

Karin Kneffel

Haymatlos

NOVEMBER 13, 2020–JANUARY 17, 2021

OPENING NOVEMBER 13, 10:00–20:00



Karin Kneffel

Untitled

2020

Oil on canvas

180 x 240 cm

Dirimart is pleased to host Karin Kneffel's solo exhibition titled *Haymatlos*. Following her inaugural show in Istanbul in 2013, *Haymatlos* presents works that generate a dialogue between Germany and Turkey through the concept of "heimatlos": statelessness. Kneffel's paintings pry about the past to reveal how remembering penetrates its foreignness by transforming it, leaving peculiar traces or by adding and removing elements from it.

Kneffel's curious look delivers the illusion of living spaces that actually consist of latent, uncanny absences. Through the use of overlapping intricate details from past and present of the artist's archive of found and taken photographs, a closed-circuit world with elements interconnected appear. Seemingly realistic, the paintings obey no photographic logic of perspective and space but are constructed with deliberately added layers of illusory details. The viewers are warned not to believe in what they see in the paintings. The things you see may mislead you. The paintings may tell lies; whilst they seem like they are constructing narratives with an obsessive commitment to details, they become unreliable narrators. This is a reminiscent of *Mimesis*.

Since the emergence of the concept of "citizen" in Ancient Rome, people who are stateless in the legal, political, and cultural senses have existed. The term *heimatlos*, meaning stateless, homeless and apatriote, bears a specific lexical intention regarding Germany and Turkey. Kneffel's new series refers to stateless people, who were obliged to leave their countries due to their political beliefs in the 1930s, and who came to Turkey to make great contributions in educational and artistic scopes. The word *haymatlos* is the Turkish pronunciation of the German word *heimatlos*, admitted to the Turkish lexicon in the 1950s. Straying from its original connotation to people who were obliged to leave their countries with the conjecture of not going back before the end of the World War II, the word was revisited by the people from Turkey who moved to Germany after the war in the 1960s and by the following expats. Another German on exile arriving in Istanbul from the 1930s, the author of *Mimesis*, Eric Auerbach quotes a monk from the 12th century "The person who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign place." Layers in Kneffel's paintings offer a historical and geographical journey on the trail of this word *haymatlos*, to its viewers.

The exhibition features nineteen paintings of Kneffel, that carry traces of the works of three *heimatlos* who lived in Istanbul: Bruno Taut (1880–1938), Rudolf Belling (1886–1972) and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky (1897–2000). Kneffel depicts the iconic house Taut built on a hill overlooking the Bosphorus; Belling's monumental İnönü sculpture of the 1940s and his



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sculpture titled *Skulptur 49* (In Memoriam Dreiklang) dated 1949; first of the kitchens designed by Schütte-Lihotzky, *Frankfurter Küche*, under the veil of her drops of water, bubbles and red brush strokes. They all pose the same question: is this world a foreign place?

Karin Kneffel (b. 1957, Marl) studied at Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf between 1981 and 1987. She currently teaches at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste München. Her solo exhibitions are Museum Jean de La Fontaine, Château-Thierry (1999); *Seduction and Distance*, Ulmer Museum, Ulm (2006); *Feuer*, Kunst-Station Sankt Peter Köln, Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst und Musik, Köln (2008); *House on the Edge of Town*, Kunstmuseen Krefeld (2009); *Kunsthalle Tübingen* (2010); Dirimart, Istanbul (2013); *Window and Mirror*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Gas Natural Fenosa, La Coruña (2014); Mies von der Rohe pavilion, Barcelona (2014); *Fallstudien*, Prints, Käthe Kollwitz Museum, Köln (2015); *Bild im Bild*, Kunstmuseum Bonn (2017); *Still*, Kunsthalle Bremen (2019) and Museum Freider Burda, Baden-Baden (2019). Karin Kneffel lives and works in Düsseldorf.

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