



The Turkish artist calling bullshit on the art world

Gizem Karakaş both satirises and pays tribute to icons like Andy Warhol and Gavin Turk by questioning what it actually takes to be an artist

Any industry sucks when you see it up-close. The fashion world is (probably) superficial and bitchy, the music industry is (probably) sleazy and greedy, and the art world, well... depending on where you're standing, it (might) look and smell like a cesspit, albeit with some shiny baubles floating on the surface – made up in equal parts of vanity, idiocy, pretension, greed, wonder, fun, beauty and, just occasionally, flashes of intelligence.

Opening in Istanbul this week is *Your Last Chance to Visit Studio*, an exhibition by young video and performance artist Gizem Karakaş that provides a brilliantly funny and smart meta-satire on the whole business of being an artist and operating in the art world. In videos performances such as "I Am Gavin Turk" and "Fuat Eşrefoğlu Eating a Lahmacun" – a kind of botched attempt to make a Turkish version of a clip called "Andy Warhol Eats a Burger" from an 80s movie – Karakaş simultaneously pays tribute to and gently mocks her famous subjects. Above all, though, they dramatise Karakas' own role as a young, aspirational artist, a role she both actually occupies and theatrically hams up.

Indeed, the comically exaggerated sense of artistic insecurity and neurosis that runs through the works in the form of Karakaş' authorial voice is the star of the show, constantly letting you know that she thinks the works don't exactly work, or are a bit crap, or that she might not *really* be an artist – and in the process, subtly highlighting the kind of bullshit that keeps the art world going.

“At one point during the process of putting together this exhibition I decided I wasn’t actually an artist, which made me wonder if other artists question also their artistry or if only believers become artists” – Gizem Karakaş

Part of the reason Karakaş has such a good insight into what goes on behind the scenes in the art world is that she also works for Galerist, the Turkish gallery showing her. Her double agent-like role surfaces in a couple of other works, including; a video shot using a forehead-mounted GoPro camera of an internal gallery meeting about her own show, while an interactive text piece, “Actually / Truths and Lies About the Exhibition”, is comprised of a list of affirmations about the show that viewers are invited to identify as true or false by use of coloured stickers. Here are a few of the best affirmations:

“5. This exhibition is based on a concept called ‘la perruque/wig’, in Michel de Certeau’s book entitled ‘Practices of Everyday Life’. “La perruque” describes the process of a worker working for themselves whilst being in their place of employment and apparently performing their duties towards their employers as expected. Nothing of value (physically speaking) is stolen; instead the worker is taking back his/her time. Accordingly I produced all the works in the exhibition at Galerist, during working hours.”

“21. At one point during the process of putting together this exhibition I decided I wasn’t actually an artist, which made me wonder if other artists question also their artistry or if only believers become artists.”

“24. The only goal that I wanted to achieve by doing this work was to steal your time by telling you my personal issues.”

Resistance is facile.

Your Last Chance to Visit Studio runs from November 20–December 19, 2015 at Istanbul’s *Galerist*

