

## Canan Tolon

### Refrain

6–28 SEPTEMBER 2025

DIRIMART PERA



*Untitled 9.3, 2025*  
Acrylic on canvas  
276 x 220 cm

*These are no gardens; these are dense, impenetrable, demanding terrains. And they are menacing. Nature is no longer confined to silence or submission: it approaches, encircles, and exerts pressure. What once appeared soft now carries force. The illusion of control begins to dissolve; nature no longer remains silent, nor does it yield.*

*With this exhibition, I wanted to reiterate my message more forcefully, as if within an echo chamber.*

– Canan Tolon

Dirimart is pleased to announce *Refrain*, Canan Tolon's third solo exhibition at the gallery. Bringing together twelve recent large-scale abstract paintings, hung consecutively in a sequence that echoes through the space with a hollow insistence, the exhibition traces the imprint of an encirclement dominated by organic force and cyclical time, where the suppressed voices of nature refuse to let the viewer go.

Canan Tolon's artistic practice, shaped around the notions of chance and accident, also engages with concepts of nature, time, memory, and architecture. Her process of pouring, erasing, and scraping paint into layered surfaces becomes almost the very subject of the work. Containing construction and destruction at once, her works embody the tension between existence and disappearance. Translating the dialogue between architectural thought and the interplay of built form and nature onto the canvas, Tolon's layered surfaces oscillate between abstraction and representation, establishing a language that is at once structural and intuitive.

The twelve abstract compositions presented in *Refrain* embody a revolt against the impossibility of painting in silence. Conceived as an immersive landscape experience, they offer a sense of visual continuity and atmosphere. With their floral forms and soft colours, the paintings first appear to suggest a familiar silence, yet in their arrangement – where space itself becomes the bearer of the refrain – they provoke unease. Installed on a curved wall that envelops the viewer and abolishes all distance, the works deny any panoramic view or possibility of escape. The gaze wanders between them only to return, inevitably, to the same forms, the same silence, the same pressure – never able to grasp the whole.

Each canvas functions like a refrain – not only in imagery but in structure. Monumental in scale, identical in proportion, and hung edge to edge without interruption, the repetition they generate is neither decorative nor passive; it encircles, it insists. Like slogans memorised and repeated until emptied of meaning, these works resonate with a hollow persistence. Seen up close, their faded surfaces carry traces of decay and a quiet threat. Their repetitive structure suggests not linear time but cyclical recurrence, transforming into the refrain of both visual and existential confinement, into the ceaseless yet ineffective song of a word without a voice.

The works in *Refrain* question humanity's desire to dominate nature and its disorientation within the very systems it creates. Returning with a silence too heavy to be ignored, they reveal what has been repressed. In *Refrain*, nature no longer appears as a silent backdrop but as a sequence of cycles – like the endlessly repeating frames of a film strip – resounding as the echo of a suppressed voice.

Canan Tolon's exhibition *Refrain* will be on view at Dirimart Pera, 6–28 September 2025.



# DIRIMART

**Canan Tolon** (b. 1955, Istanbul) studied Literature and Philosophy at the French Lycée in Istanbul. In 1976, she attended Edinburgh Napier University and Fachhochschule Trier for design, later studying interior architecture at A.A. Middlesex University in London. She completed her Master's degree in architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1983. Her selected solo exhibitions include *Refrain*, Dirimart Pera, Istanbul (2025); *About the Weather*, Dirimart Dolapdere, Istanbul (2023); *Tunnel Vision*, Dirimart Pera, Istanbul (2022); *Limbo*, Cocoon by CIF, Fişekhane, Istanbul (2022); *You Tell Me*, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (2019); *Where were we*, Anglim Gilbert Gallery, San Francisco (2018); *I will not say I told you so*, Von Lintel Gallery, Los Angeles (2017); *Heavy*, Galeri Nev, Istanbul (2015); *LIKE*, Von Lintel Gallery, Los Angeles (2014); *Sidesteps*, Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London (2014) and *Then, and Then*, Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco (2012). Her selected group exhibitions are *Floating Islands*, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (2023); *Precaution*, ARTER, Istanbul (2021); *Memory and Continuity: A Selection from the Huma Kabakçı Collection*, Pera Museum, Istanbul (2016); *Before It Is Too Late*, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (2016); *Poetry and Exile*, The British Museum, London (2014); *Zwölf im Zwölfen*, Tanas, Berlin (2012); *Confessions of Dangerous Minds*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2011); *Istanbul Next Wave*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2009); *Modern and Beyond*, SantralIstanbul, Istanbul (2007) and *2nd Yaya Exhibition*, Karaköy, Istanbul (2005). Her works are held in the collections of esteemed institutions such as The British Museum (London), ARTER (Istanbul), and Istanbul Modern (Istanbul). Canan Tolon lives and works between Istanbul and San Francisco.

For more information, please contact the gallery at [press@dirimart.com](mailto:press@dirimart.com) or +90 212 232 66 66. All images are protected by copyright law and may not be used without the gallery's approval.



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# Canan Tolon

## Nakarat *Refrain*

6–28.09.2025

1 İsimsiz 9.1, 2025  
*Untitled 9.1, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

2 İsimsiz 9.2, 2025  
*Untitled 9.2, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

3 İsimsiz 9.3, 2025  
*Untitled 9.3, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

4 *Untitled, 2024*  
Tuval üzerine yağlıboya  
*Oil on canvas*  
276 x 442 cm (diptik/diptych)

5 İsimsiz 9.4, 2025  
*Untitled 9.4, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

6 İsimsiz 9.5, 2025  
*Untitled 9.5, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

7 İsimsiz 9.6, 2025  
*Untitled 9.6, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

8 İsimsiz 9.7, 2025  
*Untitled 9.7, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

9 İsimsiz 9.8, 2025  
*Untitled 9.8, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

10 İsimsiz 9.9, 2025  
*Untitled 9.9, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

11 İsimsiz 9.10, 2025  
*Untitled 9.10, 2025*  
Tuval üzerine akrilik  
*Acrylic on canvas*  
276 x 220 cm

