final form in my works, but also an open-ended itinerary. The writing becomes, in a sense, a continuous unfolding,

which parallels the habit of an in-between inhabitant occupying middle points, intermezzos and plateaus (after Deleuze & Guattari, 1989).

The open-ended, suggestive attitude is also a habit of a practitioner whose sense of “graphy”, of writing, indicates a movement that merges, “making, observing, and describing” (Ingold, 2011, p.2). As the Tim Ingold quote suggests, in such an understanding of graphy one does not first observe and then describe; there are no beginnings and ends, no strict orders between these different moments of inquiry. In this regard, this is a kind of writing that revisits the main practice of ethnography.

This written piece is accompanied by a book in a box that is designed to experiment with the particular sense of movement my research manifests. Employing different patterns of browsing, wandering and navigating through the book space, the book-box aims to enact the complex itinerary of my inquiries. The movements of unfolding, unpacking while navigating through the book, and of getting lost across its pages follow similar patterns inherent in the constant ‘home-work’ I have been through. In this continuously unfolding book form and the loose materials in the box, an open-ended narrative that can be entered from any point offers a non-prescriptive itinerary for the reader/audience to follow and perform.

In that sense, this final chapter is also an exploration of the ethnographic monograph: the moment the inquiry meets its public and excavates an “overall sense and order” (Rapport, 1998). As such, the book-box aims to suggest another itinerary across the tripartite fields of reality, representation and subjectivity (as described by Deleuze & Guattari, 1989, p.23) in order to capture the gist of my practice-driven, unruly inquiry on my dwelling in-between.

## **Outline of the Thesis**

In Chapter 1, I introduce the key concepts and ideas that I have explored in my research. To situate my research in a wider context, I examine the concept of home and its shifting ground with a focus on the practices of constituting home. I elaborate on a precarious, wandering practice of dwelling, responsive to the coexistence of multiple languages, histories, memories and cultures. I discuss the meaning of

dwelling, of “stay[ing] in a place” (Heidegger, 1977, p.144), so as to uncover the static, territorial metaphors I used to think about my primary dwelling, my home. Against this background, I explore the mobile metaphors of contemporary theory.

In Chapter 2, I elaborate on the reverberations of this figurative language in contemporary art criticism and search for its motivations for an ethnographic turn in art, which marked a shift in the role of the artist within cultural production. I further discuss the dialogue between the practices of ethnography and contemporary art, through the works of Jonas Mekas, Kutluğ Ataman, Marcel Duchamp, Deniz Sözen, Mona Hatoum and Zarina Hashmi, who give us insights on the, “accelerating and uncertain conditions of human displacement and transplantation” (Mathur, 2011) based on their personal experiences.

In Chapter 3, I expand upon my practice-based research further by exploring each of the individual works produced during my PhD. The pieces are presented and described chronologically, in order to better convey the transforming outlines of my home throughout my stay here. The descriptive language in this chapter is interlaced with sections that highlight the theoretical underpinnings behind my works, the questions each work follows and the ideas they explore, in order to show the wider context within which these works sit. I discuss the way I inhabit the field of my inquiry, examine the motivations and intentions behind my works, and discuss the key concepts I have addressed in my research in relation to the emerging themes in my practice.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I ponder over the final moment the unruly trajectories of research come to a (provisional) end and the work meets its public. From the exhibition I realised in 2012, to my final four-fold book, I explore this moment of encounter with regards to the ethnographic monograph; the form that ethnographic research conventionally meets its interlocutors.



# Chapter 1: Thinking About Home, Away From Home

*Inside the upside-down plastic, disposable glasses by my new window, wrapped in cotton wool I grew seeds some time in the winter of 2008, as I had done years ago. The very first time, what mesmerised me was witnessing the strange potential in what I thought I knew perfectly well already. A bean becoming alive with some attendance and care, green shoots taking off unexpectedly from that little pulse and following a totally different life.<sup>2</sup>*



**Figure 1** Soilless Cultivation, 2008.

The date this series of pictures appear on my blog<sup>3</sup> is 10 December 2008, just a couple of months after my arrival in Newcastle with an educational exchange programme. From the size of the shoots and roots, it looks as though I had set up the chickpea, bean, and lentil to grow a few weeks back. The moment overlaps with the fading of my touristic endeavours, with the acknowledgment that I should develop

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2 The retrospective account that appears in italics reveals my very first impressions of this unfamiliar place, away from home. It was this strong unsettling feeling which led me think further about the meaning of home. The italics highlight the personal gravity of my inquiries. The personal and theoretical appear together and interweave my research with their distinctive voices.

3 <<http://www.esraoskay.blogspot.co.uk/2008/12/topraksz-tarm-cultivation-without-soil.html>>. I have been keeping blog for a long time for documenting my works in progress, noting down ideas, and contemplating on my practice. During my PhD this blog-keeping practice has also become a platform where I reflect on my continuing research and discuss emerging ideas. Thus, it has become another means of elaborating on the issues of concern.

another kind of relationship with this new place. Away from familiarities and routines of home, this place was going to be where I dwell in and slowly settle down. The eccentric habits of the locals would become my everyday reality and the new scenery would become my regular view. I would follow the same paths, walk the same streets and be subject to the local patterns of behaviour to the extent that they would become part of my mundane life. It must have been obvious from the very beginning, but I had not fully realised the consequences of my extended stay before I embarked on this journey.

My elongated stay on this peculiar island primarily made me think about the location of my home, the anchor point that defines this location as ‘there’. What is it that I call ‘home’? What do I long for, what do I miss when the unfamiliarities of this new land become wearisome? In moments of homesickness, of nostalgia where do I want to *return*?

As Milan Kundera indicates, nostalgia is the feeling of, “unappeased yearning to return” (2003, p.5). The Turkish word *sıla* describes a similar feeling; it translates as a meeting or reunion with a place or acquaintance with whom one has lost touch. In everyday language, *sıla* also translates as “home-land” or “hometown” (Nişanyan Sözlük, Online). *Gurbet* stands at the other end of this idea of home; it means to be away from where one was born and has lived. The word *garip* shares the same etymological roots as *gurbet* and denotes a person who is away from his or her homeland (Nişanyan, Sözlerin Soyağacı). The word also means strange. *Gurbet* is a strange place, where you feel *garip* and awkward, like a stranger.

The everyday language that we use to speak about home seems to describe it as a fixed point, a place we are originally from, and somewhere we return to. This place is, “a centre of meaning”, Yi-Fu Tuan argues; “a home, a nation, a fireplace” they are all places on different scale, requiring different levels of, “abstract, indirect” or direct processes of engagement to sustain them (1975, p.153). Home as, “a centre of meaning” is the point of gravity where our sense of belonging is attracted towards. The metaphor of roots, which is widely used to describe our relationship to home, defines the character of this relationship as natural and thus, unquestionable. We

grasp the soil of our home firmly and naturally, we are nurtured and cared for by it. In “Soilless Cultivation”, these metaphors unearth and manifest my primary understanding of home.

*The shoots crack the body of the bean and chickpea. The shoots and the roots start growing in opposite directions, stretching towards the air and leaning towards the earth. Yet, the solid material of the windowsill does not allow the roots grow that way, so they grow sideways. With its roots the pulse tries to stay put in place, in order to balance the force of its shoots moving towards the daylight and the sky. The shoots and leaves move in a very delicate and complex manner. While growing in the disposable plastic they fill the space with their presence.*



**Figure 2** Bean growing.

In his study of the poetics of space, Gaston Bachelard suggests that, “we are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house [the house we were born in], and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme” (1964, p.15). That primary home both instils in us and forms our responses to subsequent experiences; it shapes how we respond to the world and determines the limits of our

expectations, our horizon. Thus, “the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us” (Bachelard, 1964, p.15).

“The character is at home” Descombes remarks, “when he is at ease in the rhetoric of the people with whom he shares life” (in Augé, 1995, p.108). A similar diagram frames the language of the inhabitants of the same home, due to having threaded their way through the same patterns, similar assumptions and preconceptions about the world. The boundaries of home come to an end when the lines of that shared horizon fade away. The limits of home comes to an end at a point, “where his interlocutors no longer understand the reasons he gives for his deeds and actions, the criticisms he makes or the enthusiasms he displays” (Descombes in Augé, 1995, p.108).

In the same way, Zygmunt Baumann describes home as, “the place where nothing needs to be proved and defended, as everything is just there, obvious, familiar” (1996, p.30). Home is the habitual order, the rules of which we know by heart. It is a clear-cut, routine, repetitive order that defines our expectations and assumptions. Outside of its limits, the familiar character of things and the causality of acts fall apart.

*Growing within cotton wool on a solid surface, without the soft, loose, porous soil that the roots would naturally find their way through, the roots of the bean go against the usual course. The cotton wool layer works like a membrane covering the bean. At that particular moment (documented in Figure 2), its roots seem entangled with the web of cotton fibres. Rather than growing into it and finding their way through the soil, the roots seem to escape the cotton layer. The title “Soilless Cultivation” describes cultivation at a distance from the natural environment of the soil where it is, “cherished, nurtured, cared for” (Heidegger, 1977, p.145).<sup>4</sup>*

*Culture [cultivation]: mid-15c., “the tilling of land,” from Middle French culture and directly from Latin cultura “a cultivating, agriculture,” figuratively “care, culture, an honoring,” from past participle stem of colere “tend, guard, cultivate, till” (Online Etymology Dictionary).*

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<sup>4</sup> See Heidegger later in this chapter, page 18.

Since I have moved ‘here’, the imaginary borders between ‘here’ and ‘there’, ‘familiar’ and ‘unfamiliar’ have shifted. The ground I am stepping on has lost its familiarity. The incompatible orders of ‘here’ and ‘there’ have brought a feeling of being at a loss as to how to respond to the changing parameters of mundane, everyday situations. The shortcomings of the habitual ways I go about the world demanded I find my way (again) on this new land.

Rebecca Sollnit in her book *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* defines two kinds of loss: “Losing things is about the familiar falling away, getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing...the world has become larger than your knowledge of it” (2005, p.23). The word “familiar” reminds us again, what kind of relationship and feeling we are thinking about when we talk about home. The familiar brings to mind an organic, inherent relationship; something we are born into. This sense of familiarity is woven into our earliest memories, the sources and origins of which are lost but which have become much stronger in their obliterated presence in our gestures and in our embodied knowledge. Its concrete reality dissolves into a visceral feeling rather curiously, becoming an intangible but powerful feeling that sustains and reproduces the diagram of the first house that we grew up in.

Away from home, there is a two-fold loss that entails, “losing things” as well as, “getting lost”. The unfamiliarity of a new house generates a state of constant doubt about what we think we know and take for granted, which was ‘sown’ in the familiar order of home. Thus, “the familiar falls away”. The unfamiliar seems to disrupt permanently the feeling of the familiar. Once outside that habitual order, lost within the new order of things, the most mundane, routine everyday practices become unfamiliar:

We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use to the world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings (Arendt in Ritivoi, 2002, p.13).

Arendt succinctly describes the experience of losing one’s home and the effects of the loss on a personal level (ibid.). We position ourselves within the limits and

possibilities of home, we develop an attitude towards the world while growing into its rooms. The movements of our body, the movements of our thoughts and of our senses are shaped within what the rooms of this house allow. Our home draws the limits of our world and the vision of our world is tightly interwoven with our sense of self. Our primary vocabulary, through which we speak and act, is formed within this, “natural habitat” (Bauman, 2004, p.12). The concrete structure of home renders into an immaterial matter ingrained into our sense of self and, therefore, the loss of home has distressing effects on the psyche of the individual, as Arendt remarks (in Ritivoi, 2002).

The feeling of home is produced by performing daily rituals and everyday practices. It is sustained by stories we tell to each other, and by the myths and narratives interweaving the texture of daily life. Home becomes, “no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived” (Berger in Rapport, 1997, p.73). It is the intangible lines that form our approach to everyday reality and manifests themselves in our immediate responses.

“To be at home in an environment”, Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson argue, is, “to situate the world around oneself” (1998, pp.21–22). Once we leave our home behind, we are caught between the differing worlds of ‘here’ and ‘there’. The ground we are standing on shifts relentlessly, demanding us to reorient ourselves over and over. Thus, there is no concrete, fixed, stable ground for such an *intermezzo* state.

“The life of the nomad is the *intermezzo*”, Deleuze & Guattari state. “The elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilising them” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.380). Here the centre of meaning constantly moves. Rapport and Dawson also argue that in nomadic tribes the feeling of home is sustained through, “anti-structural events”, like rituals, routines and myths (1998, p.67). In this sense, the idea of home does not necessarily involve a tangible centre; it does not refer to a concrete, fixed place. These everyday practices develop immaterial ties that keep the sense of home together. In this nomadic ‘in-between’ dwelling, our rooted metaphors are challenged, the soil they would hold onto lose its stable ground; “The land ceases to be land, tending to become simply ground (sol) or

support” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.381). The naturality of the bonds we attach to a place become uprooted and denaturalised in this intermezzo state.

## **1.1 The habitual order of the familiar**

Judith Butler points out that it is through the repetition of these intangible practices of our everyday world, “the embodied rituals of everydayness” or habitus, that, “a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own ‘obviousness’” (1999, p.114). The obvious order of this habitus is closed to its outsiders. As Pierre Bourdieu suggests, habitus produces a, “common sense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning (sens) of practices and the world” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.80). The outsiders cannot understand this “sense” that organises the order of everyday. The sum of these everyday practices interweaves a common ground, a base for the possibility of communication.

By drawing an, “immanent law...laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing”, habitus conditions the subject and lays the common ground we share with others. This shared ground provides the basis for a, “minimum of concordance” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.81). This immanent law ensures that every one of us gather a similar sense, “from the expression, individual or collective...improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings)” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.80).

Common sense, that intangible and most complex form of sense through which we perceive the world, provides an understanding about what is going on around us and the means of participation in the daily humdrum. This common sense provides, “efficient short cuts for complex experiences” (Stewart, 1979, p.63). The borders of our rhetorical country are maintained through this intangible yet powerful sense we share with others. It serves to harmonise people’s responses and furnishes us with a common rhythm.

What happens when our habitual responses do not correspond with the expectations of the people with whom we share a life now? What happens in the “contrapuntal” (Said, 1990, p.366) state of the in-between, while independent melodies coexist without disappearing and dissolving into one another?

Pierre Bourdieu and Tim Ingold both speak about the position of human agency within habitus with the vocabulary of skilled practices. There are specific skills to be acquired, a code to be mastered, appropriated, twisted and adjusted (Bourdieu, 1977; Ingold, 2000). The habitus settles down into the repertoire of one's body over time. The everyday rituals settle into our immediate responses, they become embodied in us. Tim Ingold argues that, children learn to carry, "the forms of their dwelling in their bodies" by growing up, "in environments furnished by the work of previous generations" (Ingold, 2000, p.186). They acquire, "specific skills, sensibilities, and dispositions" that are embedded in their surroundings and learn to follow, and become sensitive to the particular way of doing of things (ibid.). Marcel Mauss' understanding of habitus as an, "'acquired ability' and 'faculty'" also contributes to the idea that being an inhabitant of a habitus relies on an embodied knowledge that we develop over time (1973, p.73). Tim Ingold suggests that this ability is not based on a "genetic" relationship, "nor is it necessary to invoke some other kind of vehicle for the inter-generational transmission of information" (2000, p.186). It is through being exposed to the everyday practices on a regular basis that the habitus leaves its traces on its subjects. The material world crafts what is deemed as, "proper behaviour... without us noticing", and the subjects become, "a member of any given society" (Miller, 2009, p.4). Thus, the form of our dwelling becomes embodied within our responses to the world.

How do I dwell as a newcomer, or as a latecomer, with an embodied knowledge of 'getting by' in everyday circumstances harvested somewhere else, already furnished with another kind of common sense, another kind of everyday rhythm?

The skills that I have acquired in my familiar habitus fail me 'here' now. I am unable to make sense of the dynamics of this new order of the everyday, the basics of life I take for granted and I am unable to understand what is pertinent, acceptable, appropriate, or proper. Not being able to understand even the mundane humdrum and respond adequately to the simplest situations challenges my sense of self and the foundations of home shaped within it. The feeling of awkwardness, the inadequacy of my responses and the failure of my gut instincts in everyday situations shatter my

self-confidence. This is an exhausting, embarrassing, and at times isolating experience.

Reflecting upon her migration from Poland to Canada as a teenager, and the change from being known as Ewa to Eva, writer Eva Hoffman suggests that, “the period of first, radical dislocation” makes us realise, “how much we are creatures of culture, how much we are constructed and shaped by it – and how much incoherence we risk if we fall out of its matrix” (1999, p.50). The culture we grow cultivates us and determines our expectations.

Judith Okely, from an anthropological point of view – an area whose practitioners could be considered professional outsiders within the realm of the other they are trying to understand – underlines that our knowledge and understanding of the world is formed by our culture and history (1992, p.16). Unlike a child, when we enter into a culture we are already conditioned by our upbringing, we carry the traces of another dwelling, another knowledge about life in our immediate responses. Our, “past embodied knowledge” determines our perception of the world of others, the new world we enter (Okely, 1992, p.16). While we try to negotiate with the new order of this world, the knowledge of our familiar world is put into dispute. Moreover, our sense of self is deeply challenged when we are, “embodied in new contexts” (Okely, 1992, p.16).

Reflecting on the effects of his enforced exile, Zygmunt Bauman describes the, “upsetting, sometimes annoying” feeling of living in such an in-between state and its repercussions on his sense of himself.

There is always something to explain, to apologize for, to hide or on the contrary to boldly display, to negotiate, to bid for and to bargain for; there are differences to be smoothed or glossed over, to be on the contrary made more salient and legible (2004, p.13).

Bauman’s account draws attention to the relentless process of crafting a new sense of self through the acts of smoothing or glossing over, hiding and displaying, explaining and apologising. While searching for a balance between the two worlds appearing on the horizon, one is caught between conflicting orders of life. The encounter with the

new world outside one's natural habitat challenges the position of one's sense of self formed in that (now distant) habitual order.

There is a tense pull and push between the familiar order of home ingrained into my sense of self and the order of this new place that I need to act within in order to communicate with my current interlocutors. I try to understand the, "immanent law" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.81) governing my daily encounters and perform better within the new order of things to become fluent in it. Thus, while the familiar haunts the unfamiliar and aspires to translate everything to its own making, the unfamiliar begins to bleed into the familiar order as well; it blurs the 'obvious' sense of the familiar. On this unstable ground, home is no longer a fixed centre of meaning, a place to return to but a field that is being constantly unearthed as the encounters with the new sows in doubts into our world. The shifting boundaries between familiar and unfamiliar obscure the meaning of home.

## **1.2 Dwelling in precaria**

"What is the state of dwelling in our precarious age?" asks Heidegger towards the end of his essay *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* (1977, p.161). What makes our relationship to a space more than an "occupation" (Ingold, 2000) and what turns a space into a dwelling, where we are "preserved from harm and danger, preserved from something, safeguarded", and where we are, "at peace" (Heidegger, 1977, p.149). In his reading of Heidegger's text, Tim Ingold abbreviates the main question of the text as such; "what does it take for a house to be a home?" (2000, p.180).

While the roots defining our home are entangled with the unsettling lines of distant horizons, Heidegger's question retains its validity today. What shape does our home take when the precarity that, "penetrated every nook and cranny of human existence" (Bauman, 2000, p.171) disrupt the ways we build bonds with others, how does our identities, identifications are formed in this flux?

Heidegger follows the etymological roots of dwelling in order to unearth the obsolete history of how man relates to space. He finds a deep-seated connection between, "dwelling" and, "building". Building as dwelling means more than: "raising edifices"

(1977, p.147). Building means cultivating, nurturing, cherishing, preserving and caring for as well as raising edifices, constructing and building upon (1977, p.47). Dwelling in this sense suggests growing on the land, rising on it and cultivating (the verb that forebears the word, “culture”) its ground.

“The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling”, says Heidegger (1977, p.157). He expands the idea of dwelling when he re-conceptualises and mobilises the concept of boundary that defines space. A space is, “something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary” Heidegger states (1977, p.152). He challenges what might seem like a self-contained territorial idea, by reminding us of the wandering nature of dwelling:

Everywhere the wandering remains the essence of dwelling, as the staying between earth and sky, between birth and death, between joy and pain, between work and *world* (Heidegger in Norberg-Schulz, 1985, p.18).

To consider the act of wandering as the, “essence of dwelling” redraws the boundaries that demarcate a space. Boundaries divide the same from the other, and define territories and identities. They segregate and bound with the same stroke, they create ‘us’ and ‘them’. Heidegger, however, focuses on the concept of boundary not as a dead end, “at which something stops” but as something, “from which something begins its presencing”. That is why he takes us back to the idea of *horismos* (the horizon as the ever-receding boundary) (Heidegger, 1977, p.154).

As the wisdom of the proverb recounts, a journey beyond home expands our horizon that defines and limits our vision of the world. When we cross the threshold of our home, we are exposed to, “all the cultures and languages and histories” (Rogoff, 2000, p.6), all the different voices of the world. This polyvocality challenges the way we approach the world, which is accustomed to follow the tune of our primary dwelling. We are torn between a desire to go beyond the limits of our home, in search of other routes and to cling to our roots at the same time. The particular idea of home that finds its representation in the metaphor of root attaching itself to the land is put into dispute by the prospect of the routes opening beyond the horizon.

The precarious state of dwelling suggests an indefinite status, “an uncertain future or final destiny” (Bourriaud, 2009c, p.32). The etymological origin of the word, “precarious” is the word “precaria”; “the field cultivated for a set period of time” (Bourriaud, 2009c, p.32). Away from the secure and persistent boundaries of home, we come across a similar field, a similar sense of cultivation and relationship with the land we stand on. The character of dwelling in this precarious state is, “nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal” which is characteristic of a life, “outside habitual order” (Said, 1990, p.366).

Chantal Mouffe argues that at the coexistence of the diverse voices appearing on the horizon, “there is no point of equilibrium where final harmony could be attained” (1994, p.112), thus Mouffe supports standing in the precarious in-between. At this ambiguous place, located where one thing starts presencing while the other is still present, decisions and judgements are suspended. Dwelling in this in-between zone brings the realisation that no position is absolute. As Eva Hoffman argues along similar lines:

It is to discover that even the most interstitial and seemingly natural aspects of our identities and social reality are constructed rather than given and that they could be arranged, shaped, articulated in quite another way (1999, p.51).

We are undone within the dubious, itinerant state of in-between. Everything is revised, re-uttered, revisited, and reconsidered. To repeat, to retrace and reposition our borders, as we know them at every new encounter, *üzerinden geçmek* (the Turkish phrase that means to walk through, cross over in its literal sense) – makes the paths we can go blindfold unidentifiable, unrecognisable. This is what Homi Bhabha calls the, “unhomely”, a state where, “the border between home and world becomes confused” (Bhabha, 1992, p.141). What is at risk at this in-between state is, “the possibility of either coherent narratives or sign systems” (Rogoff, 2000, p.6). When the obvious order of things collapse in the multiplicity of the voices in the horizon there are no longer, “straightforward relations between subjects, places and identities” (Rogoff, 2000, p.6). Our familiar home disintegrates amidst this disbelief

and consequently the, “deep material of the self” (Hoffman, 1999, p.50) primarily shaped by the orders of home is unsettled.

Ian Chambers indicates that in such a state of polyvocality, “other voices, histories and bodies constantly interrupt and fracture the assumed continuum of a presumed rationality and my earlier sense of reality” (1994, p.247). I begin to doubt the naturalness of my responses once my clear-cut world begins to fall apart away from the familiarity of home (that, “experiential construction” magically tying things seamlessly together and making things obvious). Imagining home as an unquestionable and unyielding ground proves to be fallacious.

What happens to the harmony that sustains a minimum of concordance when we move away from our primary dwelling, our home? How do we negotiate with these different voices, how do we achieve harmony? And what does that harmony mean anyway?

Chambers argues that the new inhabitants, the newcomers destabilise, “the fixed geometry of sites and roots” (1994, p.245). He further suggests that these strangers, “dissolve our myths and sterilise the lyricism of our sentences” which consequently obscures the “obvious” (1994, p.248). Nicholas Bourriaud similarly believes in the power of the immigrant, “piecing together a fragile and deracinated culture...far from gaze of the masters of the soil” (2009b, p.33). The immigrant “tinkers” unskillfully and clumsily with the local culture s/he enters, Bourriaud suggests. The utterance of the immigrant changes the sound of everyday language that sustains the communication between the inhabitants and gives it another form.

### **1.3 The metaphors of the precarious dwelling**

In the wandering figures of immigrant and newcomer, Chambers and Bourriaud depict the character of our precarious, mobile, and decentred world. Their metaphorical language is symptomatic of a tendency in contemporary social thought, that uses a vocabulary in which the actual characters of mobility, of displacement take the centre stage (Urry, 2000, p.27). The actual characters in this unhomely, displaced world come to represent the destabilisation of the static notions by which

we perceive the world. Eva Hoffman indicates that in this figurative language the, “virtues of instability, marginality, absence and outsidersness” seem to be embodied (1999, p.47). Through these figures, we discuss the prospect of another kind of relationship with the world, responsive to the reality of its unsettling spatio-temporality. The figures of the nomad (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), the tourist, the vagabond, the pilgrim (see Bauman, 1990), the exile, the refugee (see Demos, 2009), the immigrant (Bourriaud, 2009c) each imply different manners of, “stay[ing] in a place” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 144) that is constantly on the move and unstable.

On the other hand, Eva Hoffman raises her concerns about the implications of such a representative language aspiring to achieve, “a real description of our world, which indeed has become more decentred, fragmented, and unstable” (1999, p.47). She argues that this metaphorical language may obfuscate the actual realities of the concrete borders of our world. Hoffman suggests that we may miss the concrete reality of these lives, “the sheer human cost of actual exile as well as some of its psychic implications, and perhaps even lessons” (Hoffman, 1999, p.47).

As the modern use of the Greek word suggests, metaphor is a vehicle, “of mass transportation” (de Certeau, 1984, p.115). While metaphors strive to close the distance between two distinctive points, they expand the meanings of these departure points. Through displacement, through moving things from their appointed places, metaphors produce new paths. In the seasoned metaphors that are settled in everyday language, these paths disappear. Tim Cresswell argues that the study of metaphors allows us to, “delineate the praxis of everyday life” (1997, p.343). In the metaphors we employ to describe our unstable world, “the politics and ideologies” shaping our everyday realities are embodied (ibid.). Thus, these metaphors give insights about the mundane realities that displacement cast itself upon.

I opened this chapter with the weathered metaphors that are settled into my language, which reflects my deep-seated ideas about home. I have unpacked this particular understanding of home that manifests itself in rooted metaphors that have been replaced by mobile metaphors and the itinerant practices defining the current shape of home. In Chapter 2, I elaborate on the appearance of the distinctive mobile

character of our world in the language of contemporary art criticism and explore the motivations behind it. In the intersecting paths between ethnography and contemporary art practices, I discuss the position of the artist in the field of cultural inquiry, and the strategies they employ while they work out their field.

## **Chapter 2: The Displaced Figure of the Artist**

In this chapter, I aim to locate the key concepts discussed in Chapter 1 within the context of contemporary art. I trace the preoccupation with the subject of displacement and the emergence of figures of displacement in art criticism from the perspective of the 'ethnographic turn' in art. I elaborate on the shifting site of art towards the realm of social, the work of art towards cultural inquiry and accordingly on the changing position of the artist within this expanded site through a study of how artists work within a field that belonged to the realm of ethnography for a long time. In this regard, I explore the various ways artists and ethnographers study this shared field of interest, by looking at selected artists' works that strive to reconfigure, understand and express the unsettling experience of displacement.

### **2.1 The figures of displacement in the contemporary art**

In his study *The Ends of Exile* art critic T.J. Demos analyses the variety of responses artists have given to the phenomenon of displacement across different periods (2009). Demos discusses a state of mind, an ethical stance, a premise for, "a politics of equality" in a world marked by uneven border traffic, by different orders of movement (2009, p.87). In outlining the aesthetics of negotiating with the experience of displacement, he identifies different ethical positions, different ways of dwelling in the world within the figures of diasporic, the nomad and the refugee. Each of these three figures mark a distinctive position taken against the reality of an increasingly precarious world defined by, "the diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information and wastes; and of the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse mobilities" (Urry, 2000, p.1). For Demos, nomadic signifies an existence without any attachments, an escape from all the bonds and responsibilities, which risks, "overlooking how the less-privileged are excluded from that same freedom" (2009, p.82). He advocates art practices that come closer to depicting the world more realistically by evoking the 'refugee' in every one of us.

Demos' delineation of the figures of exile diasporic, refugee, flaneur etc. continues throughout his essay. This formal feature of his analysis echoes the figurative

language of contemporary social thought that is inclined to think with spatial metaphors, with different modalities of inhabiting space defined by movement. Demos similarly measures the field of displacement as it is represented by artists with the footsteps of the displaced figures. A related vocabulary also appears in the analyses of other art critics such as Marsha Meskimmon, Nikos Papastergiadis and Saloni Mathur, where we come across a similar approach. Mathur announces the coming of the time of the migrant, in *The Migrant's Time: Rethinking Art History and Diaspora* (2011), and Papastergiadis foresees the emergence of a, “cosmopolitan disposition” (2011). Likewise, Meskimmon, in *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination* sets out to survey, “the role of art in conceiving and reconfiguring the political, ethical and social landscape of our time” (2011, p.6). She forecasts the emergence of a cosmopolitan identity: a “be(long)ing at home everywhere” (2011, p.6).

Art not only represents and interprets this unsteady state determined by diverse mobilities unsettling the secure boundaries of our abodes now but, as Meskimmon argues, art has an agency that, “enable[s] us to participate in, and potentially change, the parameters through which we negotiate that world” (2011, p. 9). Thus, the role of the art practice is to imagine a future state that we cannot anticipate within the restrictions of our world; art offers, “an imagination that may produce material effects in turn” (2007, p.87).

Assigning the artist the role to envision another world emphasises the, “ethical and political responsibility” (Meskimmon, 2011, p.7) of the artist and brings back the old debates about the artists as the committed figure within the realm of politics. With these discussions at the forefront, Hal Foster opens his 1996 dated essay, “Artist as Ethnographer”. Building upon Walter Benjamin’s arguments about artist as producer, Foster questions the tumultuous liaison between art and politics, and consequently the role and work of the artists within society.

## **2.2 The role of the artist within the field of culture**

As Okwui Enwezor remarks, that it is the, “question of the artist’s or writer’s commitment under certain social conditions” that Benjamin problematises in this

essay; a question that is very much relevant today (Enwezor, 2004, p.1). Nevertheless, the current shift in the scope of politics affects the parameters we analyse the relationship between art and politics, the conditions determining artist's commitment. "[A]rt and politics are now much more broadly concerned with conditions of social life", as we can see in topics like, "the environment, human rights, globalization, racism, nationalism and social justice" becoming the focus of politics and art (Enwezor, 2008, p.76).

This changing field of politics also results in the shifting subject of association in politically engaged art. While Hal Foster locates the artist within the field of culture, as a cultural actor dealing with the, "cultural and/or ethnic other", Benjamin had the artist who, "side[s] with the proletariat" in mind (Benjamin in Foster, 1996, p.302). Now it is the cultural, ethnic Other that artists identify with, which structurally follows, "the old 'author as producer' model" and marks a paradigmatic shift, which Foster calls, "the ethnographic turn" in art (1996, p.172).

As the world we inhabit increasingly becomes, "marked by movement, change and multiplicity" (Meskimmon, 2011, p.5), the subject the artist becomes concerned with is the exile, refugee, nomad, the diasporic and the migrant. These voluntary and involuntary characters of displacement are the figures of a world where geographies of home are disrupted; a world in which the meaning of place, the practices we employ to remain in place, are challenged.

This is a field of inquiry that artists share with the practitioners of ethnography, since they both show an interest in, "understanding...the one world we all inhabit" (Ingold, 2011, p.229) in their own distinctive ways. In order to explore further how the unique manners of artistic and ethnographic inquiries work on this mutual field of interest, in the following section, I will look into the practices, tropes and disciplinary presumptions that define the conventions of the ethnographic method. With this brief detour into how ethnography works, I aspire to expand my explorations on the possible dialogues between art and ethnography.

## **2.3 A brief introduction to the ethnographic practice**

The first and foremost objective of ethnography is to write about people and culture, as is evident in the word's "ethno" and "graphy", which translate as "people" and "writing", respectively (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Paul Atkinson defines the process of fieldwork in the following, related, terms:

In the first mode, the ethnographer is engaged in "writing down" what goes on: the imagery is that of transcription uninterrupted by self-conscious intervention or reflection. The second phase of "writing up" carries stronger connotations of a constructive side to the writing. In this phase what was written "down" is treated as data in the writing "up" (Atkinson, 1990, p.61).

A key methodology in anthropology (as well as in other social sciences e.g. cultural geography), ethnography entails, set of methods through which the researcher engages in people's everyday lives: observing, participating, recording and collecting as much data as possible to tease out the research subject studied (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, p.1). For the purpose of understanding the field, ethnographic study employs research techniques that range from participant observation to surveys, censuses, interviews and life histories that facilitate the gathering of information (Llobera, 2003). The empirical data collected through this research is then translated into the final monograph into a written text, which describes and analyses the field (Eriksen, 2004).

In its traditional sense, ethnographic inquiry requires a direct engagement with the field of study. The quintessential method of ethnography, fieldwork, epitomises this emphasis on firsthand experience and demands spending a lengthy period of time on a particular site, familiarising oneself with the everyday practices of the others. As Nigel Rapport indicates, the outcome of this study takes the form of, "final writing of coherent reflections and analyses, facilitating a later retrieval of overall sense and order" (1997, p.94). The process of writing up entails interpretation of the experience of the fieldworker at the field and, "transforming experience into text, into a meaningful narrative" (Rapport, 1997, p.93).

The discipline of anthropology has undergone a substantial self-critique over recent times. As the founding principles and the conventions of discipline were disputed and subverted, the limits of ethnography and the role of its practitioners also become the centre of some heated debates. Anthropologist George E. Marcus states that around the time the discipline of anthropology re-evaluated its boundaries, its responsibilities and duties as the postcolonial discourse cast a critical eye upon the conventions of the anthropological mind during eighties, the art world began to show an increasing interest in the realm of the social, as evidenced by the soaring number of socially conscious artworks being produced (Marcus, 2008, p.36). Thus, anthropologists' concern with the study of social culture overlapped with a moment in art, when artists put particular focus on exploring this very same field. This shared momentum resulted in an acceleration in the dialogue between art and ethnography. Before elaborating on this dialogue, I will first explore the underlying ideas behind this shifting site of art, which brought art practices in close contact with ethnographic practices.

## **2.4 The expanded site of art**

This emergence of the, “socially conscious artwork” (Marcus, 2008, p.36) corresponds to what art historian Miwon Kwon terms as, “discursive” understanding of the site in art, the genealogy of which she traces back to the minimalist preoccupation with the notion of “site”. Kwon emphasises the, “phenomenological and experiential” character of the minimalist site, which focuses on, “the actual physical attributes of a location” (2004, p.3) continued in the notion of site-specific work, which was concerned with the institutions of art and its impacts on the presentation, perception and, inevitably, the production of art. While in its early stages the focal point of site-specificity was art institutions, later this scope has broadened when the meaning of “site” was expanded to include non-art realms. The presence of a work of art was no longer considered to be limited within the physical constraints of the exhibition space. It was recognised that the institutional framework of art was actually formed by a network of other discourses determined by social and political agendas (Bois et al., 2005, p.624).

Soon, as Foster succinctly indicated, “the institution of art could no longer be described only in spatial terms (studio, gallery, museum, and so on); it was also a discursive network of different practices and institutions, other subjectivities and communities” (1996, p.184). This analysis in itself can be considered a “mobility turn” in contemporary social thought that marks a shift in the way we think about space (see Urry, 2007). Within this perspective, space is defined as the network of relations and the flows in interaction, rather than suggesting a fixed, static location. Similarly, the discursive understanding of art marked the perception of site as contingent to, “much broader cultural, social and discursive fields, and organized intertextually”, as Miwon Kwon argues (2004, p.3). Site-specific art was considered the prominent form in institutional critique, marking a shift of focus from the work towards its surrounding site, and the acknowledgement of what Kwon called the “discursive turn”: the dependency of artwork on wider social, economic and cultural parameters.

In this lineage, the site slipped away, “from the surface of the medium to the space of the museum, from institutional frames to discursive networks” (Foster, 1996, p. 184). Thus, the site of art extends, “across much broader cultural, social, and discursive fields” (Kwon, 2004, p.3) and progresses beyond familiar art contexts. The axis of art practice has shifted from a medium specific practice into a discourse specific one (Foster, 1996, p. 184). Instead of the problems intrinsic to the art discipline, an un-disciplined movement, “from social issue to issue, from political debate to debate” began to dominate contemporary art production, which marks the so-called “ethnographic turn” in art (Foster, 1996, p.199).

As the site of art began to converge with that of ethnography, artists and ethnographers began to show a deeper curiosity about one another’s endeavours. Considered as a, “science of alterity” (Foster, 1996, p.182), anthropology seemed to offer the means to access the field of cultural inquiry. As a consequence, its methods began to be widely appropriated by artists who worked within the expanded site of art. The shape of artistic production was again changing, and accordingly, questions about the work and role of the artist became the subject of discussion, this time in relation to the ‘artist-ethnographer’ paradigm.

Hal Foster indicated his concerns about the use of ethnographic methods of anthropology as a magical formula in the study of culture. The, “Artist as ethnographer...draw[s] indirectly on basic principles of the participant-observer tradition” or other seemingly ethnographic methods like inventories, questionnaires and some documentary strategies (Foster, 1996, p.181). Its methods can, however, be appropriated without questioning the problems inherent in ethnographic work, which as Foster states with critical overtones, results in, “pseudo-ethnographies” or, “testimonies of the new empathetic intellectual” or, “traumatic, confessional” accounts (Foster, 1996, p.180).

The mere replication of ethnographic methods not only risks producing meagre ethnographies but it also restricts the emergence of possibilities across the distinctive practices of inquiry. Instead, this limited model of artist as ethnographer should be explored further. For that very purpose, I propose to locate the conversation between art and ethnography on a transdisciplinary ground, beyond the restrictions of disciplinary boundaries. This will shift the focus from methodological disparities towards the shared concerns of art and ethnography.

A reconceptualisation of ethnography that challenges the conventions of documentary procedures and the realistic paradigm at the heart of ethnographic research proves to be necessary for expanding the conversation between art and ethnography. In Tim Ingold’s definition of graphy as the primary activity defining ethnographic research, I find potential for such. Ingold indicates that the act of graphy is not constrained to writing, but can be an act beyond, “a matter of finding the right words to record or convey what has been observed” (2007, p. 128). When anthropologist Edward Bruner identifies the anthropological work as, “one mode of representation” among many others (1986, p.16), he opens the ground of ethnography for forms of representation that employs strategies other than documentary methods. Bruner establishes his argument upon the incommensurable, “gaps between reality, experience, and expressions” (1986, p.7). There is no form of representation that could capture the lived experience unproblematically (Denzin, 1997, p.3), validating the ‘unruly’ manners of artistic expression as relevant in the study of lived experience, a field of interest both ethnographers and artists share.

With the decline in the, “distinctive documentary function” of ethnography (Marcus, 2010, p.86), the documentary language that overwhelms the ethnographic work also obliterates. The methods of traditional documentary that manifest in the, “gathering of ‘facts’, the careful preservation of imperilled folkways, the construction of arguments through demonstrative proofs” (Renov, 2004, p.171) lose their unshaken authority in ethnographic work. As the objectivist basis behind the documentary modality becomes undermined, the neutral, impartial observer in the field is dethroned and the distinctions between subject and object of study are blurred. Within the field of anthropology, this shift corresponds to the reflexive turn, which openly questions the claims for objective truth and unbiased representations of the field (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Davies, 1998; Etherington, 2004; Hertz, 1997). Instead of claiming to reveal the truth, the emphasis on the subjectivity of the experience focuses on, “detailing concrete experience and multiple perspectives that include participant’s voices and interpretations”, as Carolyn Ellis argues (2004, p.29). The singular, subjective voices defy the epistemology of ethnographic inquiry that risks characterising individual subjects as, “representative of cultural practices and even ‘human’ principles” (Russel, 1999, p.5), thus diminishing the complexity of reality into abstract generalisations.

In contemporary art practices T.J. Demos remarks that a similar tendency manifests itself in, “subjectively reflexive narratives”, the main concern here being to express experience without the risk of objectifying the studied subjects, without producing, “victimized objects” (2009, p.84). In the following section, I would like to expand further upon these discussions between art and ethnography through the works of selected artists, adopting a more subjective attitude. The works of Mekas, Ataman, Duchamp, Sözen, Hatoum and Zarina individually study the field of displacement, through reflecting upon different forms of displacement defining their experience. Embarking on a study within the field of anthropology, these works explore the subject of displacement from a personal perspective, through their individual experience of having left their homes behind. In this regard, the works could be read from the perspective of autoethnography, which studies the cultural through the

personal. In such a study, the personal becomes a means to examine the wider social context the individual is located in, affected by and contributes to.

In the discussion of the works, I assume a definition of autoethnography that is understood as a practice, “a particular perspective on knowledge and scholarship” which values the knowledge and experience of the self in inquiry (Denzin, 2008, p. 374). Thus, I do not understand autoethnography as a set of methods to follow, but a particular perspective, an approach to cultural inquiry, to the study of the human world. I, therefore, do not seek methodological parallels between the works I explore and ethnographic methods. The common ground between the case studies and this particular approach of ethnography is based on the mutual interest in the, “expression of experience”, by taking the self as a medium of inquiry. Through the study of the artistic strategies, “the imaginative techniques” of art (Ravetz, 2009), I aim to explore how the effects of displacement as it is cast on individual worlds are reflected in these works.

## **2.5 The subjective voices of displacement in art**

The section opens with the analysis of two filmmakers’ works: Jonas Mekas and Kutluğ Ataman. Although both artists’ works rely heavily on documentary material, on the fragments of daily life imprinted on film, they are not concerned with providing, “verifiable knowledge”, as is the case with traditional documentary modality (Renov, 2008, p.40). In his works Mekas relentlessly records his life after his exile from his homeland Lithuania and escape to US. The urgency of capturing the unsettled order of his life becomes not only a subject of the work, but this experience of ‘homelessness’ reigning over his reality turns into a technique of filming and editing in Mekas’ practice (Russel, 1999, p.282).

Similarly, Ataman tells a story of arrival into a new place in *fff* (2010). Located at the threshold of a documentary language, Ataman refrains from calling himself documentarist: “I don’t make documentaries”, he insists, “I use what you call documentary, raw reality as an ingredient” (in Demos, 2010, p.33). By re-editing the home movies of a British family to construct a new narrative, he looks into the new place he arrives in from the perspective of an outsider. Through giving another order

to the personal archives of these locals with whom he shares a life, Ataman strives to recover the lost familiarity of the everyday.

In Marcel Duchamp's *Box in a Valise* (1935-41), a similar preoccupation with restoring order surfaces. In Duchamp's case, it is the threat of dispersion in the face of displacement that led him to collect his life work and reflected a desire to keep his body of work in order. Demos' (2007) reading of *Box in a Valise* uncovers the links between the tentative form of the box, the alternative order employed in the organisation of the works that defies any logic of categorisation and Duchamp's expatriation. The work stands as a response to the rigid, patriotic notion of identity engulfing during the two World Wars, by proposing a subject, a body (of work) under continuous construction subverting any static forms of representation. The exigency of escaping from the clearly demarcated borders of identity manifests itself once again in the shared authorship of the *Valise* with his female alter ego, Rose Selavy, which accentuates Duchamp's determination to break away from any prescribed categories.

The invention of an alter ego also emerges as a strategy of troubling the clear boundaries between self and Other in Deniz Sözen's work. Her bogus British alter ego, Suzan Dennis (first used by the artist in *My Visit to Aziziye Mosque*, 2008), challenges our perceptions of the limits and limitations of identity. As her arrival in Britain highlights the coexistence of conflicting narratives at the encounter with the Other, the disorientation in her name manifests a concern with relocating, reorienting herself within this new order of life. The contrapuntal character of a dwelling in-between is embodied in the coexistence of Deniz Sözen and Suzan Dennis.

In Mona Hatoum's work, the urge for reorientation marks itself in the repeating motif of maps, as well as the constant transformation of familiar domestic households. In her disorienting interiors the mundane objects are dislocated from their usual contexts and left at an uncanny threshold. The feeling of disjuncture, a feeling Hatoum associates with the dissolving of the solid ground she stands on, infects the defining borders of the objects. In the simultaneity of, "identification-

disidentification” (Mansoor, 2010, p. 60) on this irresolute ground, the character of her in-between, contrapuntal dwelling reveals itself.

The disorienting domestic spaces of Hatoum contrast with Zarina Hashmi’s tranquil, reticent and controlled drawings of the many homes she has inhabited. The last work I focus on is a series of prints in which Hashmi images the places of her home she left behind. Her sense of feeling at a loss at the arrival in a new place and the accompanying desire to recover that loss through a search for an order, symmetry, and distance in her work is explored in this section. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion on how these selected works propose a different form of working on the field of culture, how the ethnographic motivations behind the study of culture take different forms in art.

### **2.1.1 Jonas Mekas: The order of life in dispossession**

Jonas Mekas started filming with a borrowed camera after he arrived in the United States in 1949 and has continued recording whatever has come his way ever since. Mekas’ works are often located within the genres of diary film, autobiographical cinema and personal film. Having been an avid diary keeper before he was forced to leave his home in Lithuania, he developed a habit of recording his life on the medium of film after his arrival to his new abode. For Mekas his films are a continuation of his diary-keeping habit, and thus he calls his films, “travel notebooks” (in Horak, 2010, p.56). He would carry his camera everywhere, just as he would his diary, a habit that has become a central practice in his work.

I didn’t have any long stretches of time to prepare a script, then to take months to shoot, then to edit, etc. I had only bits of time, which allowed me to shoot only bits of film. All my personal work became like notes...I thought what I was actually doing was practicing. I was preparing myself, or trying to keep in touch with my camera, so that when the day would come when I’ll have time, then I would make a “real” film (Mekas in James, 1992, p.149).

As David James argues, “photographing the fragments of his own life was his practice of film” (1992, p.149). Mekas films for keeping a record of his life, as a way of responding and relating to his immediate surroundings as well as a means of proving his existence, here and now. Yet, beyond these more personal motivations in

his works, Mekas accomplishes to give his audience a detailed insight on the reality of the exilic experience. In that sense, Catherine Russell categorises his work as prototypical autoethnographic film, where the, “the film medium mediates between individual and social histories” (1999, p.281). Thus, Mekas’ response to his personal dilemma contributes into unravelling the conditions of the exilic state in a wider context besides fulfilling a personal exigency.

The film diaries were kept intact until a much later date when Mekas could finally bring himself to edit them. Film diaries and diary films constitute two main stages of Mekas’ working process. As David James states, “the former is Jonas Mekas’ personal record of his life, begun only months after his arrival in the United States and continuing up to the present...left unedited for longer or shorter periods of time” (2010, p.56). *Lost Lost Lost* (1976), one of the very first diary films that he released, was based on the footage he had recorded since his arrival in the United States. On this film diary, fourteen years of his life after his arrival in the States, after he had flown from his homeland, Lithuania is recorded:

The first and second reels deal with my life as a young poet and a displaced person in Brooklyn. It shows the Lithuanian immigrant community, their attempts to adapt themselves to a new land and their tragic efforts to regain independence for their native country. It shows my own frustrations and anxieties and the decision to leave Brooklyn and move to Manhattan. Reel three and reel four deal with my life in Manhattan on Orchard Street and East 13th St. First contacts with New York poetry and filmmaking communities. Robert Frank shooting *The Sin of Jesus*. LeRoy Jones, Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara reading at The Living Theatre. Documentation of the political protests of the late fifties and early sixties. First World Strike for Peace. Vigil in Times Square. Women for Peace. Air Raid protests. Reel five includes *Rabbit Shit Haikus*, a series of Haikus filmed in Vermont; scenes at the Film-Maker's Cooperative; filming *Hallelujah the Hills*; scenes of New York City. Reel six contains a trip to Flaherty Seminar, a visit to the seashore in Stony Brook; a portrait of Tiny Tim; opening of *Twice a Man*; excursions to the countryside seen from two different views; that of my own and that of Ken Jacobs whose footage is incorporated into this reel ... (Mekas, online, no date)

The diverse moments of Mekas’ life recorded on the film reels (following many unexpected trajectories as it entangled with the lives of others) lay untouched until

1976, when Mekas eventually edited them. The challenge for Mekas was to give an order to his life collected on these reels. In one of his diary films, *As I was moving ahead, occasionally I saw brief glimpses of beauty*, Jonas Mekas expresses the challenge of ordering and narrating this autobiographical material:

I have never been able really to figure out where my life begins and where it ends...when I begin now to put all this tolls of film together to string them together...the first idea was to keep them chronologically...but then I gave up ...then I begun splicing them together by chance...the way I found them on the shelf...because I really don't know where any piece of my life really belongs. So let it be, let it go...by pure chance...disorder...there is some kind of order ...order of its own...which I do not really understand same as I never understood life...and I do not want to understand them (2000).

Perhaps due to a need to reorient himself within the unfamiliarity of his new dwelling, the urgent need to grasp what is happening around his immediate surrounding has revealed itself as a desire to capture what is happening 'here and now'. As a result, he is left with an excessive amount of filmed material, which brings a question of how to translate all these, "disparate images into an autobiographical narrative" (Horak, 2010, p.57). David James highlights the different temporalities inherent in these two distinctive moments at work in Mekas' practice. He writes: "Where the film diary was constrained within the present of immediate perception...the diary film confronts its own present with the assembled fragments of a time now lost, of loss itself, of a past that can neither ontologically nor filmically be 'presented'" (in Horak, 2010, p.57). This is an attempt to negotiate these two distinctive moments in his practice that reflects the realities of his life as an exile, as a displaced person who has lost the familiarity of home and lives with the fear of losing everything once again. In between these two temporalities, we see glimpses of a displaced life torn between a desire to hold onto now and the past that sticks onto the present.

We hear Mekas speaking over the images we see on the screen, reflecting on the scenes from his collections, yet not necessarily describing or explaining to us what we see. Like home videos, which we shoot and only watch at a much later stage,

Mekas was perhaps seeing what he recorded for the first time when he began editing. We hear him thinking about his life retrospectively. The act of editing triggers the question of how the different moments of his life are tied to one another, how the past relates to the present, how exactly contrapuntal temporalities exist on the horizon of an exile.

When asked why he is so religiously recording, Mekas replied that over the years he has been confronted with this question, he has offered some answers, yet he does not have a definitive response:

All answers that I have given to this question in the past could be wrong, they are all my intentions. One of the answers, usually, is that as an exile, as a displaced person, I felt that I had lost so much, my country, my family, even my early written diaries, ten years of it, that I developed a need to try to retain everything I was passing through, by means of my Bolex camera (2008, p.92).

The excessively fragmented imagery gathered together in these films parallels the sense of loss he found himself amidst. Mekas aspires to pack all the bits and pieces of a life in the limited time the film allows. His films appear as a massive collection of images that collapse in upon each other. In this sense, his practice becomes a way of wresting his life back from the curse of dispossession through continuously collecting his present time.

His filming technique, similarly addresses this overwhelming feeling of dispossession. While filming, Mekas does not necessarily look through the camera's viewfinder. He rather moves with his camera, never knowing what he has filmed until he watches the recordings. His bodily movements are imprinted on the images we are seeing. In this sense the recordings are closer to the materiality of trace carrying the mark of Mekas' presence. As we see in the Figure 3, he is more like collecting the flowers from the field rather than capturing their images on film. Mekas does not seem to be too much concerned with capturing a legible recording; the information collected on the film is secondary. Rather than the camera slowing down the movements of Mekas, it is the camera that is subject to Mekas'

movements, Mekas' presence. Thus, the recorded material, the temporality of recording becomes subservient to the experience.



**Figure 3** Mekas with his camera while filming.1971.

Owing to this approach to filming, the unruly transitions from one point to another create restless movements on the screen. Sometimes the images in a Mekas' movie pass at such a speed that all the images dissolve into one another, creating a difficult viewing experience. The pace of the appearance and disappearance of the images on the screen is so fast, the scenes replace one another at such a speed, that I am left with a feeling of motion sickness. After watching his *Walden Diaries* (1969), I remember feeling exhausted. The images on the screen replace one another so swiftly that the limits of the figures on the screen were blurring. The movement renders the images, the fragments of his life, unidentifiable and poses a question about identity in movement. What I saw on the screen was a sequence of colours, constantly shifting patches of colour, a flickering light rather than any identifiable narrative or any recognisable reference points, any place of rest. The experience of watching the material was an uncomfortable one. The camera does not stay on one scene for too

long. This refusal to stop on any image is expressed in his filmic technique, which Catherine Russell calls a, “technique of homelessness”, which corresponds to Mekas’ personal experience of homelessness (Russell, 1999, p.282). The resulting disrupted narratives in Mekas’ works reify the hesitant, indeterminate feeling of dwelling in-between. My eyes get exhausted and sore following the flickering imagery of Mekas’ films, which reflects his unremitting movement from one subject to another and from one continent to another.

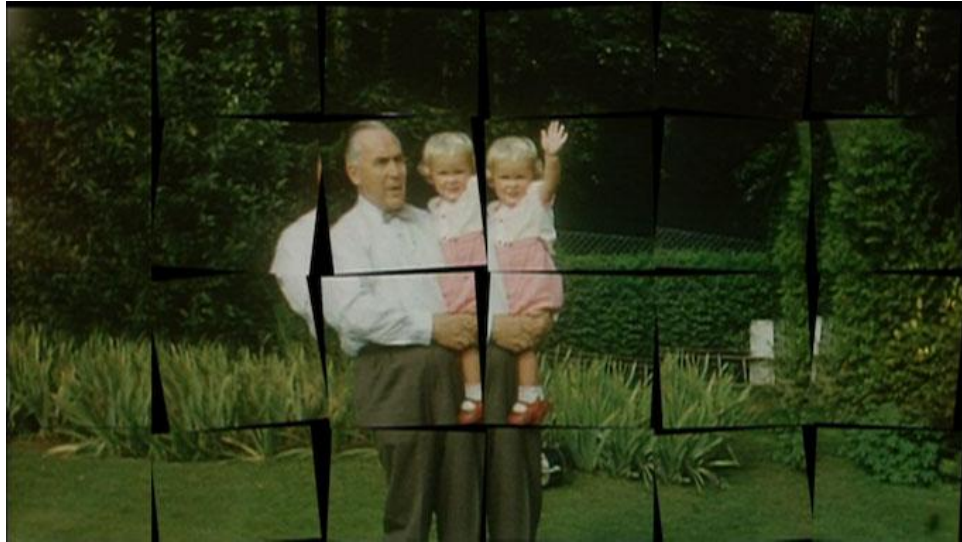
### **2.5.1 Kutluğ Ataman: Found family footage**

While Mekas meticulously collects fragments of his life, for Kutluğ Ataman the starting point for *fff* (2010) has been the personal archive of others. Ataman expresses the experience of his estrangement in England as a newcomer, with home movies of the locals in which he is totally absent; where he is not at home. Through these home movies, through the, “found family footages” (what *fff* stands for) he tells a story that reflects his struggles to understand the order of life in the new unfamiliar culture he has just entered. Ataman aspires to trace the hidden rules governing the course of everyday practices by tracing the local narratives recorded in these home movies.

Anchored in the way people behave, respond and speak, there seems to be a clear order holding this complex set of responses together – one tends to think or wish – something that weaves together the texture of daily life. The way Ataman works through this piece reflects a newcomer’s response to the unfamiliar order of everyday life. He tries to make sense of the unwritten rules ingrained in the local everyday practices that rubs against his habitual order. The feel of the everyday as a realm of familiarity, banality, comfort and unquestioned clarity is disrupted when confronted with the unfamiliar order of the others. It is an attempt to understand the new place he found himself within, with the clues he excavates from this family archive.

Working like an amateur archivist, Ataman’s weaving of a narrative out of this material starts with the selection of what he considers as, “quintessentially English” in these footages (in Waters, 2009). He sets out to collect the curious story of the locals he is living with, through the family archive of his English partner; that

documents the important events of a family life, the moments they deem as significant and the way they prefer to record it. In that sense, Ataman's work shows similarities with the work of an ethnographer in the field. He seeks to understand the local order to better situate himself within the new place he arrives in, while the ethnographic work tries to expand our vision of the possibilities of human world, to give us the knowledge of the Other.



**Figure 4** From *fff*. 2010

Ataman selects, edits and reorders this material in an attempt to understand the intangible structure of the everyday life he dwells in now. He aspires to connect with the stories of the locals, to make sense of the world surrounding him, to be able to settle in. The processes at work in the construction of the work *fff* is based upon the structure of the journey he pursues at his arrival in UK, that entails, “joining up with, somehow linking into, the collection of interwoven stories of which that place is made”, which characterise arrival in a new place, as Doreen Massey indicates (2005, p.119). Similarly, Ataman strives to grasp the rhythm of everyday life using the home movies of locals, joining them from different ends, editing them into an order of his own. The structure of the work reflects the feeling at a loss amidst that new order of life and the struggle to grasp the gist of everyday rituals of the others. In the way Ataman looks into the stories of others, selects and edits the found family footages, the fragmented understanding of the stranger reveals itself.

This grasping is, however, haunted by a distance, by the inability to engage with the intricacies of daily life of a newcomer. Ataman expresses this distance through the use of an imagery that belongs to someone else, accompanied by a sound track composed by some other; thus, he enacts his, “no input” presence in the making of this work. Unable to figure out how to approach this, “distinct culture”, and feeling “completely blind and deaf” (Ataman in Waters, 2009), the sight and sound of others become his reference points. This detached engagement instils a feeling of distance in the work.

It sparked the idea in my mind and I started developing a narrative around people coming in from different cultures and rebuilding their lives and their identities. I wanted to use footage I had found rather than created, as it was a metaphor for coming into a new, host culture and repositioning myself in it by editing these images (Ataman in an interview with Waters, 2009).



**Figure 5** View from installation of the *fff.2010*.

The installation of the work in the gallery space invites the viewer to join into this work of editing and re-ordering. The re-edited found family footage is spread across the gallery wall on multiple projections. Thus, alongside the order given to the archive through editing, the installation of the videos next to each other also re-orders the narrative. The audience can follow their own path through the visuals, enacting different permutations that disrupt a sense of a coherent, single narrative.

The dispersion of the images on the wall and the way the audience collects and brings together these fragments open the story towards multiple directions.

Looking at the piece, I bring together a narrative of my own. Similar to Ataman who gets lost amidst the unfamiliar everyday reality shaped by the stories of the locals, I feel at a loss while I try to gather a coherent narrative out of these fragments. A similar process of collecting and reconstructing a new meaning occurs for the art audience, and in that sense, “a shared experience between artist and viewer” emerges (Demos, 2013). The way these documentary materials are displayed unsettles the safe position of viewing that the informative language of conventional documentary would secure us. This formal strategy also destabilises the location of the audience; the work moves us physically as we wander around the archival footage. Cruising through the fragmented remnants of a life, each audience produces a different version of the same story. Any possibility for single, coherent, linear representation is upset.

### 2.5.2 Marcel Duchamp: *Box in a Valise*

While Ataman’s scattered images on the gallery wall invite the audience to participate in reconstructing a narrative of their own, Marcel Duchamp scatters the walls of the exhibition space in *Box in a Valise*. The collection (representations of his life’s work) sits in a suitcase, ready to be unpacked by its audience. The work invites the audience to erect the mobile walls of the *Valise* that lie flat, and restructure Duchamp’s body (of work).



**Figure 6** *Box in a Valise*, 1935-1941.

Duchamp's *Box* contains photographic images of his work cut out from the magazines, black and white reproductions of the work hand-coloured using a *pochoir* technique, and three-dimensional miniature replicas of his readymades in a peculiar order. Jerrold Seigel remarks this chaotic order that defies any logic of classification: "Putting so many works and objects inside such a casing called attention to the question of how they were all related to one another" (1997, p.232). This is a response to the museological mind that constructs a 'Duchamp', by locating the oeuvre of the artist within its institutional frameworks.

As Elena Filipovic underlines, "the institutions that judge, classify, present, and historicise the work of art as such" are under question here (2009, p.8). Duchamp offers an unstable, tentative collection in his portable museum to be continuously rewritten, reconstructed and circulated. Duchamp's work defies the idea of museum that is characterised by, "stability and rootedness" (Filipovic, 2009, p.14). The institutional framework determining the location of the artwork and the artist is mobilised with the, "unstable, unbounded structure with a collapsing frame, sliding panels, moveable parts, and an endlessly reconfigured exhibition space" (Filipovic, 2009, p.14). This provisional quality of *Box in a Valise* becomes not only a critique of the museum, but also the civilisation that made it available: the western civilisation, which was undone by the two world wars.

In the face of the museological mind, as well as in the urgency of exile he faced at the time, Duchamp's valise is a continuous struggle for, "reconstitution of the self", Demos argues (2007, p.49). When Duchamp began the preliminary sketches of the box in 1935, he was preparing to leave war-torn Europe, as the foundations of, "the entire 'homeland' of Europe, cradle and apparently secure house of western civilisation" was shattering (Vidler, 1992, p.4). This was a time when the achievement of the western culture was cast in doubt with the violence spreading across the continent. The conditions of war consequently led to, "a powerful disillusionment with the universal 'museum' of the European 'fatherland'" (Vidler, 1992, p.4).



**Figure 7** *Box in a Valise* (From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy).

The mobile structure of Duchamp's collection suggests the desire to escape from the rigid structures, of not only the institutional frameworks of museums (that fixed his oeuvre under certain categories), but also from the suffocating borders of Europe that left no room for the Other. Against the backdrop of the time where an oppressive sense of, "essentialised communal identity" reigned, this project could also be considered as a reaction to a xenophobic notion of identity (Demos, 2007, p.42). Duchamp was seeking to, "reconstitut[e] a sense of self", an itinerant, unstable, provisional self that is open to the Other, by inviting this Other into its making, while all across the world strict boundaries were demarcated hostile to the ones who do not belong to 'us' (Demos, 2007, p.42).

The acts of collecting and reordering to re-construct a new self, a new Duchamp in the *Box in a Valise*. He multiplies, circulates his life work in the multiple copies in the box and invites the Other into the gathering of a new body of Duchamp each time the box is opened. As the work tours, it is unpacked and its contents are reordered differently each time. As a response to the increasingly patriotic atmosphere of the

time that strictly fixes the idea of identity within national borders, Duchamp subverts this adamant structure through the unstable form of the *Box*.

*Box in a Valise* also goes under the name *From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Selavy*. This collaboration not only unsettles the authority of the single author but it also contributes to undoing the clearly drawn boundaries of the subject. Duchamp donned Rose Selavy (once again) to decentre the conception of essentialised identity. By embracing his 'Other', Rose Selavy, as the co-author of this *Box in a Valise* he unsettles the body of Duchamp. Against the suffocatingly rigid notion of identity he assumes a female alter ego, and thus, erodes, "the stability and coherence of his own identity" (Seigel, 1997, p.119). Demos observes that, with an aspiration to escape from the patriotic notions of identity of the time, in this way, Duchamp proposed a different notion of subjectivity, "that freed itself from the strictures of an increasingly claustrophobic national identity" (2007, p.21).

Thus, beyond the institutional critique, the *Valise* manifest the exigencies of his exilic identity, a life, "between a dispersion that placed the very coherence of the self in jeopardy and a compensatory urge that tempted a suicidal self-embalming" (Demos, 2007, p.20). As if in preparation for Duchamp's escape from Europe, the reproductions of his life works sit in a valise, ready to travel with him. In the compact form of the suitcase, Duchamp gathers his body (of work). He poses the multiple and itinerant nature of the self against a divided world that grows more and more hostile to its others. Thus, he turns the work of self-representation into a relentless self-construction.

### **2.5.3 Deniz Sözen versus Suzan Dennis**

Deniz Sözen's invented British alter ego, Suzan Dennis, similarly manifests a notion of identity that challenges clear divisions between self and Other. Suzan Dennis is the reversed mirror image of Deniz Sözen who came to life when Sözen moved to Britain. As Rachel Garfield indicates, this gesture, "reminds us that in the encounter we are undone" (2010). Suzan Dennis is Deniz Sözen undone, displaced and settled down into her new abode.

The translation of a proper name into a foreign language reveals the extent the impacts of this unsettling encounter could go. A translation aims to reach the other, close the gap between familiar and unfamiliar, self and the Other. This time, the incommensurable differences, the gap between these dualities is solidified in the twisted sound Sözen's name retained in translation. The name she is addressed by others is translated into the language of the others. Deniz Sözen with her split identity dwells on a shifting ground where ways to, "negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture...between a here, a there, and elsewhere" (Trinh, 2011, p.27) demands to be devised constantly, on a daily basis, at every single detail.

For Sözen, this gesture of extreme translation is a means for, "questioning her identity as an artist and as an ethnic 'curiosity'" (Garfield, 2010, no pagination) that conditions her interlocutors' perception of her. She aims to trouble these presumptions by undermining the categories of identity that we securely locate ourselves within. Sözen plays with the boundaries of identity and challenges our secure positions towards others through blurring these lines of separation. Confronted with this identity shift that leaves us at an ambiguous point, we face our preconceptions about differences and identities, the boundaries that separate 'us' and 'them'.



**Figure 8** Still from *My Visit to Aziziye Mosque*, 2008.

Her mirrored self, Suzan Dennis accompanies Deniz Sözen in the video work *My Visit to Aziziye Mosque* (2008). In the video, the audience sees a still image of the Astra Cinema, now the Aziziye Mosque, that is used by Turkish Muslim community in London. We hear Deniz Sözen's and Suzan Dennis' voices narrating their visits to the Mosque in Turkish and English simultaneously. The voices of these two women, the sound of a doubled, troubled identity converge, juxtapose, and overlap to such an extent that makes it difficult to grasp what is said in the video. The work produces a cacophonous orchestration of voices that makes the audience feel caught amidst an unfinished translation, with leaps, failures and repetitions. This is how a tumultuous moment of encounter actually feels like. The narrative is characterised by repetitions, lapses, delays that defines a cross-border experience.

As the stories of Suzan Dennis and Deniz Sözen merges with the history of Aziziye Mosque and Astra Cinema, a doubt sows into the narrative. Deniz Sözen (or Suzan Dennis) makes us wonder whether what she tells is true or not, whether she really is half English and half Cypriot Turk or not, whether this autobiographical material tells her story or not. At a loss about what to believe, which story to follow, we are left without any resolution. Sözen disrupts any sense of a coherent identity, by manipulating, playing with our preconceptions about her.



**Figure 9** Aziziye Mosque

The diaristic tone of the narrative is interlaced with an old image of the Astra cinema that resembles a mosque with its dome structure. Consequently, there is an incongruity between the building we see on the screen and the stories Sözen makes up. The disparity between Sözen's story and the conflicting image on the screen sows a doubt in the accuracy of her story. The coexistence of these conflicting versions of reality disorients the audience, troubles the perspective with which they approach the scene. In the displaced order of her name, we see the extent of the disorientation that penetrates into one's identity, one's sense of self.

#### **2.5.4 Mona Hatoum: The Interior Landscape of Displacement**

In Mona Hatoum's work the disorienting impact of displacement is expressed through the everyday objects that surrounds, furnishes and supports the body. Hatoum's strategy of transforming the everyday objects into their threatening, unhomely counterparts reflects the state of an in-between dwelling that shakes the foundations of the taken for granted everyday reality.

The duality between familiar and unfamiliar, the homely and strange implies an uneasy encounter, a coexistence that characterises the experience of the displaced, for whom home is a problematic site. The double nature of her works arises an uncanny feeling, which reveals a presence caught in-between, amidst a contrapuntal state.

An object from a distance might look like a carpet made out of lush velvet, but when you approach it you realise it's made out of stainless steel pins which turns it into a threatening and cold object rather than an inviting one. It's not what it promises to be. So it makes you question the solidity of the ground you walk on, which is also the basis on which your attitudes and beliefs lie (Hatoum in Antoni, 1998, p.4).

In the transformation of the mundane façade of everyday world Hatoum's displacement expresses itself materially. "We usually expect furniture to be about giving support and comfort to the body", she remarks, and turns this comforting feeling into an uncomfortable, disorienting experience (1998, p.7). By rendering these objects of support as, "either unstable or threatening" (Hatoum, 1998, p.7.),

Hatoum disturbs the notion of home as a place of peace and stability, as a safe haven. The outlandish feeling of displacement distils strangeness into these objects.



**Figure 10** *Welcome Mat*, 1996.

In Hatoum's works Edward Said finds an unbearable scene, "full of grotesque structures that bespeak excess as well as paucity" that characterise the world of a refugee (in Müfti, 2011, pp.174-175). Between this, "excess and paucity" Hatoum's work manifests an inability to settle down, in contrast to a feeling of home that defines a moment when everything seems to be in their right place, where nothing strikes as neither excess nor scarcity. Hatoum unsettles the mundane objects furnishing the comfort of home through making these objects unidentifiable. These everyday objects retain the character of the irresolute ground they raise on now. Thus, the, "sense of instability and restlessness" dominating her works carries the traces of her background (Hatoum, 1998, p.4).

A study of Mona Hatoum's work inevitably delves into detailing the embattled background, the geography she is coming from. Nonetheless, she expresses her frustration over the generic autobiographical information becoming the sole reference in the analysis of her works:

I'm often asked the same question: What in your work comes from your own culture? As if I have a recipe and I can actually isolate the Arab ingredient, the woman ingredient, the Palestinian ingredient. People often expect tidy definitions of otherness, as if identity is something fixed and easily definable (Hatoum in Antoni 1998, p.1).

Hatoum openly displays her discomfort about being confined into the fixed categories of identity and into a fixed geography. This is a common perspective in art criticism that Nicholas Bourriaud calls a, "symbolic house arrest", by which, "everyone is located, registered, nailed to a locus of enunciation, locked into the tradition in which he or she was born" (Bourriaud, 2009c, p.34). On the other hand, Hatoum's work is a question cast on these lines of segregation, on the unjust certainty of borders. She rejects this house arrest that incarcerates her into the stereotypical categories of Otherness, ossifies the frontiers and borders and accordingly increases the gap between self and the other, between 'here' and 'there'. "I find myself often wanting to contradict those expectations", Hatoum states (in Antoni 1998, p.2).

Even though the objective behind such an approach is to give a voice to the minor positions, to better represent the troubled geographies of home, it risks ending up in the, "fetishisation of the alterity of the artist from the margin" (Papastergiadis, 2005, p.341). In Hatoum's work, the suffocatingly rigid notion of identity that sustains itself through securing cultural, ethnic, gender differences is problematised through continuously revisiting its prescribed boundaries.



**Figure 11** Detail from *Interior Landscape*, 2008.

In her installation *Inner Landscape*, a detail on the wall particularly manifests this desire to escape from the strictly drawn limits of identity. We see a map of Palestine made by a wire coat hanger on the right and on the left; a shopping bag is hung next to it. The bag is actually made of a map as well, but it is so disfigured that we cannot tell what the map is of. It is unidentifiable now. Both maps are hung on a coat hanger just next to the door; they are suspended in a limbo state, at the entrance/exit of a place. Just before entering/leaving one place for another, she leaves aside the maps that signify a place-bound identity, by leaving the borders drawn between ‘us’ and ‘them’ at the threshold.

The repeating motive of maps redrawn, cut, disoriented in Hatoum’s work underscores her troubled relationship with the location assigned to her. Jaleh Mansoor suggests that it is the diasporic character of Hatoum’s dwelling that tears apart, “the concreteness of location, of place” (2010, p.60). Hatoum dismembers the maps that fix her identity within their rigid clusters. The abstract lines of maps are far

from capturing the complex reality of a dwelling in-between that defies borders. At odds with the clearly defined boundaries of identity, this is a state of being that, “dismantle[s] categories” (Mansoor, 2010, p.61) and overrules the possibility of solid, stable ground.

“Can we assign stable attributes to experience that imply the falling away of any permanent ground of signification and representation?” asks Aamir Mufti (2011, p.175). His question concerns representations of homelessness, of displacement; an experience that uproots the belief in a solid ground established by the obvious, habitual order of home. Hatoum responds to this slowly disintegrating ground of home by dissolving the familiar façade of the everyday world that we take for granted and consequently are located within. She responds to this crisis of representation and signification in the falling apart of stable anchor points to hold onto in her work, the unsettling of identifiable boundaries.

### **2.5.5 Zarina Hashmi: Revisiting Home**

In Zarina Hashmi’s work the boundaries of home are similarly revisited in order to understand and locate the disorienting feeling that comes with arrival in a new, unfamiliar place. In her print series that dates back to 1999, entitled *Home is a Foreign Place*, she draws, imprints her childhood home in India in fragments, in an abstract and formal language. Runa Samantrai suggests that Hashmi finds a solace against the unsettling forces of movement, “a life that has moved in many directions...a world so complicated that it borders on chaos” (2004, p.174) in her formal, overwhelmingly symmetrical compositions. The demand for stability against the pre-eminent feeling of disorientation manifests itself in the perfectly balanced plans of her prints. In an interview with Samantrai, Zarina indicates that in symmetry she finds an order that consoles her need to, “keep a centre” (2004, p.174).

The introduction of the house motif into Zarina Hashmi’s works emerges when this feeling of disorientation intensifies. “I started to wonder where I was, where I had come from, how I came to be standing by myself in that desert, encircled by horizons” (Hashmi in Samantrai, 2004, p.174). Recalling a moment when she found herself in the middle of a desert that demands fundamentally distinctive means of

navigation, orientation, Hashmi felt at a loss. Without any familiar reference points to navigate across, she was surrendered by the vastness of the unknown, by the unruly possibilities of new horizons. Her preoccupation with the house motif comes at this point, as the feeling at a loss brought an urgent need to relocate herself within this outlandish space. “I came to it [the house motif] when I needed to put my life in order”, Hashmi says. “It allowed me to situate myself after I had left the known path laid out for my life and struck out on my own” (in Samantrai, 2004, p.177).

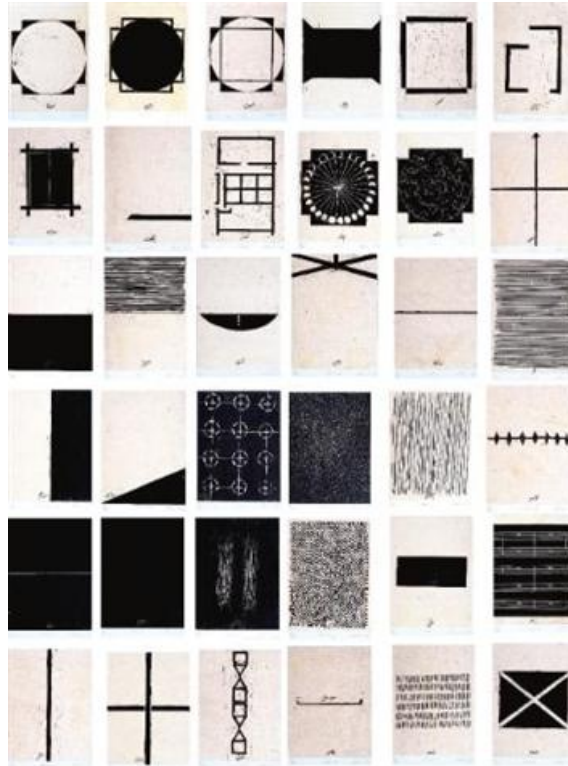
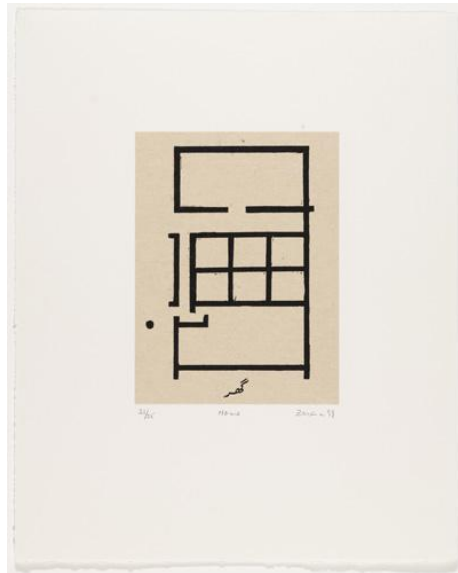


Figure 12 *Home is a Foreign Place*, 1999.

Hashmi deals with the unsettling impact of dwelling within this completely different spatial order, through reinscribing her home on the blank, deserted surface of the paper. *Home is a Foreign Place* contains 36 prints that depict the physical structures of the house she grew up in, as well as the immaterial qualities of the home. The titles of the prints in the series give us clues about different aspects of her childhood home as it is contemplated in close up in these fragments. The concrete materiality of *Threshold, Border, Entrance, Courtyard, Wall* joins into the immaterial states that is less inclined to give themselves to representation, like *Distance, Time, Country*,

*Despair, Journey, Language* etc. These are the multifarious details that inhabit her memories, when she imagines her home she left behind in India, in her childhood.



**Figure 13** *Homes I made/A Life in Nine Lines, 1997.*

In another series of prints, *Homes I made/A Life in Nine Lines* (1997), she draws the floor plans of the interior spaces of the homes she stayed in different cities, in the abstract, impersonal language of architectural plan drawings. She imagines her place within the many places she trespassed, crossed and left behind, the many horizons that she was surrounded by. Aamir Müfti defines Hashmi's work as, "place-images...images of places", as much as, "images about the imaging of these places" (2011, p.188). The detailed look in *Home is a Foreign Place* is lost this time with the elevated view from above, which evokes a sense of distance. These distinctive perspectives in these prints manifest the different manners of dwelling that mark Hashmi's life story. While in her previous prints she imagines her home in India with a sense of intimacy, in her later works she strives to capture the concrete essence of the idea of home, she shifts her focus from her unsettled, disoriented life and begins to refract other stories of homelessness.

## **2.6 Artist as Autoethnographer**

In the figures of the exile, diasporic, expatriate, newcomer, latecomer and stranger, we observe a journey that leaves the familiarity of home and, "arriv[es] in a new

place” (Massey, 2005, p.119) that disrupts the routine ways we dwell in the world. I have explored the coexistence of different stories, different orders and temporalities that unsettles the familiarity of home through distinctive personal accounts of displacement in the selected case studies. In this way, the study of the experience of displacement is enriched with a focus on detail, in the way the site of displacement is expressed in these works.

The singular voices in these case studies offer experimental forms of working in the field of culture, which has the potential for, “push[ing] the boundaries of prescribed ways of conducting social science”, as Rosanna Hertz suggests in relation to the reflexive methods in ethnography (1997, p.xii). In that sense, the conversation between art and ethnography offers an area to explore this possibility, to transform the conventional course of knowledge production in traditional ethnography. Artistic forms of inquiry reminds us the imaginative aspects of the research, which Michael Taussig argues to be muted by the hard science of collecting data (2009), by the strategies of documenting, recording and describing. With the language of “imaginative speculation” (that Amanda Ravetz argues to be distinguishing art from the ethnographic practice) these works revive the long neglected aspect of the inquiry, that of “imaginative discovery” (Taussig, 2009).

Although the working methods of each artist vary, what is common is the taking off from the personal experience and rendering their individual concerns into a form of expression not necessarily textual, descriptive, documentary, as it is with the conventional ethnography. In the expanded field between ethnography and art, that welcomes other forms of representation, these works move beyond the methodological conventions and employ, “imaginative techniques” of art (Ravetz, 2009, Kindle edition).

In the relentless acts of recording, collecting and ordering his life story imprinted on film, we encounter the exigency of dispossession that comes with an exile in Mekas’ practice. Left at a loss amidst the local stories from his new abode while he tries to understand the character of the everyday life that surrounds him now, Ataman shows us the unease in newcomer’s existence in his video work. The mobile structure of

Duchamp's valise calls its audience to reorder his body of work, construct a different body of Duchamp that consequently defies strict limits of identity within a xenophobic war-torn world. In the chaotic polyvocality that possesses the body of Sözen the conflicts of cultural dialogue at the encounter manifest itself in the arrival. The disoriented everyday objects, domestic spaces of Hatoum show us the unsettled, uncanny boundaries of home in displacement. Lastly, in the strictly balanced compositions of Zarina Hashmi's images of home, we witness how a desire to centre, balance oneself amidst the disorientation in the unknown is expressed. The examples discussed here give insights about the everyday reality of displacement, how our dwelling is infected by different orders of movement that collapse here and there, home and away, familiar and unfamiliar, then and now, self and other upon each other.

Jonas Mekas' response to a life in exile, in utter loss away from his home country appears as a relentless desire for collecting, documenting and reordering his life recorded on film wheels. Similarly, Ataman manifests a similar urge to order the unfamiliar narrative he found himself in, as he edits and builds a new narrative from the family footages of the locals. The ordering and reordering process at work in Duchamp's collection of the replicas of his works manifests a reaction against a static, stagnant notion of identity. We find a related suspicion with the clearly drawn borders of identity in Deniz Sözen's bogus British identity that questions the preconceptions about the other, the one left outside 'home'. The disorientation of Sözen's name manifests the impacts of displacement on individual subjects. Mona Hatoum's discontent with the "symbolic house arrest" (Bourriaud, 2009c, p. 34) shows parallels with Sözen's undoing of her name proper and of the conventions cast on her identity. Hatoum's undone, unidentifiable maps left at suspension are similarly a reaction to this confining sense of home. Likewise, the dismantling and dispersion of the familiar universe of home through unsettling arrangements of the familiar household items and rendering them unidentifiable manifests similar concerns with the idea of home, which shows itself as a desire to keep a centre in Zarina Hashmi's symmetrically composed prints that depicts different aspects of a home now left behind in *Home is a Foreign Place*.

The way the works are processed, structured, proceeded display the diversity of responses to the study of the cultural through personal; to the basic definition of autoethnography. The artists' study of the field of displacement that surround, surrender their existence bring us closer to the actualities of that state of being unsettled by displacement. In contrast to a theorisation of the field that provides a general view of the subject by excluding details that cannot be assimilated into a coherent narrative; these individual details provide us other perspectives. In comparison to a view from a distance, the works manifest what an autoethnographic approach to inquiry aspires to do: to capture the particularities, multiplicities and conflicts in the field. We are provided multiple access points to enter into the realm of displacement. These personal expressions have the power to refract the experiences of others, in a similar line with an autoethnographic approach that takes the self as a source of knowledge, as a tool of inquiry and as a medium of expression.

I began this chapter by tracing the appearance of the figures of displacement within contemporary art criticism back to the debates on the shifting subject of association within the ethnographic turn in art. I explored the shifting position of the artist within the field of cultural inquiry, as the emphasis on subjective truth replaced the objective basis in anthropological research and further opened a shared ground for discussions between ethnography and art. After offering examples for what could become of a study of a site that cut across autoethnography and art in the case studies, I will locate my own practice that works on this very same field in the next chapter. Examining the disorienting feeling of displacement away from the comfort of home, in my works I follow my arrival in UK after leaving my 'home' behind which brings about a concern with the shifting sense of identity and an urge to reorient oneself within this unfamiliar world, my new abode. In that sense, the case studies provide a vocabulary, patterns to further look into in my practice, appears as the parallels between the works discussed here and my practice. In Chapter 3, I will trace the dissolving of the rooted metaphors that formerly defined my sense of home, as the 'new world' that surrounds me renders a tentative presence.

## Chapter 3: The Research in Practice

In this chapter, I elaborate on how my autoethnographically<sup>5</sup> informed inquiries on ‘home’ translate into my art practice. Following my personal experience, I explore the different everyday practices that demarcate the borders between ‘here’ and ‘there’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ that build a sense of home. Through analysing my works that address different moments in my settling down to a new, unfamiliar abode, I aspire to reflect on the experience of displacement that undoes my perception of home and on the practices that structure a feeling of belonging. With the help of the field notes I have been keeping throughout my research, I expand upon the underlying ideas, the motivations behind each work, the questions they address in order to explore the themes and issues emerging throughout my practice.

### 3.1 Agoraphobic Plant Collector

*Agoraphobic Plant Collector* was the first project I created based on my interest in the organisation and decoration of domestic spaces. I had been taking pictures of the interiors of my friends’ and families’ houses (i.e. my mother’s, my aunts’, and friends’ families’) for a while in Turkey, before I moved to the UK. The way the spaces they lived in were organised, I believed, showed some similar patterns and I wondered what this might suggest.

As this inventory accumulated, I began to be drawn to the flowery nature of my mother’s home. From bric-a-brac to furniture and from curtains to tablecloths every part of the house is filled with floral designs. There seems to be an artificial, indoor garden growing, lying silently in the house. Representations of nature, especially flowers are everywhere, woven into the carpets, painted on the bric-a-brac, embroidered on the pillows and printed on the curtains. There were a few potted living plants, little fragments from nature, and some fake flowers alongside this rather silent flora.

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed discussion of autoethnographic approach and the position of the self in the study of the culture, see my essay < <http://welcomeonboard.blogspot.com.tr/2014/05/thestudy-of-cultural-through-personal-3.html>>

As Arthur Danto observes, home is, “where we impose ourselves on the world through possession, transforming the heretofore untamed into the means of habitation” (Danto, 1982, p.9). Thus, the representations of nature entering to home, I thought, could in a way be an extension of this understanding: the acceptance of nature and the outside world in a controlled manner into the spaces in which we are living. My mother, for example, thinks cut flowers are a waste of time. They stink as they rot. Cut flowers differ from the rest of this indoor garden, in the sense that they die, wither, fade away and destroy the beauty in this order with their mortality. In this sense they are uncontrollable.

The highly ornamental, floral twin Persian carpets in the house seemed to epitomise this sense of order. These eastern carpets represent paradise, the eternal spring, where there is no withering and fading away; they represent a place of eternal peace and rest. The carpet becomes a portable paradise, a portable garden around which our home seemed to be built. Built upon a different conception of the Garden of Eden, botanical gardens are also a result of this desire for resurrecting the ‘eternal home’. In its very early stages, one of the predominant ideas behind the botanical gardens was to bring together the scattered pieces of the Garden of Eden:

Throughout the Middle Ages the Garden (of Eden) was believed, somehow, to have survived the Flood, and in the great age of geographical discoveries in the fifteenth century, navigators and explorers had hopes of finding it. When it turned out that neither East nor West Indies contained the Garden of Eden, men began to think, instead, in terms of bringing the scattered pieces of the creation together into a Botanic Garden, or new Garden of Eden (Prest, 1981, p.9).

These gardens have brought exotic, otherworldly species of flora from faraway lands to western centres. Under artificial conditions, within a controlled space suited to the needs of the plants, artificial homes were created for these ‘exotic’ species. In terms of the public audience, botanical gardens offered an opportunity to see the scattered pieces of the ‘eternal home’, within the very safe and tame boundaries of their home/land. Thus, both in the eastern carpets and in botanical gardens there seemed to be a similar desire for resurrecting the Garden of Eden, of bringing the ‘eternal

home' closer to home under controlled conditions. This parallel motivation, however, produced very different material practices.

In *Agoraphobic Plant Collector* I was driven by these distinctive practices of resurrecting that primary home, the moment when everything is in its divinely right place. I looked into the distinctive visual languages, material practices that respond to this desire to restore the order of the world. The primary interest in the material order of home at the outset of this project evolved into a comparative study of the relation between here and there, familiar and unfamiliar through a focus on different responses to similar questions inherent in different material practices.



**Figure 14** Botanical study - initial versions of the accordion book project, 2009.

Thus, I decided to take the twin carpets at home as a site for a botanical study. Through doing life drawings and applying the visual language of botanical illustrations, I tried to track down the origins of the flowers, their original references in real life. Once considered as a reliable resource for proving the existence of species, botanical illustrations depict plants as realistically as possible. As a scientific study these illustrations were considered to have a documentary value as convincing as the actual specimen itself. I followed a similar botanical study on twin Persian carpets at home, dissecting the flowers into their constituent parts and depicting them in detail. Later on, I combined the carpet flowers with other botanical illustrations from a wild flower book I found in a charity shop and printed these hybrid species in lithography. The photographic images of the carpet flowers merged with the clear and smoothly painted colours of the botanical illustrations. Their distinctive worlds

blended into each other, while a new image was built layer-by-layer, dot-by-dot in the process of four-colour printing.



**Figure 15** Lithographic prints from the series *Terra Limeninis*, photolithography, 2010.

I displayed the illustrations of these new specimens, which crossed the woven flowers from the carpets with the botanical language in a cabinet, my pencil drawings, my research journal and all the other studies of the subject. On the top shelf of the cabinet the dried flowers that I found pressed in the wild flower book were erected. Below, the concertina book with the new specimens and the book itself were displayed. The cabinet display became a site for playing around with some sketchy ideas for further projects, which were developed in the *Lauriston Castle Project*, *Terra Limeninis* print series and in the work *Dikmek*.



**Figure 16** View of *Agoraphobic Plant Collector*, 2009.

The concertina book in the cabinet was a sketch for the photolithography print series *Terra Limeninis*. This title is made-up Latin, bringing together the Latin translations of the words “land” and “border”. Echoing the Linnaean taxonomy system that is used for classifying and naming species, through this title I named my position between these two different worlds I dwell in; a land located at the border of two distinctive interpretations of the world. As these unfamiliar routes pierce into the familiarity of my home, the order at home has become questionable. The routine order of my home, the unquestionable fabric of the everyday ingrained in the texture of the carpet becomes untangled within this disputed state in-between.

When faced with the unfamiliar, “comparisons are basic adjustment strategies” Andreea Deciu Ritivoi suggests, they work to produce, “analogical mapping...to domesticate the foreign, allowing the experiencing subject to respond to the unknown by ‘faking’ a kind of recognition” (2002, p.137). In this work in particular, in the way the different pieces are put together, this basic adjustment strategy reveals itself. Looking at the distinctive ways the same idea is being materialised from two different ends I was trying to understand each practice in relation to each other. The

sense of recognition that one gets from such a comparative mapping strategy gives a feeling of security, it keeps the ambiguity arising from an encounter with the new at bay, and makes life more manageable and clear cut for a moment.

Comparisons, on the other hand, risk building unrealistically clear distinctions between two entities. They ease the ambivalence caused by the coexistence of the conflicting perceptions of the world on the same plane. As Tim Edensor succinctly puts it: “The very production of ambivalence leads to a counter tendency to fix the meaning” (2002, p.16). Confronted with this ambiguity, my first problem-solving strategy was to examine the unfamiliarities from a familiar position, locate it within a familiar ground, and thus to translate it into a familiar vocabulary. Comparisons were possible and more credible then, as the contrasts seemed much more obvious, partly because I did not know my new surroundings well enough, and partly because my confidence in the familiar had not been shaken strongly enough. Yet as time went by, I came to understand that such sharp distinctions were bound to fail. My prolonged journey showed the errors in these snap judgements.

*Terra Limeninis*, the land at the limit manifests the very first sign of blurring the boundaries between the distinctions while living in this in-between space. The *Terra Limeninis* flowers reveal the symptoms of a hybrid state, “within which other elements encounter and transform each other” (Papastergiadis, 2000, p.170). A site where things come together, produce various combinations and create a change in the participating parties, in consequence of the mutual interchange, hybridity is situated, “between the axioms of foreign and familiar” Papastergiadis says (2000, p.192). At the site of encounter, “hybridity becomes an interpretative mode” that allows us to breach the lag between the distinctive realities appearing on our horizon (Papastergiadis, 2000, p.192).

### **3.2 Carpet: origin: home**

For a project I was involved in *Lauriston Castle Glasshouse*, I decided to reconstruct the Iranian carpet back home. I set to grow the carpet, the ground that provided a familiar ground to step on, with chickpeas, beans and lentils in cotton wool. The glasshouse in the garden of the castle was once used for growing plants out of season

and out of place and now it became a site for growing a ghostly image of the carpet from home.

Growing that carpet out of place; within the cotton wool through which seeds could sprout and extend their roots and shoots into an unfamiliar environment, was an attempt to recreate that familiar ground away from home. The soil, into which the roots naturally anchor themselves into, is replaced with cotton wool. My attempt to recover the loss of the familiar ground, to compensate that sense of loss manifested itself in this strategy of substitution.

The preliminary ideas for this project began to develop while I was working on *Agoraphobic Plant Collector*. I was trying to grow beans on the bottom shelves of the cabinet in the patterns of the borders of the carpet at home.



**Figure 17** Details from *Agoraphobic Plant Collector*.2009.

In the sketch of the first proposal seen in Figure 18, the wool carpet is accompanied by two chairs, with two pots of plants placed next to each chair. Earphones would come out of the pots through which one could hear the two different stories I came across during my research about the origins of the carpets, one told by my mother and the other by an Iranian friend of mine. My mother's account was about the specific routes these twin carpets have drawn, the routes that were entangled with my family's journey. Her story was more specific, more personal; she told me about how they bought the carpets, a story that touched upon the border trade between Iran and

Turkey at the time of the Iranian revolution. Living at the Iranian border of Turkey from the 1970s to the early 1980s, my parents bought the carpets when the Iranian revolution broke out, when people at the other side of the border started to sell their valuables (such as their carpets) before they left the country for good. While at one side of the border people were leaving their homes, on the other side, other homes were being built with what they left behind. Thus, the house was proved to be the ground where the many routes of the world congregate, a place where the many flows of the world appeared in an uncanny proximity. The biography of the carpets provided an insight about the unlikely encounters in the domestic space; the extensive geography of home that embraces unexpected trajectories within.



**Figure 18** First proposal, 2010.

The other sound recording was about a conversation with an Iranian friend of mine, while we were speculating about the possible origins and names of the flowers on the carpet. Trying to trace the representations of nature to their sources, I sought to unravel the Garden of Eden, that eternal home woven into the carpet.

In the course of the project my proposal changed due to the physical restrictions of the glasshouse. Since the audience was not allowed to enter the space down to health and safety issues, I had to revise my proposal and thus, I set aside the sound recordings to be listened to while watching the carpet grow.

After setting up the main outlines of the carpet, I set to work planting chickpeas, lentils and beans in the cotton wool carpet. On that ephemeral ground composed of

the cotton wool, I was looking after the carpet; watering and grooming that small garden during the limited time I was allocated the space for. I was dwelling in that space, through cultivating, nurturing, cherishing, preserving and caring for, the acts that Heidegger refers to when he elaborates on the processes at work in man's dwelling (1977, p.47). These are the acts that manifest a desire to conserve, nurse, to maintain the order of things, Iris Marion Young suggests (2001, p.268), which are undermined by Heidegger's emphasis on building and making new thing as the primary acts of our dwelling. In the act of cultivating of the cotton wool garden and attending to its growth, my work manifests a yearning for maintaining the order of home amidst the unfamiliarity of this ground I am stepping on. Without building new structures, I locate myself within the existing order of this new life; I try to sustain the orders of my familiar world within my new abode.



**Figure 19** A view of the glasshouse, 2010.

In my decision to introduce my project as another piece of the Eastern Rug collection at the Lauriston Castle, a similar exigency of the newcomer resurfaces. I locate, introduce my story into the many stories this collection is made of. My carpet becomes a part of the selection of rugs brought from many different parts of the world. This gesture can be read as an attempt to locate myself within the unfamiliar through a language of replacement, juxtaposition and reordering that reflects the newcomer's response to the unfamiliar order of everyday life.

7 (A) Origin: Home: Carpet  
10300mmx4900mm  
First Quarter of 20th century  
This carpet was purchased around 1979. At that time more and more second hand carpets had began to enter to the country from the Iranian border .  
At first, two carpets with same layout was purchased, one with red, the other with dark blue back ground.  
The following year , the smuggler who sold the carpet offered to swap the blue one with another red one, for the two to match.  
GH 1789 Living room  
cotton wool, chickpeas, beans, lentils

Figure 20 My entry from the manipulated catalogue.

The catalogue of the collection gives short information about each rug, where they come from and when they are acquired. I added a catalogue entry for my carpet as well, to make my project a part of the collection and blend my story with the story of the place told through the collection of rugs. I manipulated the catalogue by inserting the photographic documentation of my work as well as through an entry summarising the story of the twin carpets at home, in the formal language of the catalogue. The manipulated catalogue became the lasting evidence of the transient presence of the cotton wool carpet. The introduction of this personal detail disrupted the existing timeline of the collection; thus the order of the collection is reedited.



Figure 21 Manipulated version of “Eastern Rugs from Lauriston”, 2010.

### 3.3 Dikmek

While I was working in the glasshouse at the Lauriston Castle, I began to further explore the uprootings and re-rootings of plants that grow in far away geographies, inspired by the history of glasshouses. Originally used to host the findings of botanical expeditions carried out in distant corners of the world by simulating the conditions of the native habitat of the uprooted plants, glasshouses constructed artificial homes for them.

The journeys these plants embarked on not only shifted their location, but also the categories they belong to. The native plants became exotic away from their natural habitat. Some rare exotic plants that used to be considered beautiful at first would later be deemed as invasive weeds<sup>6</sup>, or they would become to be categorised as native as time passes. In the transformation of the language that defines these plants, in the shifting categories of native - exotic, invasive - beautiful, the complexity and instability of their identity is revealed. As their relation with the land they are transplanted transformed over time, they are considered either as a threat to the landscape or as a seamless part of the land.

My research on the journeys of these uprooted plants made me wonder about the native flowers growing in Turkey and what that idea of 'native' meant. During my searches, I came across a coin series called "Flowers of Turkey" issued by the Turkish Monetary Institution that shows, "the flowers specific to us". The translation of "specific", "özgü", assumes an unchanging essence in its Turkish translation and consequently draws strict boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Thus, the language at work in "Flowers of Turkey" naturalises, essentialises the borders of a country by building an innate relationship with the land we happened to be born in.

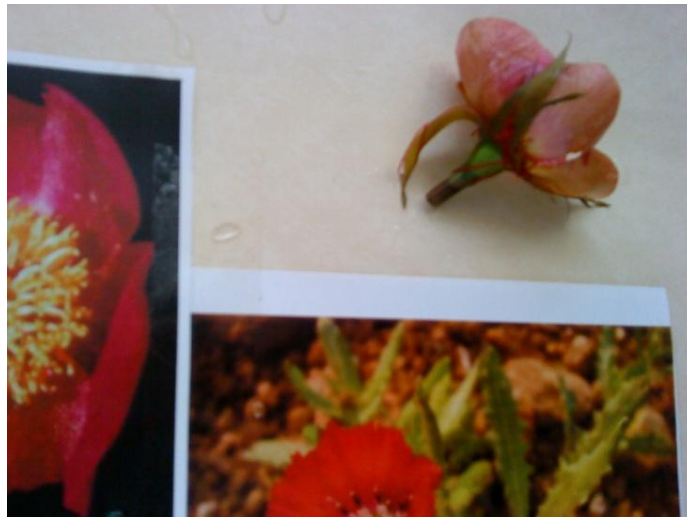
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6 See Simon Starling's *Rescued Rhododendrons* project, for example, in which he takes ponticum rhododendrons from Elrick Hill, Scotland (an area designated by the Scottish Government as a cultivation area for indigenous Scottish plant species only), back to Spain, where they were first come from.



**Figure 22** Detail from *Agoraphobic Plant Collector*, 2009.

While I was working on the *Agoraphobic Plant Collector* project, I collected foliage and flowers on my way home and later on sewed them into each other. In a sense, I was making new plants with what I had collected, similar to what I had done with the *Terra Limeninis* prints previously. Building upon this idea, I decided to make the endemic flowers depicted on the memorabilia coins, the flowers that are defined as, “specific to us”.



**Figure 23** Detail from work in progress, the flower “Şakayık”, Paeonia, 2010.

This time, I picked my flowers from a nearby shop, where they had arrived after long journeys from the far corners of the world. I gathered and sewed together elements of

these different plants, and used them to make representations of native species endemic to Turkey.



**Figure 24** A sewn flower “Yılan Yastığı” *Dracunculus Vulgaris* in an alcohol filled jar, 2010.

I recorded the process of sewing the flowers, with time-lapse photography. In the resulting video, a “Yılan Yastığı” (*Dracunculus Vulgaris*) appears slowly on the screen. An endemic plant, growing only in Turkey is re-made through cutting and bringing different parts of various plants together. The many routes these plants have embarked on are sewn together to make a version of an endemic, native plant of Turkey. The title of the project *Dikmek*, which translates both as, “to sew” and, “to plant”, highlights the conflict between natural in the act of planting and the man made in the act of sewing, thus underlining the nature of identity as a construct.



**Figure 25** Stills from *Dikmek*, performance video, 2010.

At the time, I was more interested in recovering a feeling of familiarity, with a defensive attitude that holds onto the familiar whilst struggling to adjust to my new

dwelling. The act of sewing implied such a sense of restoring, healing, mending. With what I find readily available in the new, unfamiliar world I dwell in, I was trying to reproduce a homely feeling amidst the fluxes and flows of a world expanding on my doorstep. While I was searching for the native and specific, that distinguishes my sense of home, I discovered the perils of drawing such clear boundaries. The search for stark differences between ‘here’ and ‘there’, the longing for clarity amidst the blurring of boundaries proved to be divisive and hostile. This language was more problematic than I first realised.

As the flora and fauna of a land becomes the symbols, synecdoches for national identity, it signifies the language of division penetrating into every single detail of our daily lives and becoming naturalised. We witness the exemplification of this phenomenon in the language that recognise some plants as ‘native’ or ‘specific’, and others as ‘foreign’, ‘exotic’ and ‘invasive’. Borders are drawn with recourse to rhetoric of purification, Wolschke-Bulmahn states (in Edensor, 2002, p.43). He goes on to say that, “the doctrine plea for native plants is often accompanied by the condemnation of ‘foreign’ or ‘exotic plants’ as alien invaders or aggressive intruders, thus suggesting that native plants would be peaceful and non-invasive” (2002, p.143). As Tim Edensor remarks, “specific geographical features may provide symbolic and political boundaries” (2002, p.40). In this language the distinctions between self and other, native and stranger are naturalised. A divisive, exclusionary sense of belonging situates the others as ‘naturally’ foreign and invasive, which manifest an unwillingness to allocate a space for non-natives on the grounds of the ‘native’ soil.

### **3.3.1 Symbols and narratives**

The use of natural elements as symbols of a country (e.g. the Scottish thistle, the Canadian maple leaf, the Polish eagle), similarly works to naturalise national boundaries. Symbols are, “any token serving as a proof of identity” and national symbols are, “national narratives...emblematised by different symbols” (Geisler, 2005, p.xvii). Thus, symbols are narratives in a different form, with distinctive material presence. Anthony D. Smith provides us with an exhaustive list of national symbols that manifest a variety of forms these narratives can take:

...flags, anthems, parades, coinage, capital cities, oaths, folk costumes, museums of folklore, war memorials, ceremonies of remembrance for the national dead, passports, frontiers...national recreations, the countryside, popular heroes and heroines, fairy tales, forms of etiquette, styles of architecture, arts and crafts, modes of town planning, legal procedures, educational practices and military codes – all those distinctive customs, mores, styles and ways of acting and feeling that are shared by the members of a community of historical culture (in Geisler, 2005, p.xx).

The list reveals the extent to which national myths and narratives are embedded in our lives. From very obvious symbols (such as flags) to the more obscure ones (such as forms of etiquette), these tokens of identity reproduce national narratives and sustain national borders on a daily basis. As Tim Edensor argues along a similar line, “The experience of the nation is rooted in the quotidian” (2002, p.7). It is through the everyday, unremarkable routine practices that national identities reproduce and fortify their borders.

At a geographical distance from the realm of these practices ingrained into the everyday, embodied in my immediate responses to the world, I began to grow an interest in how national identity reproduces itself on individual level, manifesting itself in the relationship between the ‘home’ and ‘home-land’. When Angelika Bammer draws attention to these close-knit ties between the notion of home and homeland, she indicates that they share a reliance on myths and stories, “to create the ‘we’ who are engaged in telling them” (1992, p.ix). Through these collective narratives they both claim a “discursive right to space (a country, a neighbourhood, a place to live)” and consequently construct an ‘us’ (Morley, 2000, p.16). Thus, similar to term ‘home-land’, “home” indicates a territory, “to which some must belong and from which others must be excluded” as Dawson and Rapport indicate (1998, p.8).

After moving to UK, first for an exchange programme and then for my PhD degree, one of the questions I was quite often asked was where I was from, “originally”. Sometimes this question was triggered by my accent, by my misunderstanding of something, by my looks or as part of an official procedure. The question was like a reminder of my strangeness, stranger-ness. It was a question evincing the fact that I was obviously not from here (i.e. the UK). This question became a constant reminder

of my connection with the home(land) I happened to come from, and it made me think about what it is that I am actually referring to when I say I am from Turkey. This concern seemed to draw a particular relationship between me and the country I come from, a certain sense of origin and idea of home that is not easily shortcut. The answer has, however, become less and less clear for me. When I am in Turkey, I would not be questioned about my origins as often as I am here, and even so, my answer would be on the scale of a village, a town, a street or perhaps even a family name. On the other hand, in UK the location I identify myself with has grown much larger; it has become a country. My world has expanded to such an extent, that I felt lost within. I was uneasy about the largeness and vagueness of this answer and what it is supposed to say about me, since the location of home has become much more obscure for me.

What does the adjective “Turkish” actually describe? What is it supposed to say about me? While the scale of my identification grows unprecedentedly, it is not clear to me how this “Turkish-ness” defines me. This language does not do justice to the reality of my provisional being. Even though the perpetual going back and forth between geographies, differing rhythms and routines has the power to destabilise clear cut definitions of belonging; we still seem to hold onto a language that strives to fix us to an origin, to a, “symbolic house arrest” (Bourriaud, 2009c, p. 34).

Due to this tension between my provisional being and the national identity cast upon me national narratives and the imagery of these grand narratives began to enter my work from *Dikmek* onwards. At the interstice between home and homeland, the clear-cut order of belonging at work in national identity appeared as a site I work on. I started to unpick this thin stroke of the home/land, the unnoticeable methods of its reproduction and its relevance to the idea of home and belonging. Because moving away from the realm where the idea of homeland reproduces itself in mundane practices has brought my critical attention to how these grand narratives survive in my own personal utterances here. Thus, in the following projects I continued to dissect and break down the representations of such a perception of belonging and to work with the imagery this discourse relies on in reproducing its borders.

### 3.4 Bayrakatlama

As a symbol of national identity, a flag carries the narratives of belonging and exclusion in national terms. For the project *Bayrakatlama* (flag/folding), my starting point was the routine, muted everyday presence of these narratives that are instilled into mundane practices. When I came across a code in the Turkish law that regulates the use of the flag, I decided to work on the discrepancy between the official order and the everyday practices that attribute to the flag very different meanings.

The official *Turkish Flag Code* (1985) is a sixteen-page document standardising almost everything about the flag, from its method of production, the materials that are allowed to be used to make the flag, its colour and the size of the crescent and the star, to its everyday use. Amongst this exhaustive list the code also provides instructions about how the flag should be folded in everyday use.

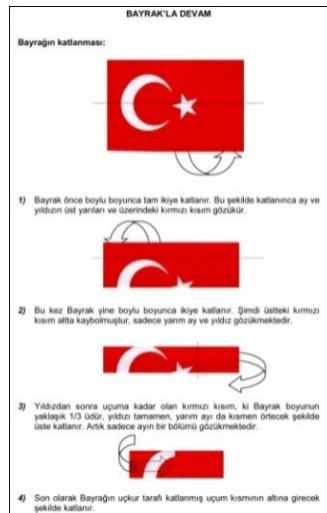
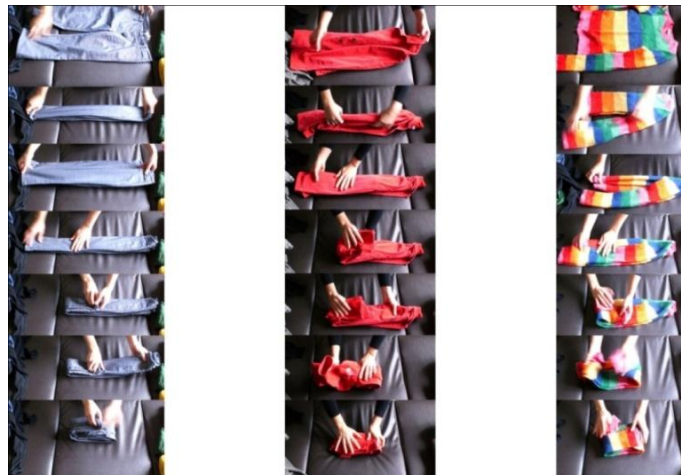


Figure 26 Instructions for folding the flag from the *Turkish Flag Code* (1985).

The four-step Turkish flag folding instructions officially state the way the flag should be kept when not in use. The flag must be folded into half horizontally twice, then, one third of it should be folded vertically to the left, and finally the other two thirds is folded to the right and tucked into the other third, so that the star and crescent are totally covered.

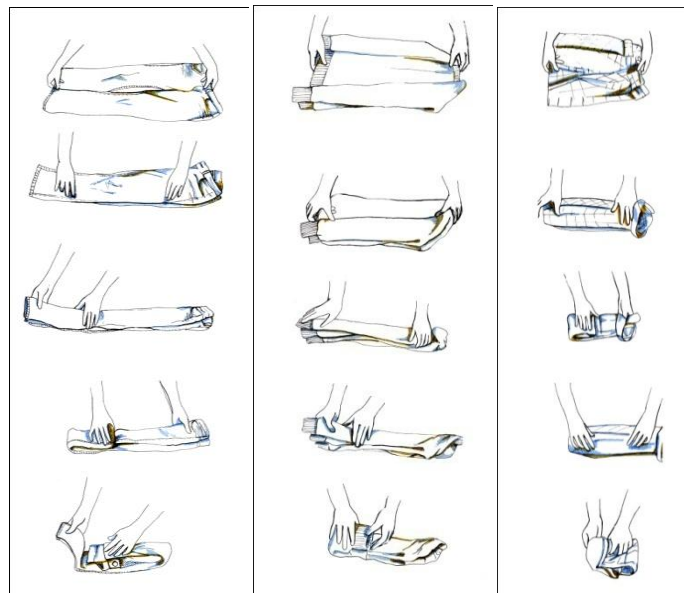
Nevertheless, the everyday use and appropriation of the Turkish flag goes far beyond what is prescribed in this document. The grand narratives of national identity are retold in everyday use in, “unforeseeable sentences” (de Certeau, 1984, xviii). In such appropriations, the flag loses its primary function and its meaning expands. We witness how these national narratives intermingle with everyday practices in unexpected ways. In fortunetelling, for example, the image of a flag in the coffee pot denotes a success, such as getting a promotion. In some village weddings (at my mother’s home town nearby Maraş in Turkey, for instance), a flag is hung on the roof of the wedding house, as a signpost, letting the villagers know about the blessed event. Such uses of the flag are very different from its official prescriptions and show how people appropriate the symbols of a national identity. People interpret these symbols and the narratives circulated with them. In these acts of appropriations national, local, cultural and personal selves entangle. As Tim Edensor argues, “[P]eople make and remake connections between the local and the national, between the national and the global, between the everyday and extraordinary” all the time, (2002, p.vii). The paraphrasing of these strategies of sustaining national borders by the everyday tactics highlights the continuous work of negotiation between the local and national, between the personal and political.



**Figure 27** Stills from *Bayrakatlama*, performance video, 2010.

*Bayrakatlama* was built upon the continuous negotiation with, and the appropriation of the orders of national narratives in everyday use, in everyday practices. I followed

the flag-folding instructions in the Turkish Flag Code when folding my clothes. By applying these official instructions to a daily chore, I was enacting how these regulations transform when confronted with the fabric of everyday life. The camera held a static position while I recorded the folding of my clothes according to the code. Through the influent quality of the time-lapse documentation, I wanted to repeat the clear cut, almost bullet point effect of the instructions, to highlight the contrast between the different material qualities of the clothes and the rigid order of the code.



**Figure 28** Manual drawings for garment folding, 2010.

Sometimes I struggled with the form or the rough fabric of the clothes while I was trying to follow the strict instructions. I had to press hard to make a folded jacket hold the folds and at times I had to juggle with the legs of trousers or the arms of jumpers to fit them into the instructions. The incompatibility between the instructions and the material, size and shape of the garments manifested the misfit, the lapse between abstract formulations and the actual reality and complexity of the fabric of everyday.

### 3.5 Hayali/imaginary

As another quintessential icon that visually represents the borders of a national entity, national maps were my starting point in the work *Hayali*. The work was developed from the idea of devising a portable home/land, by scaling down the map of Turkey to fit my pocket, so that it could be carried, unpacked, pitched anywhere.



**Figure 29** Details from *Hayali*, making of a Turkish Map, 2010.

I decided to make the map with my hands so that it could be available any time, any place. When I showed this hand-made map to a friend of mine from Turkey, she was not completely satisfied with the form of my map and started correcting the position of my hands. Then we began to build the map together and I decided to record this moment of negotiation, the process of making Turkish map step by step.

We decided to continue with producing the map of our new ‘home’, guided by another friend of ours, Tom. While making the map of Turkey with Deniz, we relied on our habitual knowledge. The borders of the country had cast itself upon our minds so strongly that we formed the map without needing to look at any source. I had seen the map before, hanging on the walls at school, reproduced in schoolbooks or in other institutions. I had been taught to draw the Turkish map by rote. But for the British map, we were directed by Tom telling us to, “highlight Cornwall” or, “do Ireland properly”. We referred to the parts of the maps using specific place names; these rather irregular and random curves have specific names for us:



**Figure 30** Film stills from *Hayali*, 2010.

*Are you Scotland?*

*Yes I'm Scotland.*

*You need to get higher.*

...

Esra be Ireland

*So Ireland is...*

Deniz, if you spread your fingers really wide... 'cause it goes really wide.

*Down especially towards Cornwall.*

*That's it, that's it.*

...

(Dialogue from *Hayali*)

The camera captures the emerging of these maps, the limits of which we know like the back of our hands. The shadow of our hands cast on the wall restlessly moves until we are satisfied with the image cast on the wall. Like the map, the shadow is a two-dimensional projection of a three-dimensional entity and thus, the shadow maps become the projection of the habitual knowledge guiding our hands. The video recording helps to capture this fugitive state of the performance, the continuously transforming maps on the wall. This is a repeating motive in my practice as we have

also seen in *Bayrakatlama* and *Dikmek*, which makes documentary strategies a dominant means of presentation in my works, since the emphasis is on the transformation, on the transient, changing nature of things. The ephemeral material quality of the shadows renders the territories of the home/land irresolute in contrast to its actual rigid borders. The work emphasises the unremitting attempts, the trial and errors, the failures in the making of these maps.

### 3.6 Eerie landscapes

In continuance with my preoccupation with the iconography of national identity, I carried on with the printed materials where this iconography, the imagination of the nation marks itself. The currency of a country, for instance, provides another visual form to circulate the narratives of the national entity by carrying the crucial landmarks and figures in a nation's history. On the surface of the banknotes and coins the narratives of national identity are visualised and disseminated on a daily basis.

In the new Turkish coins that were introduced in 2005 and updated in 2009, we can see the inscription of changing definitions of national identity on the surface of the currency. The new 1 Turkish lira coins were looked very European, almost indistinguishable from the Euro, showing the face of the country turned towards Europe at a time when debates about membership of the European Union were in focus. Then, in the 2009 version of the coins, this *European* look transformed into a more ornamental, slightly oriental look, which seemed to reflect a shift in the axis of Turkish identity.



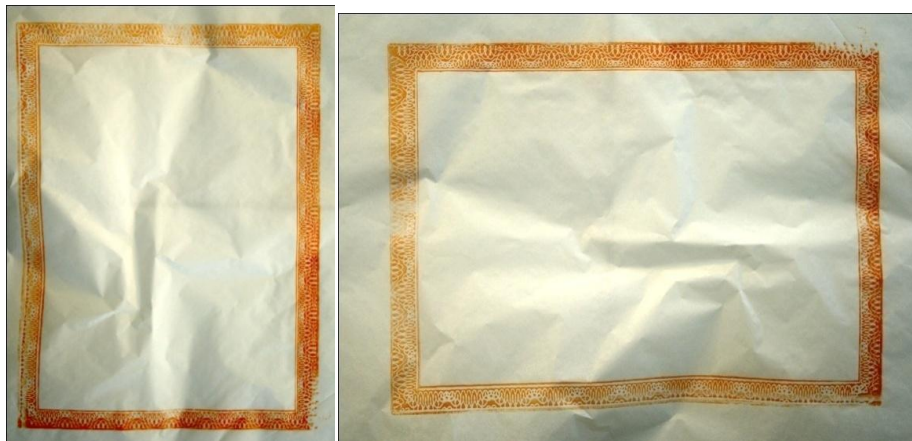
**Figure 31** 1 YTL – The one on the left is from 2005, the one on the right is from 2009.

On my national identity card and my passport, a similarly ornate design caught my attention. The margins of my national identity card and the pages of my passport were adorned by an equally elaborate decoration. I wanted to highlight this specific visual character of the official documents, which pursued an oriental look and thus reflected a certain taste and character.



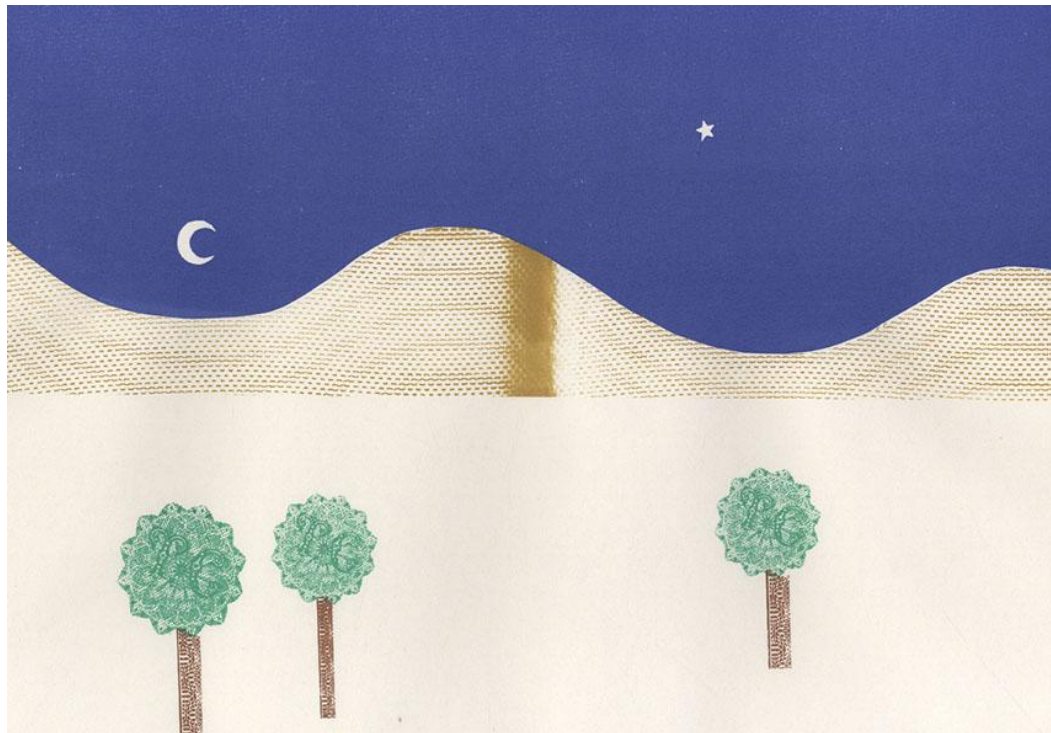
**Figure 32** Fragments from a national identity card and passport.

After resizing and blowing up the frame running around my national identity card, I screen-printed this image onto 100x70cm paper. On this large format the ornate character of the borders was brought to the fore. Stripped bare of the other information appearing on it, only the margins of my national identity card was shown on this opaque and brittle paper.



**Figure 33** The borders of my national identity card, Screen-print, 2010.

This official ground frames my picture, the details about my birthplace, my birthday, the names of my parents etc. My identity details are inscribed on this background. It is this piece of paper that I am checked against. I wanted to bring forward the visual character of my national identity documents to the forefront, to emphasise the background against which my figure appears. I continued to work further on this relationship between figure and background, subject and place, portrait and landscape through unpacking this ornate ground, breaking it down to its constituent parts, rearranging these elements and finally composing a series of landscapes. With the visual elements on my identity cards that provide us clues about how the official discourse imagines its subjects, I set to compose a series of landscapes that refer us back again to the national borders where this identity is imagined to be anchored into. I worked with the character the national identity unravelled on the surfaces of the passports, identity cards, took these visual elements that compose my world and then recomposed another scene by rearranging these parts together in a different order.



**Figure 34** Screen print, 2010.

The ornamental borders running around my national identity card became the trunk of a tree, the initials of the country embedded in the passport pages become the leafy part of the trees, and the wavy patterns covering my passport became mountains. Later on, I introduced other visual elements into these compositions, to emphasise the introduction of new landmarks after moving here. In my landscape prints thistles, roses and leeks began to flourish, the natural elements symbolising Scotland, England and Wales. I could not make much sense of the narratives inherent in these symbols at first; I had to look up, ask about and research the origins of them.



**Figure 35** *Eerie Landscape*, 2010.

Using photolithography, I printed these new landscapes that depict the new scenery extending upon my horizon. In these prints, I appropriated the official imagery and translated them into the landscape prints that narrate my personal journey. Rather than making these images from scratch, I reconfigured and reconstructed these visual materials and produced new compositions. Juxtaposing the symbols on the coins with the visual elements covering my identity cards, I redraw new landscapes. In these multi layered landscapes the coexistence of different narratives revealed my

daily experience of being exposed to the distinctive influences, practices and agendas of these two worlds.

### **3.7 How far can you go with a Turkish passport?**

This preoccupation with the national identity documents continued in my next project as well. In this particular piece, I worked with my passport that determines where I can travel, stay and live and for how long. My passport draws a rather different world map for me. When I set to embark on a journey, approximately a month of paperwork for visa applications and the anxious waiting process adds onto the actual journey time, onto the distance between my departure point and destination. In this work, I set to measure this warped distance that changes according to my nationality.

How far could I go with a Turkish passport? I pursued this question from a naive point of view and searched for an alternative solution that ignores the ‘official’ one. With this gesture, I wanted to underline the uneven shape of the world and test the reasoning behind these very concrete and consequential borders that my passport casts upon me.

Naiveté is a tool that sheds light on the artificial nature of things, Carlo Ginzburg relays from Montaigne: “To understand less, to be ingenuous, to remain stupefied: these are reactions that may lead us to see more” (2002, p.13). The question that triggered this work already has a clearly defined answer, but its logic is not very convincing. Using the luxury and disadvantage of not understanding fully what is happening around me as a newcomer, I donned my naiveté as a provocative gesture while searching for an alternative response. Thus, seeking for an answer that might sound as rational and as haphazard as the one that is valid right now, I aspired to expose the fragility of the logic behind it. While seeking for an answer to my simple question, I employed an unofficial even absurd rationale against the official order I am subject to.



Figure 36 Detail from my passport.

The pages of my passport are covered with dashed lines generating a wavy pattern on the surface of the page. The form of these patterns looked to me like insurmountable mountains or waves that spread across the page. Taking my cue from these lines interweaving the texture of the pages, I decided to trace these wavy, sinuous, intermittent lines. The idea was to undo, dissolve the lines that make the tissue of the passport and to build an escape route by abutting the intermittent lines onto one another. I set to unfasten the lines that hold this passport together - the passport that determines the compass of my movement area - and turn its tightly woven texture into a loose thread.

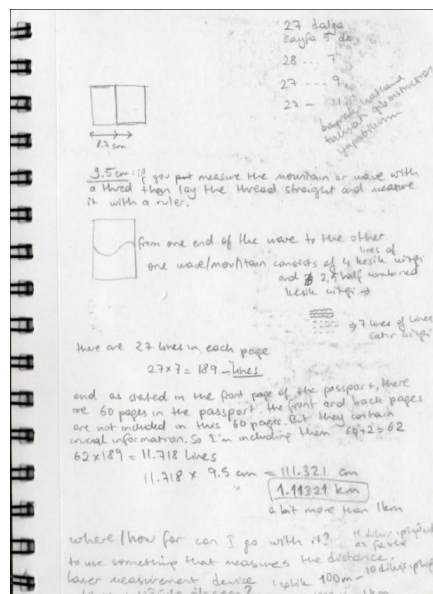


Figure 37 The calculation from my sketchbook, 2011.

As can be seen on the page from my notebook above (Figure 5.23), I measured the dashed lines that form these wavy mountains or mountainous waves with a ruler first, then I counted the lines covering the pages of my passport. The result of this calculation has given me a 1.332 kilometre long line. Thus, if I had ‘undone’ my passport - opened its pages, tied the lines weaving its pages - I could have achieved a 1.332 km long line.

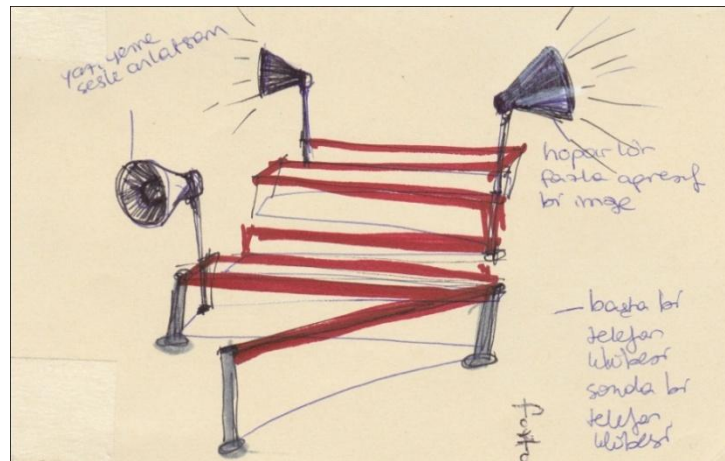


Figure 38 Proposal for a possible installation, 2011.

I wanted turn this line into a path to be walked, performed. My first idea was to build a 1.332 kilometre long queuing line with airport barriers, the ones that takes you to the passport control. The audience would be encouraged to walk along this path. The line of flight that undoes, unfastens the pages of my passport would retain a tangible presence when the path is performed by others. My absurd escape plan would be the walking path for the audience.

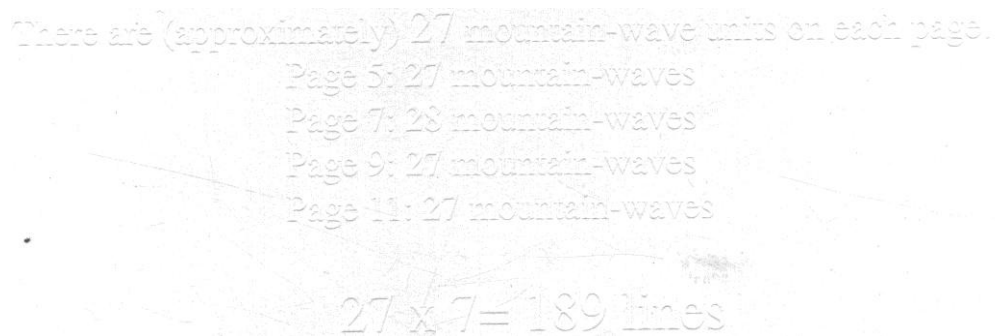


Figure 39 Detail from the blind emboss, 2011.

Only the blind emboss print of this calculation to be hang at the end of the path would reveal the audience the motivation behind the work, behind their walk. Only being visible and readable when looked at from a certain angle and in close up, the print would reveal nothing but blank paper at first. The long calculation would only be visible at a particular distance and at the right angle, making it legible only to those standing in the right place (or wrong place) to look at it.

The project eventually remained as an unrealised proposal, as an, “imaginative speculation” (Ravetz, 2009) in my journal<sup>7</sup>, across which different paces of thinking and different manners of inquiry are inscribed. Alongside other disparate range of materials accumulated on my journal pages (notes on how to get by in everyday situations as a newcomer; that manifest in hand-drawn maps for finding my way, journey details, timetables; and minute observations that reflects on my everyday, study drawings from my surroundings, diary entries) the project proposal remained as a provocative question. With the other research materials in the journals that explore the field I was studying on a daily basis document my reflections on my journey from a personal perspective; the provisional guidelines sketched for this project evidenced the imaginative inquiry at work that strived to reify the intangible feel of the experience. And the failure to do so, to realise the project, underlined the difficulty I faced in capturing, expressing that intangible feel of my unsettled location.

### **3.7.1 The study of everyday in the personal details**

The field of the everyday is the site I am working on. I try to tease out the material of the everyday I am enfolded by, observe the daily practices shaping my immediate environment, and the ways I respond to things in order to grasp how this place I inhabit now unsettles my habitual responses, how I am undone at the encounter. Since this encounter with the other undermines our perception of the realm of everyday, “as confidence, familiarity, proximity, as ‘home’” (Kosik in Moran, 2005,

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<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the role of journals in my research see my blog entry: <http://velcomeonboard.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/journals-unfolding-process-of-inquiry.html>

p.165). Following the rifts opened in my habitual order I try to reveal what is at stake in this disrupted order of everyday, “where we make our worlds and where our worlds make us” (Pink, 2012, p.5).

While the feel of familiar as a sense of things existing simply, naturally, effortlessly falls apart, the secure order of my home collapses. The unsettling feeling of the unfamiliar appearing at the limit of my home demystifies the habitual order of my world. When the roots of the unfamiliar, uncanny (*unheimlich*) are entangled with that of home (*heim*), an indescribable feeling bordering on horror and hesitation emerges, as Freud showed us (1919). The English translation of *unheimlich*, “uncanny”, describes a similar feeling, yet it follows a different etymological journey. Uncanny negates the world of “canny”, which means, “possessing knowledge and skill” (Vidler, 1999, p.23). The perception of home as an intangible feeling of security and confidence, as the skilled practices that we know by heart would bring these two different etymological journeys on similar grounds. The set of skills, “‘acquired ability’ and ‘faculty’” (Mauss, 1973, p.73), of our habitual world grow into an embodied knowledge over time, through performing the everyday routines, rituals that belong to it. Our home becomes embodied within our responses to the world.

When the skills that are acquired in the familiar habitus fail beyond the limits of home, in the realm of the unfamiliar, the embodied practices of the world we inhabit, the skills of our habitus ingrained in our responses demand reconfiguring, reframing. In my research, I explore the shifting material of my everyday world, through an autoethnographical approach that looks into its field in close up, to touch the fine texture of the field through the study of individual practices. The rationale of this research approach relies on the perception that the individuals constitute and transform the space of the everyday. As Lois Wacquant indicates the full reality of the world is comprised of, “the consciousness and interpretations of agents” (1992, p.9). Thus, the study of individual practices provides us insights into the reality of the field the individual inhabits. I take my everyday experience as a source for inquiring

into the reality of displacement, of the changing meaning of home, as I am unsettled by the coexistence of different worlds.

The focus on the everyday is one of the main parameters that define the ethnographic turn in art. The practices of art and ethnography converge at this mutual field of inquiry characterised by, “a willingness to look at common sense everyday practices – with extended, critical and self-critical attention” (Clifford, 2000, p.56). Yet the study of the evasive material of everyday poses a problem of method. How can one notice the unnoticed? How can we attend to the slippery material of the everyday that escapes any possible systematic method of study? (Johnstone, 2008, p.15). Stephen Johnstone indicates that working with the complex material of the everyday obliges, “an interdisciplinary openness, a willingness to blur creatively the traditional research methods and protocols of disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology and sociology” (2008, p.15). The dialogue between the practices of art and ethnography that I tried to pursue in my practice emanates from this exigency and the trouble of studying the elusive material of everyday.

I tinker with the things of this in between reality, “piecing together a fragile and deracinated culture” (Bourriaud, p.33). I reproduce the old forms in new guises, retell the old stories anew that manifest the work of negotiation between familiar orders of home and the unfamiliar shape of my world here. I work with the material artifacts composing the feel of the everyday, the material world enwrapping us, in order to study the, “more intangible” (Miller, 2005, p.6) orders we find ourselves located in. Since, as Daniel Miller suggests;

[T]he categories, orders, and placements of objects – for example, spatial oppositions in the home, or the relationship between agricultural implements and the seasons. Each order was argued to be homologous with other orders such as gender, or social hierarchy, and thus the less tangible was grounded in the more tangible (Miller, 2005, p.6).

These orders ingrained into everyday life produces us as the member of a community, of a habitus, Miller indicates. Thus, the order of this material world provides us clues about how the parameters of these intangible bonds are established. A similar approach can be seen in my practice as well. In *Agoraphobic Plant*

*Collector* I pursued the spatial order of home and the intangible feel of the home implied in this order, in *Bayrakatlama* I explored the negotiation between the national order performing us as the member of a nation on a daily basis and the local practices that appropriate and manipulate this prescribed order. In the shifting of categories between native and exotic, *Dikmek* explores the intangible boundaries that distinguish ‘us’ from ‘the others’. Thus, my study of the everyday attends to the material orders regulating everyday life, in order to study the less tangible feeling of home. The materials I work with become the intangible threads of the everyday that gives us a glimpse in the stories of things (*Carpet: Home*), daily practices of a location sedimenting itself in our habitualised responses (*Bayrakatlama, Teascape*), symbols circulating certain narratives of belonging and exclusion (*Hayali, Extended Maps*), mundane objects that furnish our everyday world (*Perde/Curtain, Spinal Column*).

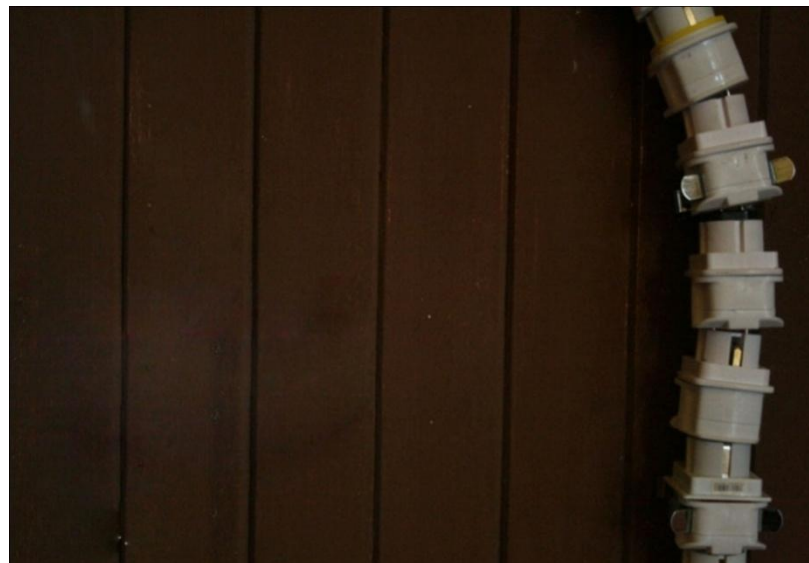
### **3.8 eu-uk-eu: Spinal column**

A study of what we bring with us and leave behind while we embark on a journey, “an analysis of the suitcase”, can provide insights about the dynamics of the encounter with the new, with the unfamiliar Irit Rogoff suggests (2000, p.37). Following Daniel Miller’s (2005) suggestion, which involves searching the intangible feel of the world in the tangible order we are surrounded by, we can claim that a study of a suitcase could reveal what is at stake in a journey, in the mind of the traveller, how he/she envisions her destination. The perplexity and bewilderment that we feel in the prospect of a journey into a new world manifests itself for the first time within the suitcase. The incommensurable differences between our expectations and the reality of our destination are packed within its limited space. The disparity between our assumptions about the destination and the actual reality unfolds in my valise. What I have packed within, as much as what I have failed to bring with me, what I deem as essentially necessary over there and what I think I should leave behind, marks the very first moment that I begin to envision that other place.



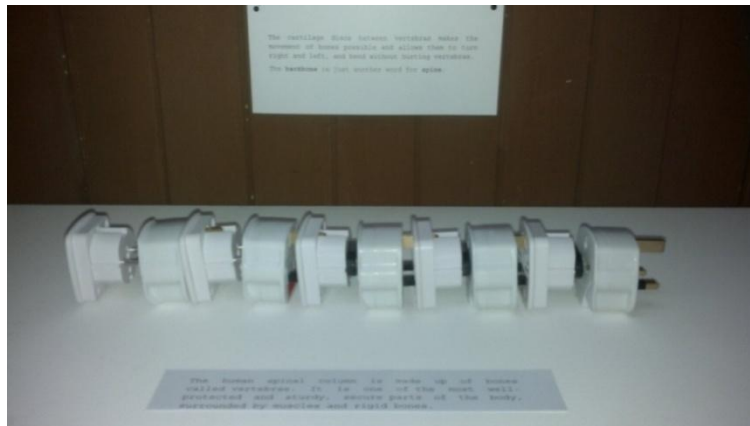
**Figure 40** Project proposal for eu-uk-eu, spinal column made with adaptors, 2011.

The first day I arrived in UK, I found myself looking for a tourist travel adaptor, as I forgot to bring one with me. In this missing piece, the language that would characterise my stay here seemed to be emerging. It has suggested significant insights about the limits of my assumptions, my limited understanding of what expects me there, in my new dwelling: an arduous process of adapting, fitting, converting.



**Figure 41** Detail from the spinal column, 2011.

For the work, *Eu-uk-eu Spinal Column* I set to build a spinal column by fitting UK-EU and EU-UK adaptors into one another and converting the adaptors continuously without connecting to the electrical flow. I gave the form of a spinal column to this successively abutted structure of adaptors, as a reference to the relentless adaptation process I was going through here. Built through the perpetual transformation of adaptors, this spine might imply a journey that continuously moves from one place to another. Through absorbing and transforming the external physical forces, the spine adjusts to the surrounding conditions and protects the body in this way. Thus, the body regulates the physical traumas and maintains its posture in negotiation with the external and internal forces.



**Figure 42** Details from the installation, 2011.

In a display cabinet I installed the adaptor spine on one side and then a fragment of it next to the spine (to demonstrate how the pieces came together). The display was accompanied by texts describing the basic features and function of the spinal column; emphasising the importance of its flexible structure, and everyday expressions that employ the spine as a metaphor for stability, as the sign for a strong character. This conflict between two different texts, one privileging flexibility, adaptability to change and the other finding a consistent character in resisting any external impact manifests the dilemma one faces when moving from one place to another. In that sense, the quality of the spine to move, adjust, absorb and transform

to retain its posture and the integrity of the body highlights the acts of fitting, converting, adapting as the vital aspects of a life in constant movement.

### **3.8.1 Drawing, redrawing borders**

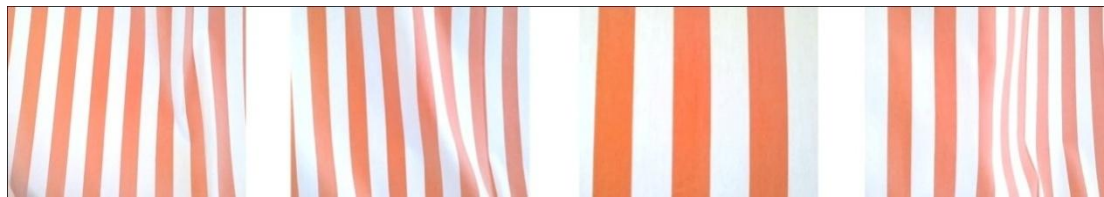
A journey (particularly to somewhere new) brings us to the limits of the world as we know it. While we move from one place to another, the horizon that demarcates our “boundary of perception” (Aschcroft, 2001, p.183), the boundaries of our world becomes unsettled. “Every voyage can be said to involve a re-siting of boundaries” (Trinh, 2011, p.27). Other possible worlds begin to glimpse at us from beyond these familiar horizons. This is a place that strikes us as a realm of other exciting possibilities, as well as an anxious, risky and insecure position to be. A journey casts doubt on the way we do things, the way we conduct our lives and what we know about ourselves that generates a perplexed state. As we leave behind our secure territories, “all our acquired skills and knowledge would be rendered questionable, useless” (Baumann & May, 1990, p.35). The voyage unsettles the boundaries of our world and consequently the regular course of everyday life, the processes, practices that sustain the intangible order of the life become denaturalised; “norms get undone, temptations rear their head, transgressions take place and solid, reliable identity gets undone” (Rogoff, 2000, p.112). Caught between a desire to retreat into our own safe world and trespass this secure yet stultifying enclave, we find ourselves confused about whether to embrace these undoings or hold onto our familiar territories.

The coexistence of different worlds introduces different sensitivities that disorient the subject who finds a centre, a sense of stability at home. Estranged from that habitual world, the feeling of hesitancy and ambiguity casts doubt on the intangible yet resilient borders we all draw around ourselves. If the building of boundaries is the quintessential characteristic of humankind as Baumann & May argue (1990, p.35), this in-between space of encounter provokes an unsettling dialogue. The limits of our world demand being redrawn in continuous negotiation with, “home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture, or more creatively speaking, between a here, a there, and elsewhere” (T-Minh-ha, 2011, p.27). The preoccupation with borders in my following works manifested this relentless act of reconciliation. From the

perspective of displacement, from within an in-between position I focused on different manners of drawing and redrawing borders that reflected a concern with the everyday dilemma of negotiating the differences, the incongruities between different worlds I dwell in.

### 3.9 *Perde/curtain*

The drawing of curtains every morning and every night, is a mundane act that sets borders between home and what does not belong to it. A soft border drawn between sun and shade, day and night; the curtain gently divides inside from outside. One crucial function of the domestic curtain is to redirect any source of intervention from outside, whether it be artificial light, sun, wind or the gaze of others (which do not belong to our domestic realm).



**Figure 43** Film stills from the video, 2011.

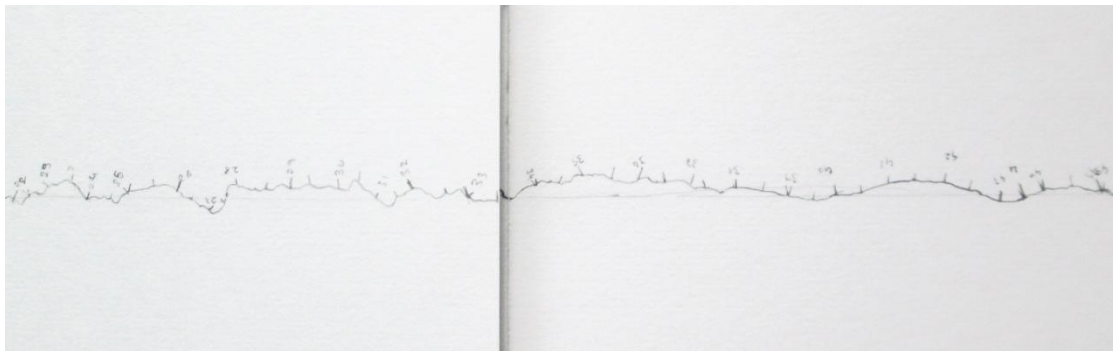
A recording of a red and white stripy curtain, flying unruly by the wind is seen on the screen in the video *Perde/curtain*. As the curtain is blown about by the wind, the straight vertical lines on it constantly move with the currents of the wind, with no regular pattern. As the curtain blows up and deflates the straight lines on it grow, regress and break up. The frame of the screen is filled with the red and white lines. What is outside, beyond the curtain, is not visible; the curtain becomes a barrier.

The stripy domestic curtain in the video draws a boundary against what is outside. The lines move and shift swiftly. The vertical lines of the fabric, waving in an unruly fashion, work against the limits of the screen. The frame of the screen is mobilised by the constant change of the solid, thick red and white lines, as they are broken up by the wind. The curtain, battered by the wind, becomes a membrane showing the transition between outside and inside, here and there. The push and pull resonates on

the stretched fabric, reflecting the fluctuation of the clear-cut borders of my ‘inner-scape’ in my in-between position.

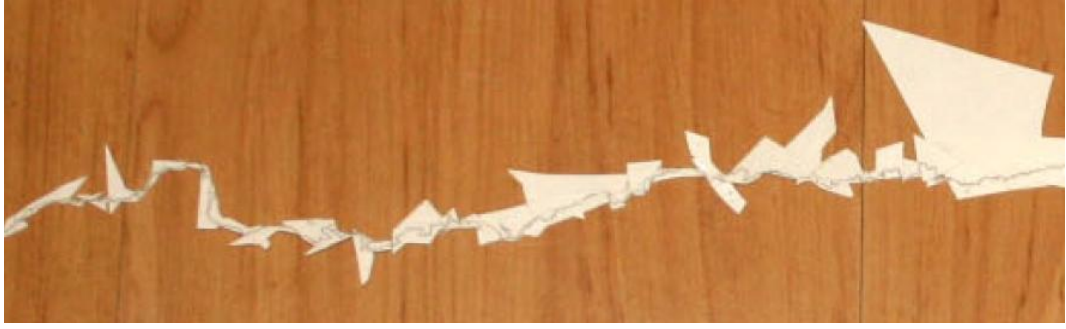
### 3.10 Extended maps

The series of work, *Extended Maps*, also pursues this endeavour of redrawing-drawing borders, negotiating between here and there, but in a more macro scale. This time my starting point was the national maps that draw, “the final line of resistance between a mythical ‘us’ and an equally mythical ‘them’” (Rogoff, 2000, p.113). The visual manifestation of national entities appearing on national maps signifies a territorial idea, they are drawn with, “lines of division and separation” (Rogoff, 2000, p.115) showing the borders that cut ‘us’ from ‘them’. The borders of the national maps end where they start, thus, they draw an enclosed form. In this way the borders not only close to others, but they also close upon themselves. I wanted to draw a different kind of map, that defies these exclusionary agendas and hence to redraw borders that would resist the rigid boundaries.



**Figure 44** Extended map, fragment from the Turkish map, pencil drawing, 2011.

Once these borders are opened, dissected and fragmented, what we have does not resemble the rigid, strong image of the map we once had. The map that is based on the principle of closing itself to others turns into a hesitant, loose line (Figure 44). When opened up in this way, the closed outline can no longer hold the mass of land it holds together. It is no longer possible to locate where the earth ends and the sea starts, or where one country ends and another begins. The land escapes and leaves behind a fragile, faltering line. The non-porous borders turn upside down and inside out.



**Figure 45** Extended map (Version 2), cut out of paper. 2011.

To convert the lines of division into an open ended single line, I traced the Turkish map on A4 paper first and then, I cut out the map and pasted the fragmented outlines of the map in a straight line. As the cut paper subdued the pencil outlines on the page, I decided to try other materials that would highlight the borderlines more.



**Figure 46** Borderline drawn with picture wire, 2011.

I traced the borders of the maps many times using many different materials (pen, pencil, electric wire, picture wire, garden wire etc.). Each material transformed the lines of the maps according to its particular character; each moulded the borders in its own way. The different materials that these maps were drawn and traced with gave different characters to the unyielding form of the borders.



**Figure 47** Screen-printed extended border lines of Turkey on fabric, 80 x120cm, 2011.

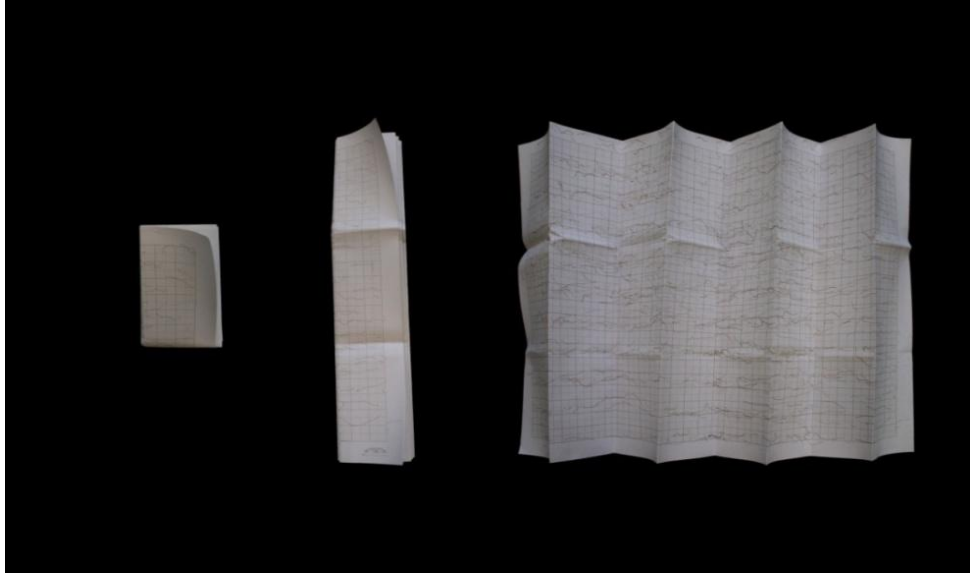
On the soft material of the fabric shown in Figure 47, I printed the open-ended form of the Turkish map. The borderlines took the shape of the folds and creases of the fabric. The malleable material of the fabric cast the segmentary lines into its own light and fluid material, thus undoing the fixed lines of the map once again.



**Figure 48** The two different moments of the Turkish map, drawn with black wire, 2012.

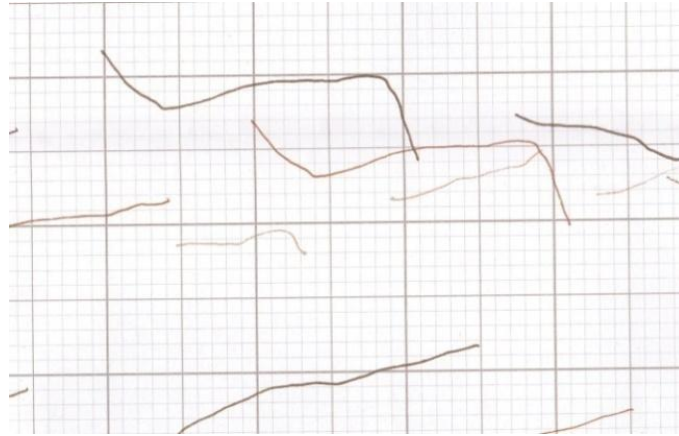
I then redrew the map with a black wire, bending the wire in the form of the Turkish map and hung it on the wall multiple times. Each time I changed the spot where the

map was hung, the orientation of the map as well as the form and the territory it defined were transformed. The wire twisted with the resonance of the movement. The knot that tied the beginning of the map to its end and held the map together became loose. As the map turned around the nail, this loose knot slipped on the wire continuously and with every movement the borders of the map were redrawn.



**Figure 49** Folded maps, broken border lines, 2011.

Next, I broke down the outlines of the map into small units and then printed these lines on fine-lined graph paper in screen-print. The now unidentifiable fragments of the map on the paper folded like a road map suggested a journey. Yet unlike a road map, which promises to show us the way into the unknown by manifesting the connections between different points, these fragmented outlines were floating on the surface of the paper detached from each other. The connections were lost, as the boundaries of the map scattered across the strictly regulated grid and became unidentifiable. The bonds and boundaries were broken up. The lines of separation that define where I belong become the lines of dismembering, dispersion and disorientation, depicting the reality of the in-between state I dwell in now.



**Figure 50** Detail from the fragmented borderlines, 2011.

The borders are redefined while I traced them over and over, revisited the limits of the segmentary lines of the map with different materials. The study of the territorial lines closing upon itself through employing various gestures (drawing, printing and bending) eventually made them un-identifiable and un-recognisable. This project came about at a time when I was trying to get away from the national imagery dominating in my practice and the particular kind of belonging it implies. These untangled lines in this project manifested my attempts to distance myself from the feeling of being held captive by an all encompassing, homogenising ‘Turkishness’. In the following works, I began to look into the everyday practices that remind us the limits of our world on a daily basis and the unremitting process of crossing, breaching, redrawing borders in quotidian acts.

### **3.11 Dil, bizi ayıran nehir**

I have my feet on two planets  
when they begin to move  
they tear me along  
I fall  
I carry two worlds inside of me  
but neither is whole  
they continually bleed

the border runs  
through the middle of my tongue  
I shake it like a prisoner would

...

In his poem *The Double Man* (1984), Zafer Şenocak expresses the hesitant feeling of, “having his feet on two planets”. Şenocak was born into the Turkish language yet maintains his life in Germany. His double presence (astride “two planets”) manifests itself in the depiction of the tongue in the image of the border: “the border runs/through the middle of my tongue”. The tongue that speaks the words to reach the other, to express oneself becomes the limit.

When I came to UK, the language in which I had to conduct my everyday conversations, which I had to rely on to express myself, was one of the first impediments that I ran into. My tongue has become a barrier. Thus, Şenocak’s depiction of the tongue as a border resonated with my experience of feeling crippled by my inability to communicate within this new, foreign language. My un-belonging seemed to be deeply ingrained into my alien tongue. Language, as the primary tool for communicating, the transparency and efficiency of which I took for granted was now failing me. I felt very strongly that I had no control over what I was saying in this foreign language. As if I was becoming someone else when I spoke this foreign language, there was a gap between what I wanted to say and what I ended up expressing. The words were failing me. I felt as though my tongue became idle, when the inability to articulate myself fully in this foreign language became a source of constant frustration, I failed to translate the feel of things into words. Reduced to its basic elements, language has become just a tool for everyday survival. The intricacies of words were lost in this language that will always be foreign to me.

The lines, “the border runs/through the middle of my tongue” ran through my mind in Turkish for a long time: “*Dil, bizi ayıran nehir*”. Yet, when I wanted to revisit the poem, I could not find any Turkish translation of it anywhere, although I was pretty sure that I had read it in Turkish. Later on, I realised that I had actually read the poem in English, but remembered it in Turkish, in my own version with a somewhat

different imagery than the original. It seems that I translated this line inadvertently and replaced Şenocak's words with mine.

The word, "border" became a river in my translation. The English translation of my unconscious Turkish translation reads as, "the language is the river that separates us". Şenocak neither directly refers to the word, "separation", nor does he use the word, "river". The verb, "to run", probably led me to imagine the border in the image of a river, in a fluid material. The poem has undergone an unconscious translation, from one language to another, from one experience to another. This mis-translation and mis-placement exemplified both the constant translation work I go through on a daily basis and the coexistence of two languages, two voices on my horizon. It marks the perpetual shuffling between the two languages, between the two distinctive worlds to the extent that they start to bleed into each other.

In the world of the stranger the act of translation continuously builds intangible paths to close the distance between distinctive worlds to link the distinctive realities to one another. A path, George Simmel argues, freezes the movement that, "links two particular places", in that movement turned into a, "solid structure" (in Urry, 2007, p.20). The path represents the connection between two points separated by a distance. Translation similarly draws a path at the encounter between two strangers, and aspires to close the distance between the two. The act of translation works to, "transport[...] the object of which it lays hold...goes forth to meet the other and presents him with the foreign in a familiar form" (Bourriaud, 2009, p.54).

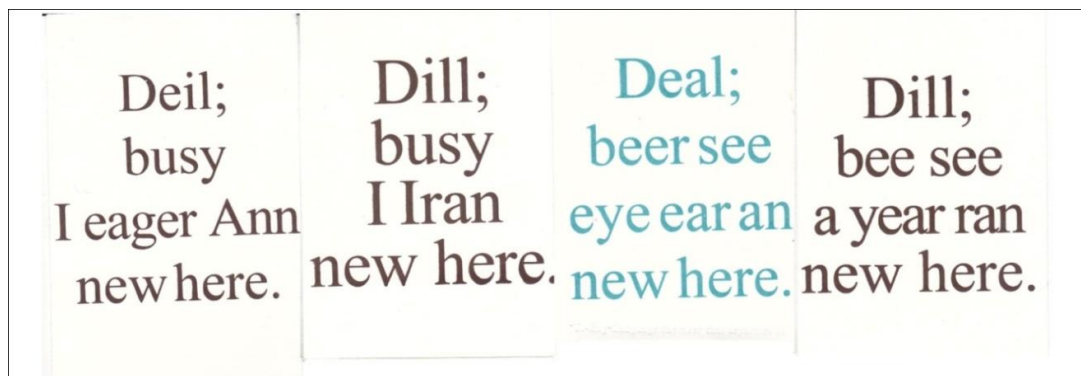


Figure 51 Screen-printed postcards, 2011.

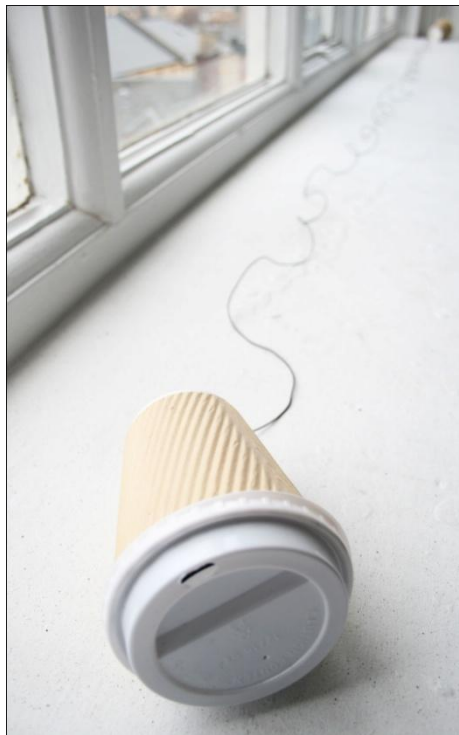
Similarly, my unconscious translation exemplified the continuous chore of closing the gaps between familiar and unfamiliar where, “both the new and old environments” (Said, 1990, p.366) coexist. To reproduce that sense of coexistence inherent in my twisted translation, I resorted to an old word play, which house two different languages on one surface, on one text. I looked into the dictionary to find alternating English words that would sound like my Turkish mistranslation of Şenocak’s lines. In this way, I was planning to produce an English-looking but Turkish-sounding text that hides the Turkish sounds beyond its surface. The two universes would appear contrapuntally together in this way. The visual component of the text that looks like English would disguise the Turkish sound of the text. Only when looked at, read from and heard with an openness, which takes us beyond the limits of our language towards the other, the meaning unravels itself. In the overlapping of two universes the possibility of understanding is suspended at first.



Figure 52 *Dil, bizi ayiran nehir*; postcard series, 2011.

I produced seven different versions of the same text. In all the seven different versions, the same sound is repeated over and over with little variations. Only the English homonym of *nehir*, “new here”, remains the same, to emphasise the position from which I participate into this word play. On a postcard format, I screen-printed the different versions of these English-looking, Turkish-sounding texts first and then blind embossed the translation of the text in letterpress. The postcards repeated the same sound as they are reproduced, disseminated and posted to different addresses. The postcards turned into an echo as they are read by different addressees, in different accents.

Later on, I decided to focus on the sound element and asked people (some English-speaking, some Turkish) to read the texts for me. The English-speaking people were more confident when reading the texts. Even though the text was meaningless at first sight, it still appeared familiar to them. They did not understand the sentence yet spotted the similarities in the sound repeated in each text. For the Turkish-speaking people, it seemed harder to identify the Turkish sentence hidden within the repeating sounds, as they were misled by the unfamiliar appearance of the English words. They felt they were confronted with an English text, probably beyond their understanding of that language. The perception of the text was determined by the distorted axis between the familiar and unfamiliar, native and stranger.



**Figure 53** View from the sound installation, 2012.

Figure 53 shows the final installation work I realised with the recordings of these different readings. I connected two paper cups to each other with a wire and placed them at a distance from each other. As if responding to the other, or maybe correcting the other, the same sentence is repeated again and again from within the paper cup phones. When one finishes, the other starts at the other end. Running one after another; two distant (*tele*) sounds (*phone*) strive to reach, connect to one

another. The choice for this simple communication device (much like the postcards I printed the texts on) reflected the longing for the ease and comfort of the familiar language, the simplicity of communication I had lost amidst the unfamiliar everyday language here away from home.

### 3.11.1 Distance and proximity

The following journal excerpts reveal my dilemmas about finding the correct distance to keep when approaching others. It was a similar concern which motivated the previous work, that sought to close the gap between, draw paths between familiar and unfamiliar, myself and the other. The journal excerpts below explore the invisible limits and unsaid rules determining the conditions of the communication between two strangers and the shifting parameters of proximity. The first entry was written when I was back in Istanbul in Turkey, after an incident in a shop. The other is an imaginary experiment into the depths of everyday life here in Edinburgh, which was triggered by this encounter in Turkey two months previously. They show my attempts to understand the same basic social rule that has different norms in these two locations.

02.10.2010

*bir ay sonra Türkiye*

***Turkey, a month later***

*Gözüme kestirdiğim mesafede durdum*

***I stood at a distance that I measured by eye***

*Gözüme kestirdiğim mesafe İskoçya kuyruk bekleme mesafesi çıktı*

***That distance seems to be the queuing distance that is valid in Scotland***

*Sonradan gelen kadın benim kasa için beklediğimi anlamadı bile, geçti önüme.*

***The woman who came after me did not realise I was queuing at all and headed to the cashier***

*Uyarsam mı dedim, niye uyarır ki insan, kabalığından değil, iki dünya kesişmediği,*

*aynı dili konuşmadığımız için o benim aksenimden başka yerden geçmiş*

***I thought about warning her, saying something, but why should I, it's not because she was being rude or something, it's because our worlds did not cross at that time, because we were not speaking the same language, our axis did not overlap***

08.12.2010

*Personal space; can I measure it?*

*Task: measure it. A metric measurement device might be hard to use. Maybe not hard but odd. What if I ask for permission from the person standing in front of me to measure it? I can make a guess, or measure it with non-metric devices, Such as the number of ceramic tiles between us.*

*That would be my approximate sense of distance, the extent I should-could approach to someone – to a stranger here?*

*Then I should observe the others and how much space they leave between each other.*

*But then, there should be some parameters setting this distance: the location, occasion, the degree of acquaintance, the purpose ...*

*I might look at the people in the queue, or people in a library.*

In these journal entries, we see a concern with finding the right distance between myself and others, that manifests being at a loss about the rules of communication as they change dramatically in these two different contexts. In my relationship with the other, an invisible course of the local common sense runs underneath, that I cannot really make sense of. Different sets of values lie hidden, different to those I habitually rely on. I cannot totally figure out how things work here, where I should stand, how far is too far, how close is too close when approaching someone. What is not acceptable? Where do the limits of one end, at what point do I start disturbing people with my proximity? At what point do I go beyond the allowable limits in one-to-one encounters?

When my habitual responses do not meet the expectations of the new world I am dwelling in, when out of my familiar zone, where the rules and routines of daily life seem self-evident, habitual and even natural; the overlapping of these conflicting realities causes problems. Having grown up in a ‘touchy feely’ country, I am worried that my idea of personal space, my idea of borders, limits might not be appropriate here, where people are said to be distant. I try to understand the extent to which I can approach someone else without breaching that acceptable distance between two strangers.

Nonetheless, the very presence of the stranger defies distances; as Bauman & May suggest, dwelling in a place between here and there, in proximity yet at a distance the stranger holds a position, “neither close nor distant” (1990, p.35). With her /his very presence the stranger challenges the parameters ordering the everyday interactions, disputes any measures, any measurements regulating everyday life.

### 3.12 Thyme and Spice – Time and Space

The issue of measuring and finding alternative measurement solutions in my practice arose, I guess, from this need to restore these lost parameters that guide me in everyday situations. I aspire to gauge the codes and the rules of my new abode, the distances, measures and measurements at work here.



**Figure 54** Video stills from *Thyme and Spice – Time and Space*, 2011.

This video piece shows the making of a metric ruler, a fixed, rigid order that helps to measure the space, the distance between two points, the gap between two ends. Spanning across the whole screen, a metric ruler slowly appears in the video that

measures the distance between the two edges of the video frame. A pinch of red powder is sprinkled over a piece of wood first, and then the regular lines and numbers of the ruler are drawn by spreading that pinch of paprika around.



**Figure 55** Detail of a video still from *Thyme and Spice – Time and Space*, 2011.

The act of measuring brings the unknown into our understanding, “by the use of something known - measuring rods and their number - something unknown is stepped off and thus made known” (Heidegger, 1975, p.224). Gauging the distance between the two edges of the video frame with a habitually, bodily acquired forms of measurement reverses the fixed order of the ruler. The clear lines of the ruler are dispersed by the hazy, habitual knowledge. The vague measurement unit of a pinch (like ‘a little’ or ‘of the consistency of an earlobe’<sup>8</sup>) contrasts with the standard, rigid measurements depicted. The existence of different parameters in tension reflect the troubled sense of distance and proximity in the world of the stranger, marking a state of, “loss of all familiar external and internal parameters” (Hoffman, 1999, p.50). On the one hand, there is the accustomed, habitual ways I get by, and on the other hand, there is an order totally strange to this embodied order. Measuring one through the other, casting one into the other reflects the rebuilding of the parameters to get by in the new order.

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8 A translation of “*Kulak memesi kıvami*”, the term describes a certain consistency of dough.

### 3.13 *Horoz Dövüşü / Rooster Fight*

In the video work *Horoz Dövüşü* two glasses that look quite similar in size and shape appear on the screen. One of them is a small tea glass with a smooth, curvy shape and the other one resembles that glass, even though it is different in terms of its structure, function and texture. It is not suitable for holding a hot liquid like tea at all, the shopkeeper from whom I bought the glass told me. “It is possibly a small vase”, she said, “with a spiky, thistle-like surface”, someone else commented.



**Figure 56** Stills from the video, 2011.

I bound two glasses to each other using a rubber band. One of the glasses was filled with half water and half *rakı* (a Turkish spirit), which gives a white colour to the glass. The other was filled with water. The glasses appear against a background split into two planes. The line that separates the dark blue ground from the light blue background is distorted through the glasses. The two different containers that denote two distinctive material expressions, two different universes refract and redraw this infra tiny horizon line they appear against. I set to correct, fix the distortion through levelling the liquids in the glasses and to merge them on the horizon line while still trying to keep the glasses balanced with the help of the rubber band.



**Figure 57** Stills from the video, 2011.

The clear water infused into the white Turkish spirit as the two glasses bow and bend towards each other. As I pulled one glass, the other responds to the force on the other side. Their brims opened towards each other the more they bowed. The sound of the glasses rubbing against each other highlighted the tension between the two worlds

collapsing on the same horizon. This tense pull and push is seen in the video, while I try to find a balance between the two glasses and the two distinctive worlds they signify. This taut sound belongs to a peculiar dialogue between these two different worlds that find themselves face-to-face, head-to-head, on the same table obliged to and bound to each other.

### 3.14 Tea-scape: A change of scenery

The following work similarly focus on the tension at drawing, redrawing boundaries. In *Tea-scape*, I was again preoccupied with redrawing a horizon line in a minute, mundane scale that reflects the continuous work of getting accustomed to the shifting order of things on a daily basis. I recorded the moment when milk mixes with tea and change the colour of the transparent, bright and brownish red colour of it. This is the colour of the ‘right’ consistency of proper tea, which is called “*tavşan kanı*” (rabbit’s blood) in Turkish. As I pour milk into tea, this ‘right’ hue acquires an opaque light brown colour, the colour of British tea, or at least a way of drinking tea that I associate with Britishness. The proper colour of the tea defined by my cultural habits is undone.

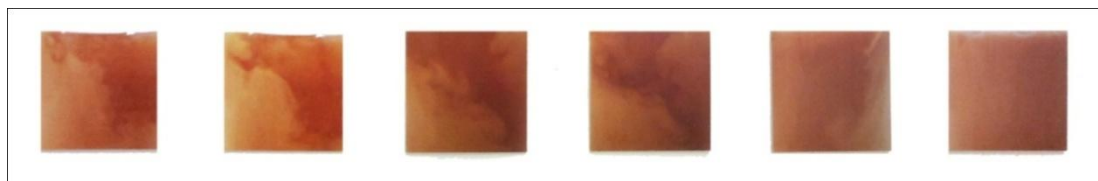


Figure 58 Fragments from the first shooting, 2012.

I repeated this ordinary habitual act in front of the camera and look into the scene with the eyes of a stranger wide open; tearing apart every detail in order to understand the unusual manners of the natives. The video was shot with a static camera, watching transfixed the dissolving of the milk fully, until the motion of the liquids finally settles down.

As I looked through the viewfinder to adjust the frame, while I pour milk into tea, I am the subject-object, director-directed, observer-observed. Similar to my other video pieces in which I act for the camera (as in *Dikmek*, *Bayrakatlama*, *Hayali*,

*Thyme and Spice, Horoz Dövüşü*), the emphasis is on recording the unfolding of things, the performing of an action with the least amount of editing. Thus, the stress is on the emerging of the things, the transformation of one thing into another. The shifting material of my everyday reality manifests in this sense of transformation overwhelming in the works. The objects appear in-between, the things seem to deform and trans-form, evoking the transition and transformation I am caught up in-between. The emphasis is on the shifting flow of things, on the processes that bring a different material world into existence. The overlapping of the distinctive orders on the same plane in the *Terra Limeninis* prints or in constructing different routes, journeys for the endemic flowers of Turkey in *Dikmek* confirms the coexistence of distinctive worlds, the contrapuntal realities. The everyday materials in my work are always caught up within a flux, in a movement, to the extent that the process, the movement overcomes the fixed, stable position of the object. I strive to understand the intangible processes that furnish my world in the shifting shape of things. The acts that result in this transformation belong to the acts of settling down, of arrival; the horizons ripple, the tensions are negotiated, the borders of the maps dissolve and new forms are brought into existence as the outlines of my home unsettles.

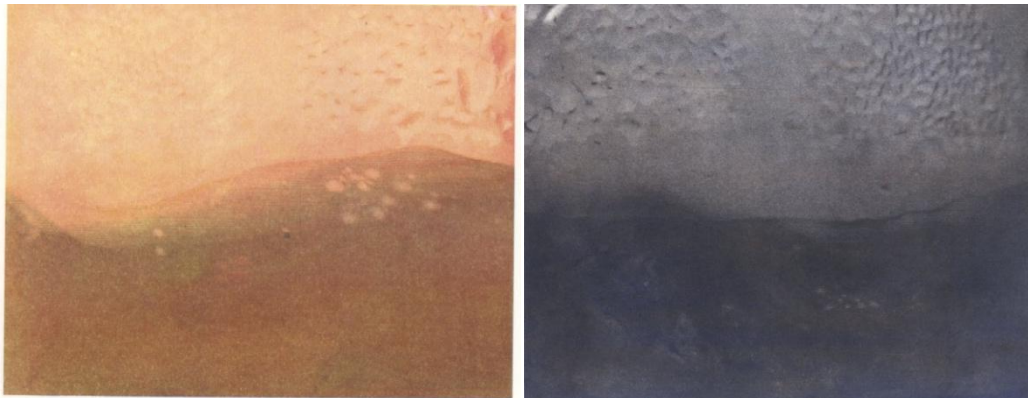


**Figure 59** *Tea-scapes*: film stills, 2012.

Focusing particularly on the moments when the surface of the tea is rippled with the milk, I captured some video stills that emphasise the unsettling of the infra tiny horizon line. Meanwhile, the piping hot tea steams the glass and a bleak, rainy look emerges on the screen. This scene resembles a typical weather draping over my stay here in UK. In the close-up observation of the peculiar habits of the natives, an image of a landscape appears from an excerpt of daily life, a landscape shaped by the unfamiliar habits of my new dwelling. A land is scaped (shaped) by the people

working and living on it, anthropologist Tim Ingold suggests. A landscape is formed by the deeds of the locals, by the ways the inhabitants dwell on the land. As Ingold underlines, in its early medieval use, the word landscape referred, “to an area of land bound into the everyday practices and customary usages of an agrarian community” (2010, p.126). Thus, the habitual everyday acts of the natives *scape* the landscape.

The title of the prints I produced from these video stills comes from this underlying understanding of landscape as the work of its inhabitants, as the outcome of the habitual practices of its indwellers. The repeating acts of the inhabitants produce the habitual realm, “the embodied rituals of everydayness” (Butler, 1999, p.114) that shape our dwelling, the rules governing the everyday world. The still images capture a routine everyday practice enacted by the local inhabitants of my new dwelling. The landscape prints are based on the close-up observation of a daily habit of the locals; the collective acts of scaping the land that shapes the ground I remain in in this strange place.



**Figure 60** Photo lithography and Photo etching, 2012.

The prints depict an in-between moment, before the tensions of the encounter between two different liquids, two different worlds settle down in balance. This in-between state also manifests in the close-up look of the video that produces an image of a landscape at a distance. In contrast to the, “close-up...immediate, muscular and visceral engagement” (Ingold, 2000, p.126), which shapes the land, the image of this landscape evokes a sense of distance in the proximity of detail. As an observer,

outsider amidst this place, I depict a landscape that I look from afar, feeling at a distance.

### 3.15 Discussion of Works

Newcomer, latecomer, stranger, foreigner, inane tourist, abiding outsider; my location is, “provisional, contingent, temporary” (Lok, 2006, p.21). In my practice I deal with the disconcerting sense of displacement away from home, from my habitual, familiar world. With my arrival here, the fabric of home that weaves together this habitual world conditioning my steps untangles and gets caught by the unfamiliar texture of my new dwelling. The discussion of my works that departs from a garden flourishing on a carpet at home and arrives in a fleeting, fluid landscape reveals this unsettling experience that changes the ways I dwell, “remain in place” (Heidegger, 1977). The rooted metaphors of home growing into the land, anchoring itself into the soil lose its gravity in such a state. Between a study of a ground woven tightly, knot by knot and a landscape depicted with fluids fusing into each other, a very different practice of dwelling develops. The shift from the unyielding ground of home to a representation of a space formed by the acts of merging, fusing, intermingling reveals the clear lines between home and away, here and there becoming complicated.

In an unsteady moment caught between incompatible practices, languages, seasons, time zones and climates; transformation becomes the dominant formal quality of my works. In this state of transition, the matter changes its forms from liquids to solids, from solids to fugitives. In *Hayali*, the concrete, stable grounds of national maps turn into a passing trace of a shadow, shifting from a solid to a fugitive state. In the *Extended Map* series the borderlines of the Turkish map change constantly as it rotates around a nail on the wall. The entrenched outlines of national maps are destabilised as they come loose with every movement. In *Teascape*, as the milk infuses into the deep red colour of the tea, the colour on the screen turns into an opaque brown. Thus, at the threshold of an unfamiliar reality unsettling my world, transformation overwhelms the vocabulary of my practice. The contrapuntality of

different sounds, images, distinctive practices formally appears as a constant movement of things, as a movement between forms, stories, and places.

The underscoring sense of transformation draws attention to the act, to the gesture in the making of the work instead of the final object itself. The emphasis on process brings the experience of journey to the forefront. Commenting on the escalating appearance of the concept of journey in recent art practices, Bourriaud observes that, “today the journey is everywhere in contemporary works, whether artists borrow its forms (journey, expeditions, maps), its iconography (virgin territories, jungles, deserts), or its methods (those of the anthropologist, the archaeologist, the explorer)” (2009, p.107). The everyday acts that I pursue to understand this in-between place I dwell in, the methods of the newcomer’s journey resurface in the vocabulary of acts appearing in my practice, compare-contrast, break it down, dissect, recollect, juxtapose, superimpose, collage, layer, edit, cut-paste-bring together, translate, interpret, reorder, map, un-map, orientate, relocate. These are the repeating gestures that appear in my work as well as the routine everyday acts of a dwelling in-between. Throughout my works, forms are undone, narratives are broken down into their basic components, routine habits are dissected and brought into a new light. The outcome is the material artefacts of a mobile and increasingly precarious world linked by serendipitous relations and unforeseen encounters.

The predominant feel of transformation inherent in the works gives them an, “indefinite status” (Bourriaud, 2009b), which characterises the harvests of a precarious world. As our relation with our dwelling, with the space we remain changes on this, “transient territory” of the *precaria*, it is no longer possible to build, “durable bonds” (Bourriaud, 2009b, p.32). The bond between the land and the people scaping it manifest a very different character. Massimiliano Gioni similarly draws attention to this ambivalent, in-between state as he elaborates on the, “unmonumental” forms proliferating in recent art practices. In contrast to the durable bonds the monumental builds, which marks an abiding statement over time and space, unmonumentality manifests a very different sensitivity, it occupies an uncertain ground. The monument erects on a firm, solid ground as it spreads its steel roots into the land. Unmonumental, on the other hand, marks another form of

dwelling caught, “between the desire to dissolve into the world and the need to fortify their own borders” (Gioni, 2007, p. 65). The need to protect, preserve exists together with a desire to set loose the roots we anchor into our safe territories, with a longing for seeing what lies beyond our habitual world. Amidst the disparity between the need to withdraw to our own secure territories and the desire to be drifted away in movement, unmonumental occupies a middle, hesitant ground.

In my study of this in-between ground, the methods of another traveller, that of the autoethnographer, also manifest in my practice. I aimed to understand the new shape my world has retained in movement, in displacement through attending to my everyday world, observing my attempts to negotiate between here and there, familiar and unfamiliar realities. I followed the intangible threads that interlace the texture of this world in flux: a dwelling, “simultaneously marked by movement, change and multiplicity” (Meskimmon, 2011, p.5). In that sense, in my research I employed, “strategies of quite literally following connections, associations, and putative relationships”; a particular definition of ethnographic method that George E. Marcus terms as, “multi-sited ethnography” (1995, p.97). Following the things, crafting their stories anew at the encounter and consequently giving new material forms to these intangible lines becomes a generative strategy within my practice. Exploring the complex relationships between here and there, familiar and unfamiliar, this particular manner of cruising through the material of everyday has been an overarching method in my works.

The presentation of such a dynamic form of study demands alternative forms of engagement and new forms of presentation. I draw the unruly paths of inquiry into a conclusion in Chapter 4 and reflect on the final stage of the work of inquiry where the research encounters its public, the moment the work is presented. After unpacking the intangible contents of the suitcase I brought with me here in the preceding chapters, now it is time to pack my suitcase back again and get ready for the journey back home imposing its own exigencies. To this end, I explore the itinerant structure of the book form with its fleeting space as a form of presentation in the next chapter ready to pack and unpack, the way it exhibits, gathers, encounters.

## Chapter 4: The moment of encounter

In January 2012, I held a small exhibition to reflect on my art practice, including the works I had produced as inquiries throughout my research. This was a time to withdraw from my inquiries across the field of displacement and to focus on how to communicate my research to others. It was a time to have a last look at my research journey, to wrap up things and pack up my suitcase again. In this chapter, I will outline my queries that explore this final moment as an opportunity to open my research to the others, as a moment of encounter when the work meets its public with regards to the ethnographic monograph, the form by which ethnographic research is conventionally communicated to a wider public.



**Figure 61** A view from the exhibition, January 2012.

My experience with the exhibition form underlined that this form of display employs a sense of order different than making and searching which were the dominant modalities throughout my research. While making is about wandering around, about strolling across the field, the format of exhibition demands stepping back and having a last look at the work from a distance. There is a sense of finality in the way the exhibition form is organised that clashes with the open-ended process of making. The temporality of making implies a provisional moment, it emphasises the process. On

the other hand, the logic of exhibition is interested in the products of that process; it fixes the process of making with a retrospective look.



**Figure 62** A view from the exhibition, January 2012.

While mounting the exhibition, I found myself looking for other ways of installing things in the space. I was trying to fix the shelves with Velcro and using photo-corners to stick the prints on the wall. In a space that I would only have for few days, I could not see any point in building permanent structures and finding long-lasting solutions. This attitude in the installation of the work not only exemplifies a form of making that is reluctant to be fixed, but also of the habitual way I relate to space, the characteristics of my dwelling in-between. Being on a temporary stay with a prospect of return, this manner of settling down manifests the habits of an ‘itinerant mender’ who builds makeshift structures, or a tenant who is cautious of leaving any trace in an abode that belongs to others. I recall such a quality of inhabiting space from growing up in a household where the only means of hanging a picture on a wall was toothpaste. The nail would leave undesired holes in the wall. A piece of cardboard or a rough fabric would separate the legs of the sofa from the wooden floors. While moving the furniture around, that piece would protect the floors from being damaged. Thus, our main concern was to make our movements unseen in the house owned by others where we stayed temporarily.



**Figure 63** Shelf fixed with Velcro. 2012.

Living in houses that did not belong to us, we needed to devise other forms of remaining in that place. Our temporary stay manifested a cautious, provisional character. Wary of leaving any marks behind, there were always these soft, small, almost invisible layers we put between us and the many rented houses we inhabited while we were moving from one place to another. These habitual acts of dwelling have reappeared in the manner of fastening the shelf on the wall or attaching the papers only from the corners. Things were temporarily fixed, only to last the limited duration of the exhibition. In my new dwelling of the exhibition space, where I am again on short-term stay, the old habits were resurfacing.

I realised that my dissatisfaction with the exhibition format might be coming from the fundamental discrepancy between this hesitant form of dwelling I am accustomed to pursue and the modality of settling down that the exhibition format demands. The itinerant character of my practice, the open-ended process of making seemed to be risking losing its dynamism in the fixed order of the exhibition. The moment the work is displayed imposes an end to the work in process; it fixes things for good.

This dilemma also appears in the ethnographic work. Similar to the exhibition form, the monograph provides a realm for the ethnographer's work meet its public. The dynamic, open-ended process of the ethnographic inquiry that wanders around its field, serendipitously comes to an end in the form of ethnographic monograph. Providing a retrospective look, the ethnographic monograph is written at a distance, at a temporal as well as a spatial distance from the field of inquiry and claims to bring a sense of order and closure to the messy character of the field. Thus, the monograph, the public side of the ethnographic research offers, "the final writing of coherent reflections and analyses, facilitating a later retrieval of overall sense and order", Nigel Rapport suggests (1997, p.94).

As Arnd Schneider & Christopher Wright indicate, despite all the self-criticism the ethnographic endeavour has been through, the mode in which the final outcome of the ethnographic research encounters its public is still an untouched area. They underline anthropologists' reluctance to engage in, "formal experimentation" to expand the, "methodologies and forms of presentation involved in exhibiting anthropological work" (Schneider & Wright, 2010, p.3), and to challenge the ways a monograph describes, explains, presents the field and meets the public. In the rest of this chapter, I intend to explore the formal qualities of monograph, how it accords with the conventions of the ethnographic mind, in relation to the questions I faced during the process of finalising and presenting my autoethnographically informed research.

#### **4.1 The monograph and the book form**

At the final moment of the ethnographic work, the desire for, "closure and finality" that characterise ethnographic endeavour transpires strongly in the conventional form of monograph (Ingold, 2011, p.15). The realistic, documentary modality employed in traditional ethnographic inquiry, the monograph, claims to give the truth about the field to its readers. The monograph is thus the outcome of a hierarchical relation between the object of the ethnography and the subject of the ethnographer in the field. This relationship, then, continues between the readers of this research and the

ethnographer; the authority of the monograph claims to hand in the readers the truth of the field.

The structure of power within the ethnographic inquiry is also supported by the authority of the printed, published, bound and predominantly textual form in which the monograph appears (Drucker, 2004, p. xviii). Legitimised through this form, the power of the monograph is strengthened as the account of the ethnographer asserts its reality as the truth of the field. Could there be another form of representation defying this sense of finality and its authority, that renders the field of study captured by the ethnographer a less stagnant entity?

Through elaborating on different forms of books, Deleuze & Guattari declare the obliterating of the separation, “between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)” (1989, p.23). The different book forms they discuss refer to different forms of representations, perceptions of the world and, accordingly, different divisions set upon this, “tripartite” field. The first is, “the classical book” that claims to give, “the image of the world” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1989, p.5). In this form, the relation between the, “field of reality” and, “field of representation” is based on reflection and mirroring. This model is inclined to perceive the world with roots, lineages and genealogies; a thinking that imposes hierarchies.

The classical book, “as noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority...is a taproot” Deleuze & Guattari suggest. This book form visualises the arboreal idea, “with its pivotal spine and surrounding leaves” (1989, p.5). The classic codex book form takes its name from the Latin word “caudex”, meaning “tree-trunk” (Oxford Dictionaries, Online). The pages of the book are bound at the spine, at the trunk of a tree, and open in a sequence, layer by layer, one after another, to unfold the reality of the world. Their second category of book is similarly built upon the idea of roots, yet roots that are aborted or destroyed. Nevertheless, this second category of book still follows an arboreal system (Deleuze & Guattari, 1989, p.5). It is still through the ontology of the roots this system orders the world. The rooted book has a beginning

and end, and implies strict relations build between different nodes of the arboreal model.

Conventionally ethnographic monograph follows a similar arboreal order made of, “culmination and termination points” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1989, p.22) with a desire for closure. Yet, with the critique that challenges the claim for fidelity to truth in ethnographic inquiry, a single, final version of reality has been put into dispute and consequently the foundations of monograph has been shaken. Other possibilities of envisioning this final moment different from a reflection of a coherent picture of the studied field mirrored in the monograph become necessary. In *Exhibition Experiments* (2007) Paul Basu & Sharon MacDonald give us clues about these other possibilities. They propose a different form of encounter and a different form of representation:

Rather than making complex realities more vividly simple, patronising audiences and perpetuating illusory securities, the issue has more often been how to engage with complexity, how to create a context that will open up a space for conversation and debate, above all how to enlist audiences as co-experimenters, willing to try for themselves (Basu & MacDonald, 2007, p.16).

The conception of the exhibition format as, “a site for the generation” of new dialogues, thus, approaches the world not as something to be reflected, pictured in the final work - as it is symbolised in the codex book form - but as something in process, a continuous unfolding. The complexity of the reality demands such an openness that might challenge the secure positions we hold onto. The rhizomic movement entering into the field of reality from multiple entryways, through following, “detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1989, p.21) routes wanders across this complexity. The rhizomic is the last order that Deleuze & Guattari discuss while they elaborate on the tripartite field between author, reality and the representations of reality. It defines a moment when the distinctions, hierarchies between these fields disappear. Growing across the field, from multiple locations, a rhizomic order renders a world to be wandered around, rather than to be stared at from a distance, as it happens with the arboreal mode of

representation that looks for an, “image of the world” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1989, p.5). Rhizomic is amidst the things in their continuous unfolding, in their continuous becoming.

## **4.2 The space of the book**

The sense of termination in the order of the exhibition space, imposing a finality on the serendipitous character of my inquiries, led me to look for alternative forms of representation. Inspired by the unruly movements inscribed on the journal pages, the many uncategorisably random moves charted in the journals I kept during my autoethnographically informed research, I decided to work on a form of encounter that would locate the audience within this messy field. I wanted to emphasise the unruly movements of my inquiries that reveal the complex character of my experience, the many directions I was being drawn while following the routes of my journey. I wanted to draw the audience into the complex feel of displacement, instead of providing an image to stare at from a distance.

Thus, taking off from the surface of my notebooks from the field, I focused on the book form more closely. The book is the conventional form for ethnographic monograph, as well as an alternative for an exhibition space. Within the context of art, the book retains many forms; it becomes an itinerant exhibition space that circulates, “images and aesthetic ideas to wide audience in an accessible and affordable form” (Drucker, 2004, p.320), a medium for documenting ephemeral work, a catalogue that continues to exist after the exhibition. The book form became to be considered as a refugee from the institutional frameworks of art with its distinctive means of displaying, circulating and communicating the work. Deemed as a democratic form that allows a wider audience to have an access to the work of art, the artists’ book was seen as an opportunity for dethroning art and delivering it into the hands of the audience. Thus, the book form was privileged for the egalitarian relationship it proposed to establish between the author and audience.

A book seems to embrace the diverse materials between its covers while the exhibition format employs a high selectivity. The space of the book does, however, demand its own form of editing and selecting. While within the exhibition space the

works can often be perceived in an, “all at once glance” (Drucker, 1998, p. 17), the book unfolds itself page-by-page, layer-by-layer in time. The pages of the book replace the walls of the exhibition space. Yet, unlike the concrete walls of the exhibition space, the pages of the book offer a fragile, fleeting, and transient structure. The pages move on the command of the reader. Providing a, “sequence of spaces” as well as, “a sequence of moments” (Carrion, 1985, p.31), the book form accords with the agendas of the dematerialisation debates that emphasised processes and ideas in art, instead of the singularity and authority of the unique art object.

### **4.3 Experimentations with the book form**

Within my practice that stresses the wandering subject in displacement, the book form has become an alternative to explore further. After the first exhibition, I set about experimenting with different book structures, to think about the form of the book as the conventional form of ethnographic monograph, as well as an alternative form of exhibition space.

The first book I designed was in a simple codex format, in which the visual documentations (excerpts from my journals and notes from the field) appear in a chronological order. While working on this format I started to think about different modes of wandering across the space of the book and the various movements the structure of the book suggest, in order to draw another itinerary that could evoke the complex itinerary between different moments of my inquiry. We browse, skim the pages of the book, skip some parts, and jump from one part to another. We dwell longer on intense reading, pause at some points, and drift away at times. The book is an itinerant form; it is a space to be wandered through. I began to further experiment with the structure of a codex book that determined a particular itinerary based on the varied habits of movement we perform across the book space. Thus, I started to try-out a couple of book structures that use different forms of opening, different forms of order to challenge the usual ways in which we handle a book.



**Figure 64** Details from the first book, 2012.

I was trying to draw a different itinerary and propose a different form of encounter. To this end, I aimed to rework the existing structure of the book that houses a particular habit of movement and to suggest different relationships, different orders that open alternative readings, links between the works. Through troubling the usual opening of the book and unsettling the habitual movement of the pages, I wanted to evoke a sense of disorientation in the audience. By leaving the reader at a loss about how to navigate across the surface of the book and thus drawing an unfamiliar itinerary in the book space, I intended to evoke the wandering pattern of the newcomer, the stranger, one who has left the familiarity of home behind.



**Figure 65** Second book: landscape and portrait orientations, 2012.

The second book structure I worked on combines a landscape and a portrait orientation book. The two are bound to each other. The documentation of my visual works appears on one side, and excerpts from my journals on the other. In every page turn, the landscape and portrait books open independently of each other and produce

haphazard encounters between. New unexpected paths emerge with the overlaps, superimpositions and juxtapositions that occur with every turn of the page and manifest the complex intermediary space of dwelling in-between.



**Figure 66** From the second book, 2012.

This pattern of movement unravels different interpretations of the work that might not happen in a linear, chronological order. The reader sees different projects in relation to one another, which present the work of my three-year practice as a complex whole. The loose itinerary of this format captures the unruly paths across different moments of inquiry.



**Figure 67** From the second book.2012.

Due to the some technical problems I faced in the binding of this book format, I set to work on another book structure with four independent spines that opened in four different directions. This fourfold book structure lays down four different paths opening on a vertical and horizontal axis. One can handle each small book separately, yet four of them complete a whole following a circular line, gathering the

four different paths together. The image of a circle repeating on the corners of each book binds and orders the pages, each page is follows this circular motion.



**Figure 68** Detail from the fourfold book, 2013.

Each booklet is designed to be postcard sized, to spark an impression of a souvenir from a journey that states, “I was here”. In this sense, the book might suggest an intimate encounter, a personal correspondence where the audience is addressed individually. The individual account of this autoethnographically informed project is told to the audience in person and demands a similar personal engagement from its viewers. The book fully flourishes only with the reader’s movements across its pages, with the reader’s response. Challenging the habits of navigation, the fourfold book unfolds four different paths that provoke the wandering patterns of its ‘dwellers’. As the audience tries to find its way across this unfamiliarised space of the book, the itinerary I set at the beginning is performed once again. Even though the book exists as only one copy, it multiplies as it travels from one hand to another. Every arrival in the space of the book demands the reader to embark on an individual journey across the pages of the book. As such, this book form enacts the newcomer’s journey into the unfamiliar order of things in a new abode. Following the pattern of movement the newcomer performs, who wanders across the host space with a repertoire of movement stranger in that new abode, I wanted to unsettle the regular (chronological and linear) course of the book space.



**Figure 69** The circles guide the movement of the pages, 2013.

The fourfold book appears in a black box. Similar to a suitcase packed for a return journey, the box contains a diverse range of material in its limited space. In its structure the final book-box inevitably recalls Duchamp's *Box in a Valise*, as a response to a journey in terms of its organisation. After opening the box, what we first come across is the books. Underneath, another layer contains leftovers from projects, residues from my practice, souvenirs from my research journey; small test prints of *Terra Limeninis* project, the remaining postcards from *Dil, bizi ayıran nehir*, a manual drawing for *Bayrakatlama*, a plastic stencil English alphabet manipulated to host Turkish alphabet, a passport tunnel book made with the remaining prints from *Eerie Landscape* series and a dvd that documents my video works. These materials allow the reader to have a glimpse of the work, to have a feel of the original texture of the works reproduced on the pages of the fourfold book.



**Figure 70** The fourfold book, 2013.

The box in its entirety calls for different forms of engagement, different orders of viewing and handling. The diverse materials contained in the box poses a question about the order that brings this diversity together. Instead of keeping the work at a distance (as is generally the case in the exhibition format), the book-box invites the audience to itself. The reader is drawn to the field of inquiries to enact the complex itinerary of displacement. The manual invites the audience to follow its guidelines, the Turkish alphabet pierced into the plastic stencil comes across as sharp nicks to the hand, the passport book and loose portfolio prints of *Terra Limeninis* demand a careful handling, the postcards needs to be read out loud and the video works are to be watched.

The coexistence of the fragments from original pieces with the documentation of the works also troubles the order of viewing the work. The documentation of the works in the book presents the experience of disorientation through a strategy of displacement. As Elena Filipovic argues in relation to Duchamp's oeuvre in which reproduction retains many forms, the act of reproducing suggests, "a displacement, a temporal and perceptual shift" (Filipovic, p.11). The 'here' and 'now' of the original is replaced by the 'there' and 'then' in the reproduction. Documentation as a form of reproduction similarly takes the work off its original location, off the time of

its production, and consequently confirms another time, another place within the present. Thus, between here and there, then and now, the contrapuntal order of displacement resurfaces in the order of the book-box, in the distance of documentation with the actual feel of the work.

This in-between character of the book-box suggests an alternative order to the ethnographic monograph, which aims to excavate an, “overall sense and order” (Rapport, 1998), with a desire for finality. The slippery paths, changing directions and hesitant steps of the inquiry manifest a continuous sense of movement in the book-box, following the habit of an in-between inhabitant occupying middle points, *intermezzos*. The audience is left without conclusions as they ceaselessly engage in the acts of unfolding and unpacking while navigating through the book. This portable, itinerant structure follows the patterns of a movement similar to leaving the familiar world behind and encountering the need to restructure a new world amidst the unsettling experience of an unfamiliar world. Thus, I set an itinerary open to alternative paths and other ways of wandering across the tripartite field that opens unprecedented routes to a non-prescribed destination for the audience.

## Epilogue

In this research, I departed from the roots of 'home' and followed the complex topographies these dissolving roots draw while the wandering character of a precarious world shifts the practices we seek to keep in place. Bearing in mind that research is a question about, "'where to travel' and 'what is worth seeing there'" (Latour, 2005, p.17), in this epilogue I look back one last time at my journey that has challenged my sense of home after my arrival in UK. I highlight the crucial characteristics of this open-ended inquiry and the underlying currents forming this journey.

While the encounter with the unfamiliar has cast doubts on my mundane decisions and habitual responses, I was drawn to the outskirts of my natural habitat and thus, the rooted image of my home became unravelled. The outlines of my horizon were blurred as I moved back and forth between 'here' and 'there'. The unyielding ground my idea of home used to be anchored in has dissolved. Over the course of my research, I revisited the practices ingrained into the texture of the everyday that reproduce the myths and narratives of home, and sustained certain ideas of belonging on a daily basis.

In my autoethnographically informed art practice, I explored the character of my in-between dwelling. My intention has been to understand the shifting practices by which we relate to a place while the roots of our homes are entangled with distant horizons. With an autoethnographical approach, I focused on my personal experience to understand this cultural phenomenon through individual practices. I explored the infra tiny details of this in-between dwelling and searched for forms to capture the feel of this hesitant ground. To this end, I studied the existing forms shaping my everyday world. Thus, this has been an inquiry that studies its field by attending to the destabilised habitual order of my home and proposing new forms to express this tentative being. By revisiting, retracing the existing habitual practices, symbols and narratives that construct my home, I tried to unpack this immaterial feeling.

The investigation of these concerns brought about questions as to how one can represent, capture such a personal experience without necessarily being limited to the

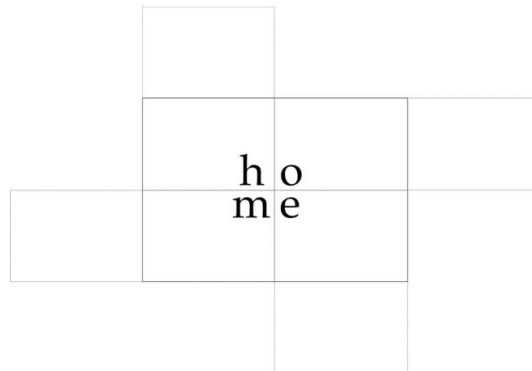
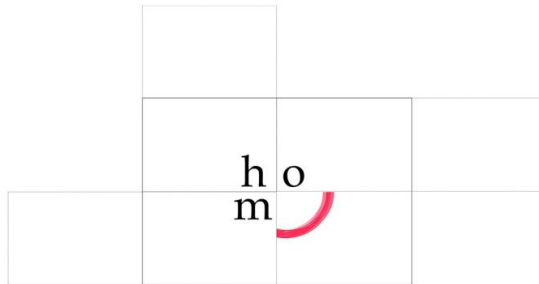
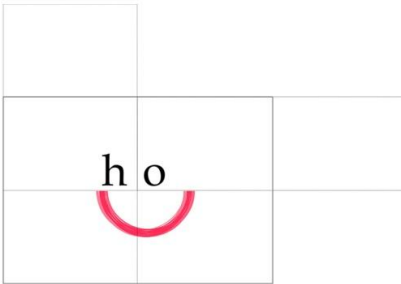
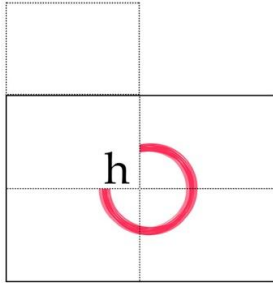
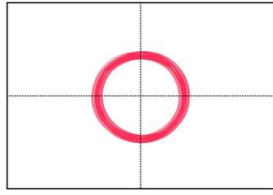
documentary, descriptive, explanatory language through which conventional ethnography often approaches its field. Although both art practice and ethnography are interested in reifying the complexity of the human experience through a study of the material and immaterial practices we live by, they pursue distinctive methods, embarking on distinctive journeys in the field. Throughout my PhD, following the basic fieldwork practice of an autoethnographer, I recorded my personal responses on the changing scenery of my everyday life, yet, I was aware that simple appropriations and borrowings of methods would not do justice to the potentials of this transdisciplinary dialogue. Thus, I explored the possibilities of ethnography that could open itself towards the imaginative, undisciplined manners of inquiry in art. This has become an inquiry that obliterates the boundaries between, “making, observing, and describing” (Ingold, 2011, p.2). The conversation I pursued between the focused yet serendipitous wanderings of ethnography (Ingold, 2011) and the undisciplined distracted attention of art practices (Ravetz, 2011), demanded going beyond the prescribed definitions of research. This dialogue eradicated, “the old boundaries between making and theorising, historicising and displaying, criticising and affirming” (Rogoff, 2006), and transformed the way I work and think through the disciplinary frameworks I am located in.

Between capturing the image of the world and seeking, “alternative imaginations” (Rogoff, 2006) that challenge the documentary function of conventional ethnography, this research challenged how I understood my practice. It was the question about the role of the artist within the field of culture that marked the, ethnographic turn in contemporary art (Foster, 1996). It was my questions about the location of my work at the risky place between self and other that led me to explore further the autoethnographic inquiry and the methods, tropes and presumptions that characterise ethnography in the first place. In order to further expand these discussions occurring between art and ethnography, I studied the works of Jonas Mekas, Kutluğ Ataman, Marcel Duchamp, Deniz Sözen, Mona Hatoum and Zarina Hashmi to explore the various ways artists engage with the issues that fall into the field of ethnography. I looked at the diverse positions artists adopt while grappling with the distinctive aspects of dwelling in *precaria*, and dealing with displacement,

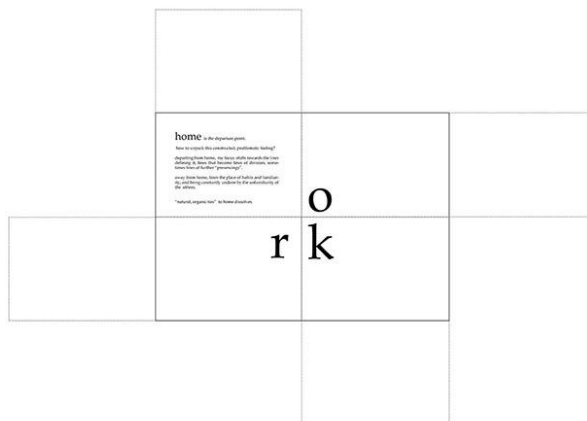
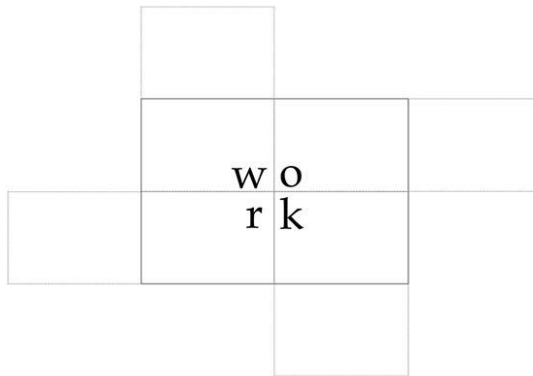
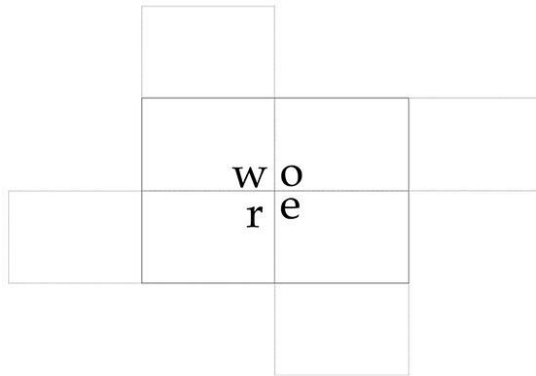
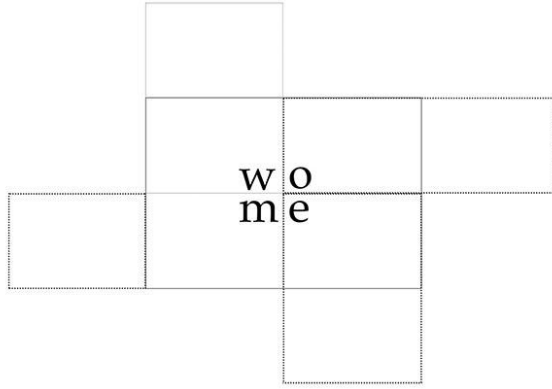
while caught, “between the desire to dissolve into the world and the need to fortify their own borders” (Gioni, 2007, p.65). This study revealed how the forms our wandering dwelling are expressed in the artistic language, how the distinctive artistic strategies reified the mobile character of our world.

Torn between a desire to capture the messy landscape of experience in a, “moment of closure and finality” (Ingold, 2011, p.15) and following the world in its continuous unfolding, this practice-based research has questioned the nature of inquiry with its transdisciplinary approach. This study then, contributes into corroding the frameworks defining knowledge with the transdisciplinary dialogue between art and ethnography. It suggests another form of complicity between these practices that studies the material practices of an individual experience that translates into material forms back again. In that sense, in my research I have not only explored the field I am studying to contribute into understanding the changing sense of home in an increasingly mobile, precarious world, but I have also offered new forms to express this phenomenon through tinkering with the forms, material practices of this world.

## Appendix: Documentation of the fourfold book

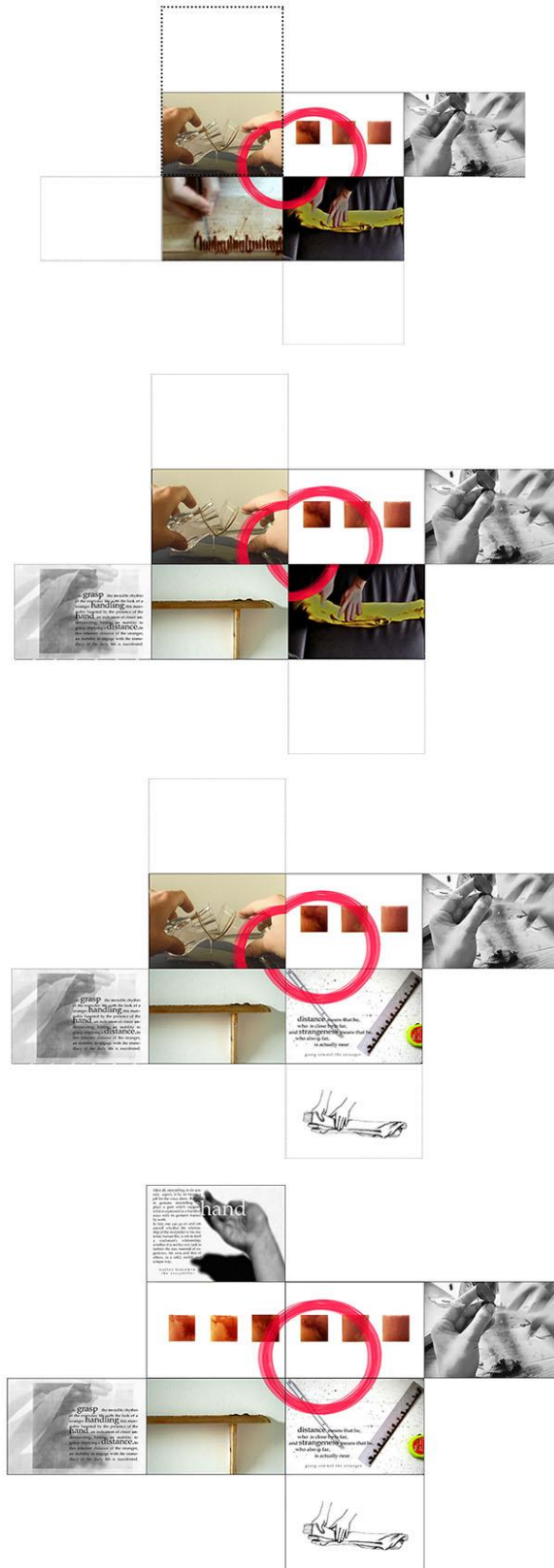


Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground

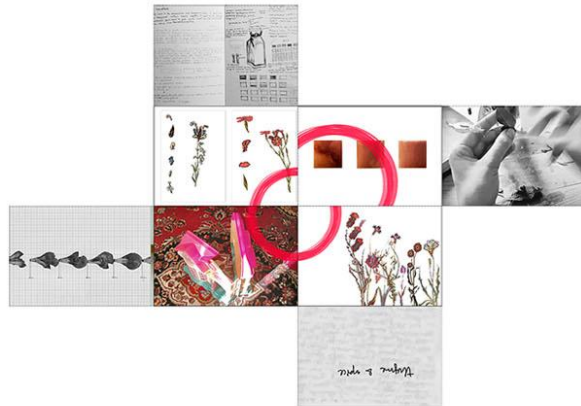
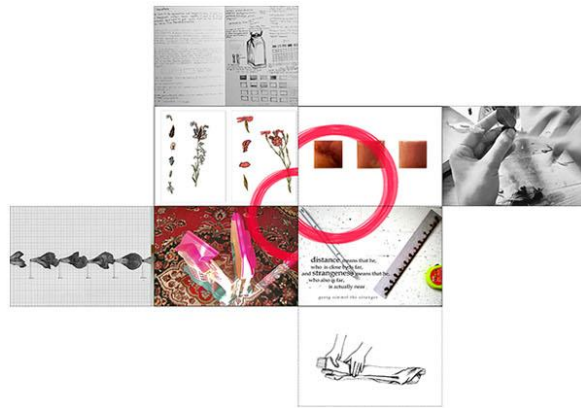




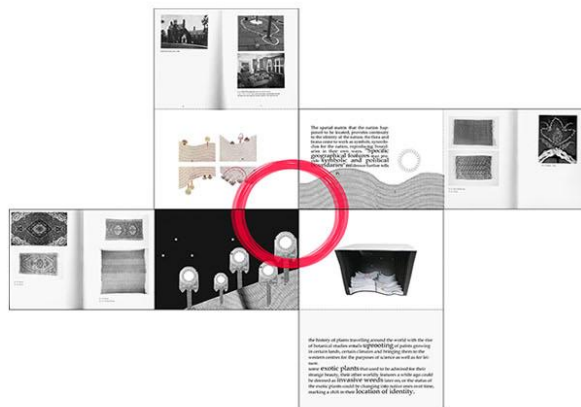
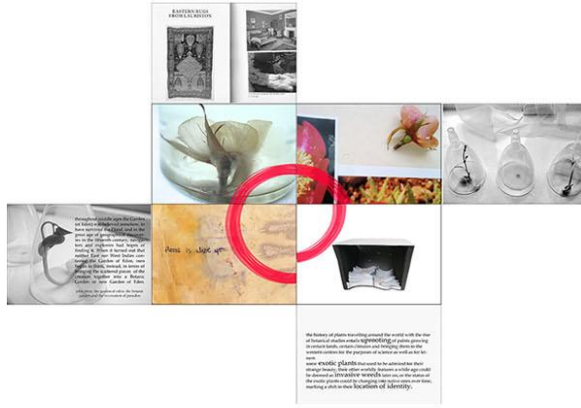
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



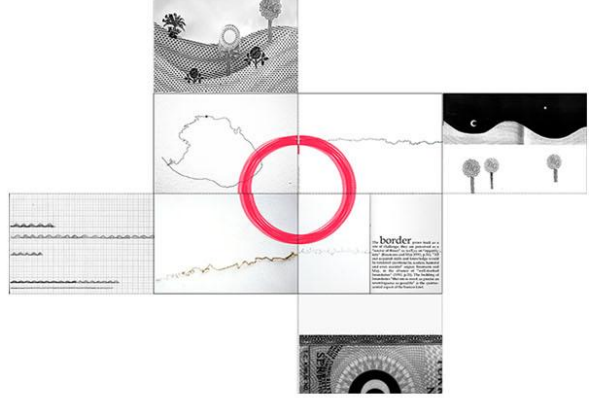
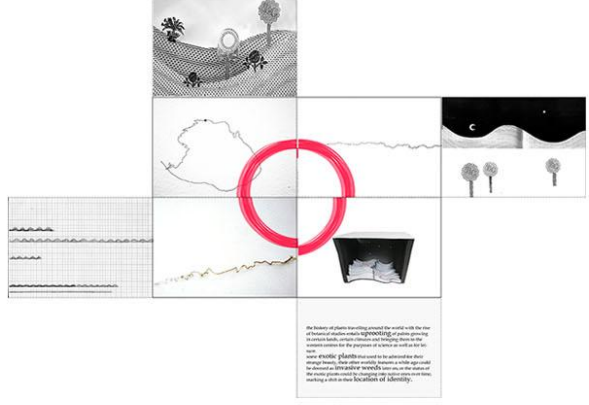
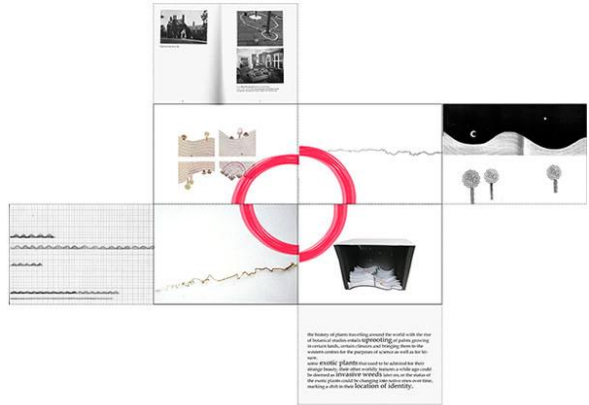
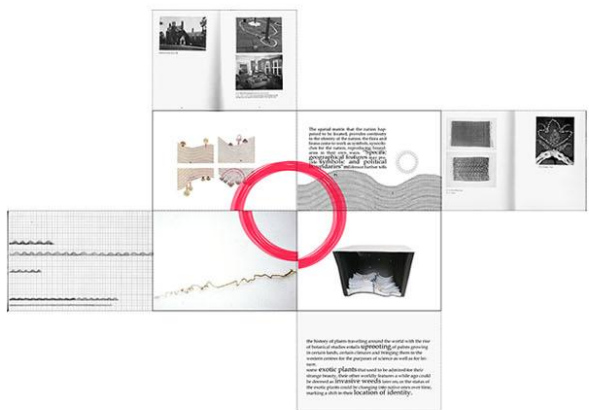
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



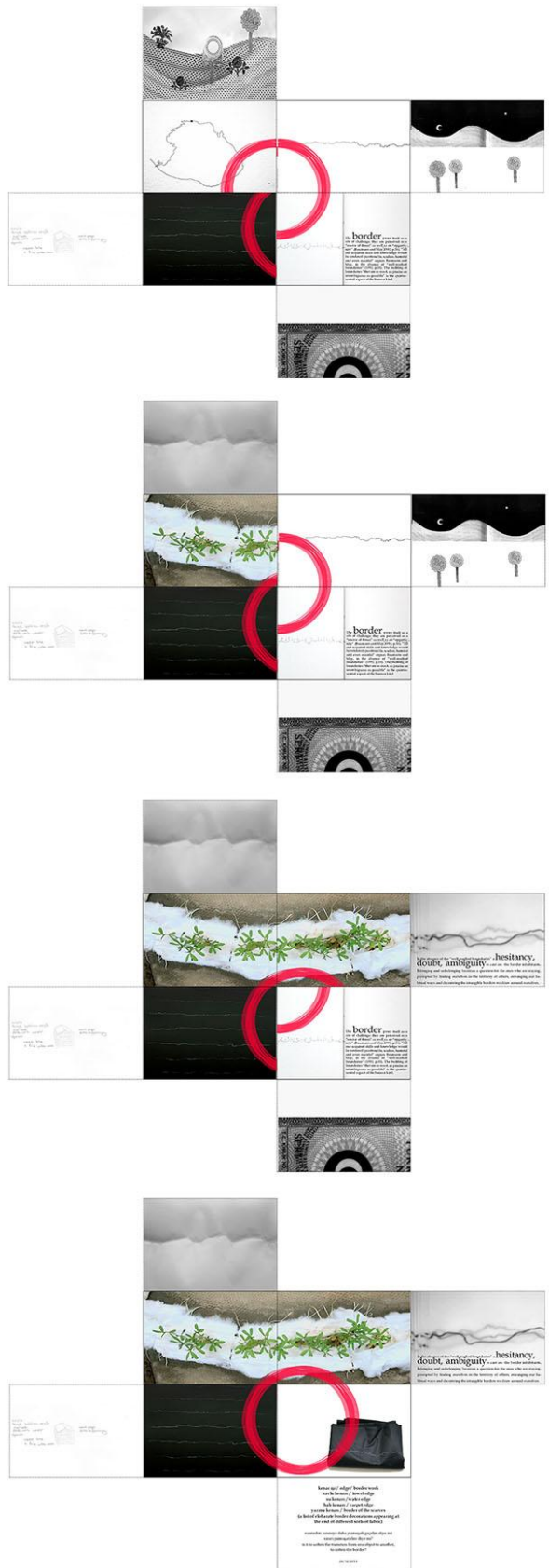
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



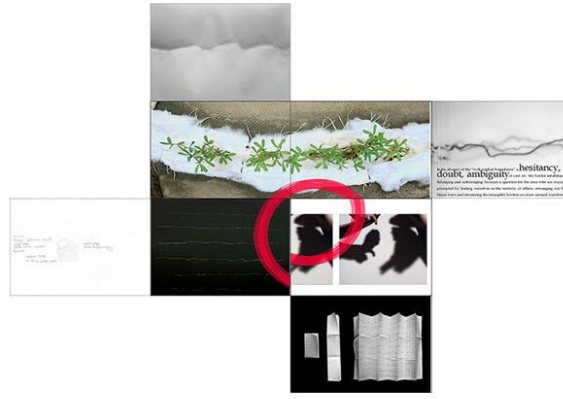
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



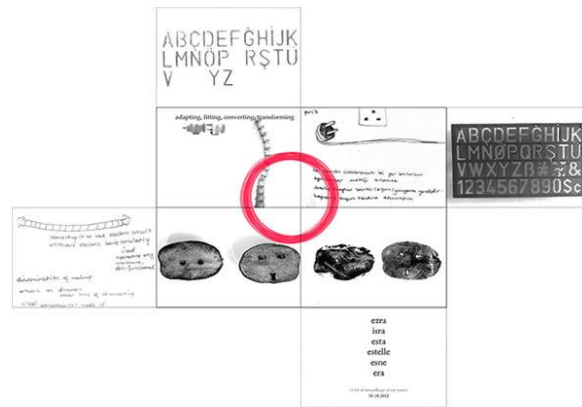
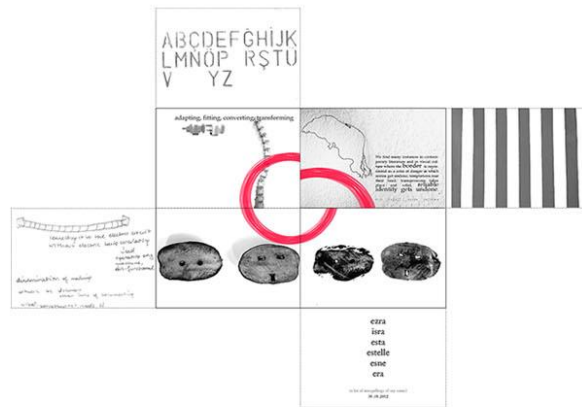
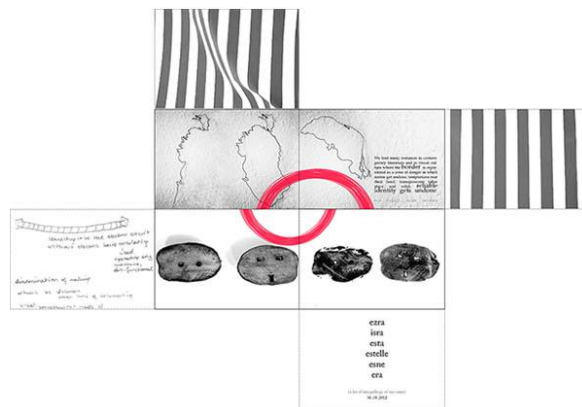
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



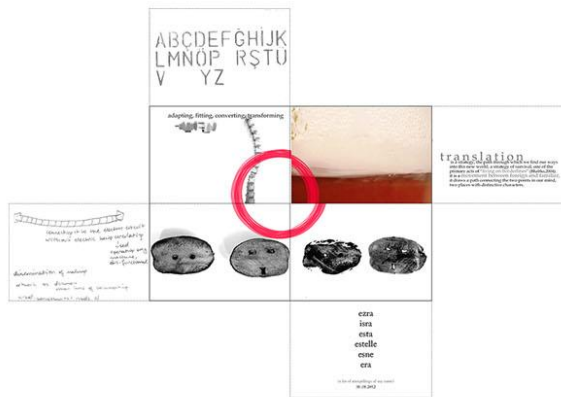
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



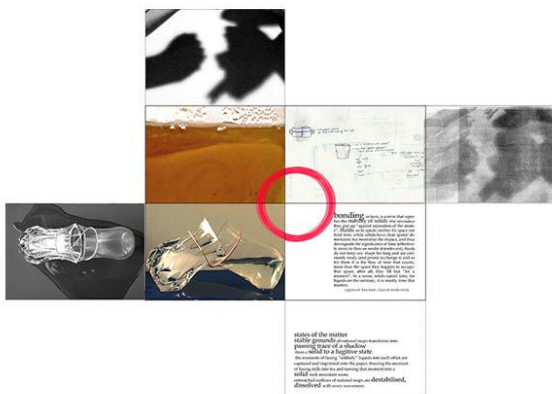
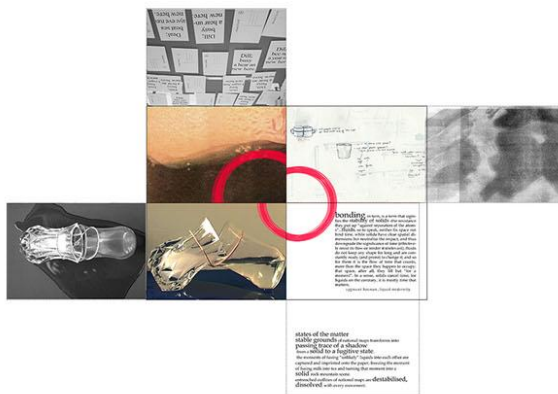
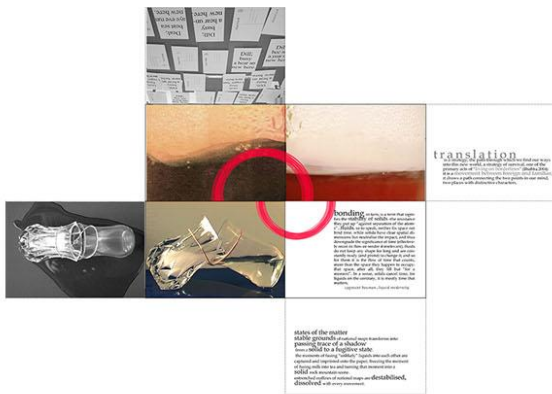
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



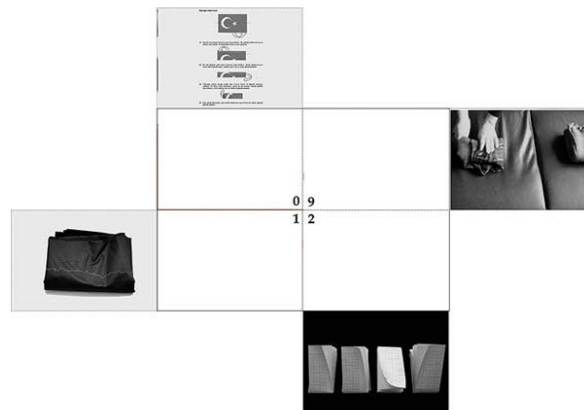
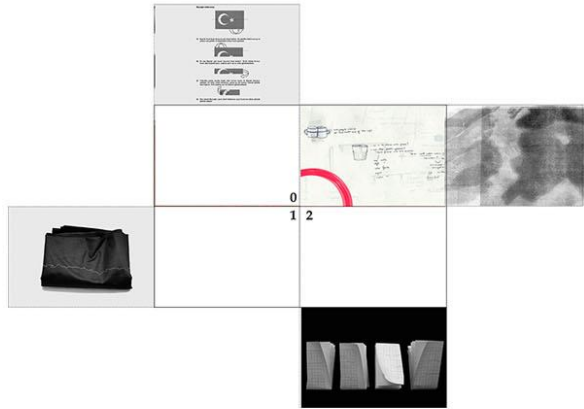
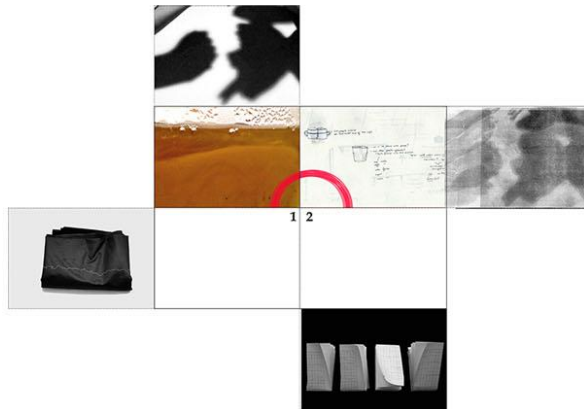
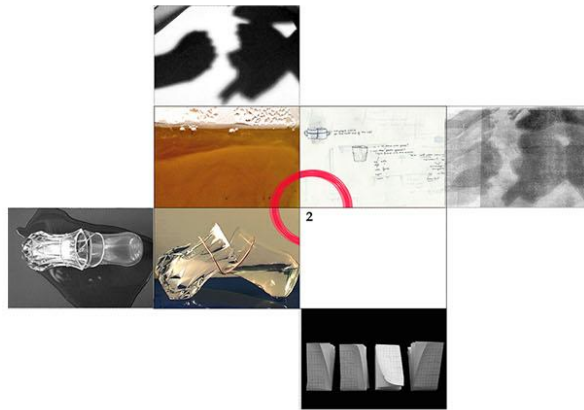
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



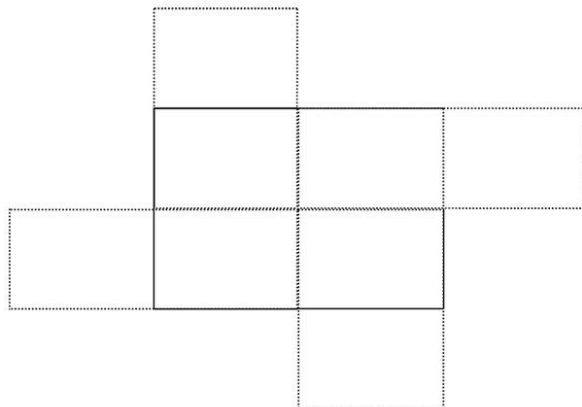
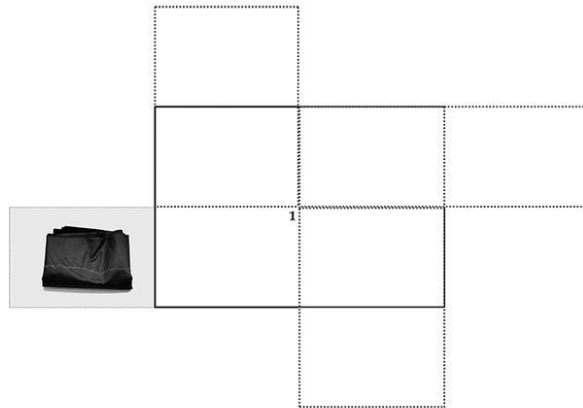
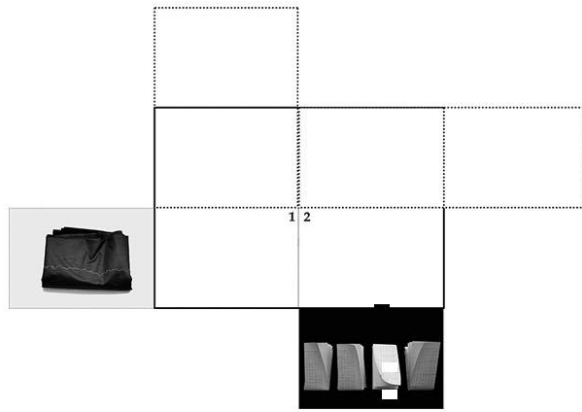
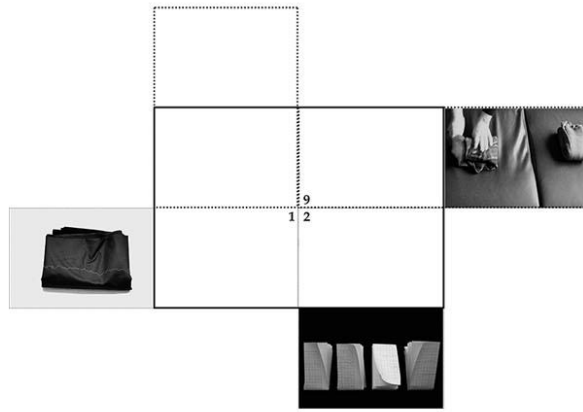
# Home-work: A study of Home from a personal ground



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## Image references

Figure 3: *Klat Magazine. Mekas with his camera while filming* [Online] Available at:

[http://www.klatmagazine.com/photography/pics-06-jonas-mekas/6936/attachment/jonas\\_films\\_flowers\\_press-page](http://www.klatmagazine.com/photography/pics-06-jonas-mekas/6936/attachment/jonas_films_flowers_press-page) [Accessed 11 June, 2012]

Figure 4: *From fff* [Online] Available at: [http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-FxtpZfToL3k/URjcsFKuWtI/AAAAAAAAAe70/oV2UY4d8KKE/s640/MANA_13_17_Feb_ARCOmadrid_image.jpg)

[FxtpZfToL3k/URjcsFKuWtI/AAAAAAAAAe70/oV2UY4d8KKE/s640/MANA\\_13\\_17\\_Feb\\_ARCOmadrid\\_image.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-FxtpZfToL3k/URjcsFKuWtI/AAAAAAAAAe70/oV2UY4d8KKE/s640/MANA_13_17_Feb_ARCOmadrid_image.jpg) [Accessed 27 June, 2012]

Figure 5: *View from installation of the fff* [Online] Available at:

<http://www.saatleriyarlamaenstitusu.com/site/artworks/work/76/> [Accessed at 27 June, 2012]

Figure 26: *Bilgi Bayrak. Instructions for folding flag* [Online]. Available at:

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Figure 30: *1 YTL the one on the left is from 2005, the new one on the right is from 2009*

[Online] Available at: [http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BCrk\\_liras%C4%B1](http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BCrk_liras%C4%B1) [Accessed at 12 March 2012]

Figure 61: *Joseph Frank's Aralia design* [Online] Available at:

<http://theridoureport.blogspot.co.uk/> [Accessed at 10 March 2012]

Figure 62: *Simon Starling, Blue, Red, Green, Yellow, Djungel 2002*, Dundee Contemporary Arts. p.43-46

Figure 63: *Francis Alÿs, The Loop, 1997* [Online] Available at:

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/\\_SAQuS0LA/THJApZg2\\_DI/AAAAAAAAAf0/Pms1VJuLNOE/s1600/Alys+the+Loop.JPG](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_SAQuS0LA/THJApZg2_DI/AAAAAAAAAf0/Pms1VJuLNOE/s1600/Alys+the+Loop.JPG) [Accessed at 13 March 2012]

Figure 64: *Francis Alÿs, The Loop, 1997* [Online] Available at: [http://some-](http://some-landscapes.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/sometimes-doing-something-leads-to.html)

[landscapes.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/sometimes-doing-something-leads-to.html](http://some-landscapes.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/sometimes-doing-something-leads-to.html) [Accessed at 13 March 2012]

Figure 65: *The Loop, installation view from "A Story of Deception", 2010* [Online]

[http://www.arte-sur.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/C\\_ALYS-light.jpg](http://www.arte-sur.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/C_ALYS-light.jpg) [Accessed at 13 April 2012]

Figure 5.13 *Instructions for folding the flag from the Turkish Flag Code (1985)* [Online]

<http://www.gezginkorsan.org/images/zbayrakkatlama.pdf> [Accessed at 19 March 2012]

The rest of the images belong to the author.