

All Else Is Far

MARCH 4–APRIL 25

OPENING MARCH 4, 10:00–19:00

Furkan Akhan
Sabri Berkel
CANAN
Nuri Bilge Ceylan
Halil Ege Dođramacı
Nilbar Güreş
Gözde İlkın
Can Küçük
Cihan Öncü
Yasemin Özcan
Güçlü Öztekin
Sarkis
Ayça Telgeren
Güneş Terkol
Nasan Tur
Celal Tutant
Berke Yazıcıođlu

Curator:

Ceren Erdem

Assistant Curators:

Senem Özgören

Levent Özmen

Only *within* is near; all else is far.
Within is tightly packed and every day,
brimful with everything they cannot say.
The island is a much-too-little star
space takes no notice of and silently
and dreadfully destroys as if unknown.
A thing unheard—a thing no one can see;
alone—
it thinks all this will end in darkness—done—
and tries to plot its own self-blinded, cryptic
course, outside of any scheme's elliptic
of planets, solar systems, or the sun.

—Rainer Maria Rilke, "The Island (III)," *New Poems*

It's a year now, we share an immense solitude. Wishing to see the end to it, coupled sometimes with angst, sometimes with hope, this is the first extraordinary state we experience collectively in the world as we know. And the foremost collective sense of deprivation that comes with it is intimacy. Physical, social, sensual, visual, audial intimacies are the first associations that come to mind with this word that also accommodates a sense of privacy.

Mothers hold their newborns' hand when they first embrace them as a welcome. Intimacy established by the individual with the mother through touch, sound, gestures, gradually extends into the immediate environment, then to social groups. And the ultimate sense of intimacy you feel when you fall in love is founded in the basic intimacies experienced in infancy. In other words, we begin to exist, we subsist, by touching a body, by seeing, hearing, smelling it since the moment we are born. This mutuality is not limited to the physical; it also enables shared feelings, attunement. The unprecedented process we begrudgingly found ourselves in disrupted our right to intimacy, that distinctive quality of being a human, perhaps even more so for those people living in metropolises. When the ordinary flow of life fed with substantial systems' opportunities is interrupted, the lure of touching unreachable bodies and the unreachable nature amplifies. Rilke, in his poem "The Island (III)," says that man sometimes just turns in upon himself, remote from the world; recedes like a humble star in a galaxy, fades away. Aware that he can never be close to another soul, he wishes the end of his existence remote from everything else while sustaining his motion in the galaxy. Keeping our light shining bright when we recede from everything has been possible with the voice saying "I am here," echoing in our islands. Are we heard or those voices just evanesce away?



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Starting out from this sense, *All Else Is Far* exhibition focuses on longing, feeling trapped, and alienation in the context of sensual intimacy. Contrast between the impossible intimacy with other bodies and the intimacy we established within our own and its close physical environment into which it is trapped, is explicit and acute. With this exhibition, works of artists from various generations, created at different times and within different contexts, display shared moods, feelings, and dreams of today; lustful bodies stuck in a sofa, trapped in the house, longing for being freely out in the streets, for other bodies, find their voices, emphasize our shared wish of days of reunion, not in the imagination but for real.

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info@dirimart.com
dirimart.com

DIRIMART
Irmak Caddesi 1-9
34440 Dolapdere İstanbul
+90 212 232 66 66