



Suspended Things.

Organic Bonds

Burcu Ö. Karabey's Recent Works

*Article by
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*Ne duyu, ne görü, sade yıldızlar. None sense nor sight only the stars now.
Bütün müyüm, parça mıyım, kim bilir? Am I whole or a fragment, who knows?
Yitmiş gitmişim güneşlerle yüklü; Loaded with suns I am lost and gone;
Yiten güneş değil, toprak değildir. Neither the earth is lost nor the sun.
Passage of "Odysseus Bound" (M. Cevdet Anday, 1963)*

FOR MOST CERAMIC ARTISTS, CLAY IS A METAPHORIC kind of earth. A dynamic, layered and complex organism which exists, reproduces and produces, is moved and torn and exists in a continuous transformation. This old element of nature offers mankind a world of opportunities to realize his own existence and rejoice in his creativity. Clay in this context offers the artist its concealed character in designing and in creative processes.

What we perceive as a complex series of intellectual, spiritual and physical relations, offers its plain character after infiltrating our experiences. The artist creates a new work of art with the infiltrated pieces. The created work of art is in itself a layered organism, holding opportunities and forming a unique being after the interaction with its creator,

thus independent on its creator. When we see Burcu Karabey's latest series, we easily feel the call of this organism.

When we examine Karabey's creative adventure of 10 years, we observe different and increasing interests, sensitivities, tendencies and excitements of a never ending search. The artist herself believes that her works, up until her 3rd individual exhibition, have depended upon themes like piece/whole relationships in nature and in life, togetherness, violence, inner world, isolation, primitive traces of existence, examination of space, migration, truth and substitute truth. We come across these themes as a unique metaphoric interpretation of feelings, states and relations apart from physical inspiration relationships in Karabey's works.

The creative process of the artist begins with the realization of the notion that she chooses. The themes as the primitive traces, migration, substitute truth are filtered imaginatively with the verbal or visual evidence, discoveries and selections, comparisons or boundaries pushed until they are saturated emotionally and cognitively. The essence obtained is kneaded with the clay. We are aware of the courageous and self-contained sentences of this perfect language in the latest exhibition of the artist, *Organic Bonds*.

The artist defines her feelings regarding the dynamic state of clay and her creating with it in a plastic manner as; "Clay is transformed from an objective state into a subjective state by its variability and elasticity properties. These closed and transparent forms which were formed by meaningful non-verbal moments are reflections of the material and life, both of which are in continuous change." For Karabey, the exhibited work of art is not the finalized version; it is a call for things to be said and heard.

When we examine Karabey's series, in the work *Suspended Things*, there are five units hanging by the neck and tied to the wall, giving the feeling that they have remained untouched. The artist emphasizes that these units reference the seed form. The placement symbolizes the "truth suspended both willingly and unwillingly by the pressure of the outer world and which the individual prevents himself from facing..." When we closely examine the hanging units and see them through their seed identities, this work is no longer a silent whisper but has a more influential meaning that we can not avoid. Thus, the interaction desired by the artist is coming into existence.



Secret Boxes (Detail).

While watching these seeds awaiting their destinies, we remember H.D.Thoreau's lines; "The smallest seed of faith is better than the largest fruit of happiness." While examining the work, the individual has the opportunity to confront postponed possibilities and preferences. In *Suspended Things*, we find our repressed feelings of truth and our secret hopes.

Secret Boxes comprises amorphous blocks, each being a massive closed form placed with the others on a circular ground. The bodies of the units wear a sooted surface created by the *Raku* firing, with each surrounded by a thin glaze line dividing the piece. The placement of this band draws the attention of the viewer to this centre. The artist uses the space successfully by constructing this dark stain. When we come closer, we come across the new centres – the black boxes hiding the void, closed in on themselves. The artist states that these boxes are a confrontation

Secret Boxes.





Inside and Outside.

of the inner truth. "These are things that we keep for ourselves against both ourselves and others and they grow as we keep them inside..." The light and colour that exude from the *Secret Boxes* become meaningful as we face our inner self. The glitter of our expectations and dreams that we feel and experience and



Piece-whole.

keep for ourselves selfishly and self-protectively is filtered. When we draw ourselves away from the centre, these secret boxes remain a part of a wide darkness.

Piece-whole consists of concave white units filling a circular frame hung on the wall. The units co-exist and fill all of the gaps in harmony. The unit has a shape to fulfil the whole so that they all follow each other while, at the same time, being followed. These white units existing in harmony with the circular universe are perceived as a part of the whole. But, when you happen to be the unit to complete the whole, you might ask yourself; "Am I a part of the whole? Or if my existence completes the whole, am I the whole itself?"

The hesitation that we feel with *Piece-whole* leads us face to face with our duality. Karabey explains *Inside and Outside*, which is another confrontation, as "a transparent structure and a transparent dialogue between the inner and the outer. When we examine the construction free from the wall, we come across the formation of the organic structure of a skeleton." The artist uses this construction of skeleton familiar from nature while searching the space and it consists of placing sticks like tree branches put together in a stabilized manner. When we examine the work closely, we come across some different plans of this transparent system. When we look at it from the centre, we see a deep spiral. But at the same time, the inner void does not exist without its bond with the outer world. When we look at it from different perspectives, we become more interested in the dynamism of the safe outside intersection of the sticks. These intersections show us that what we thought



Organic Bonds (Detail).

of as ‘inner’ may, in fact, be an illusion. This transparency between components does not lead us to an unknown but, on the other hand, it make us free. What we feel is “the self confidence that stems from being transitory that enables us to focus at that particular moment”.

Another work in which the artist studies the transitory nature is titled *Agony*. A plain shaped, thin walled bowl form appears to be in the air while it is on a thin-legged plinth. We see that the smooth outer surface of the work is filled with writing consisting of consecutively placed lines. When we view it from a distance, the letters and the words are perceived as “codes hiding the time and the story” as in the sea shells or in the barks of the trees or as in fingerprints. We read the codes on the bowl and understand them: “Agony; The suffering moment before dying...Agony...” While we read these lines, we feel that this bowl keeps in itself the experiences of life as patiently as the dry and old body of a simple tree holds and hides the echoes in its inner void. It seems as if this old bowl is a strong body that has witnessed illnesses, agonies and deaths.

We feel that the works in Karabey’s exhibition were created by experiencing the conceptual counter-currents. The artist just gives us clues with the names and leaves the interpretation to the spectator. “The pieces are intended to create an interaction with the spectator psychologically. As for the spiritual interpretations, the works are not easy to be defined verbally.”

Art is not only a reality that arouses feelings and provides the individual with a sense of happiness. It is an area that offers inspiration for creativity, provoking the individual to experience different ways of thinking that intellectually stimulate and offer constructs using metaphors for new perspectives.

The artist, with her latest series, invites us to experience an interaction while also presenting her individual experiences. She offers us new



Agony.

opportunities by harmonizing our own experiences with her works of art. Burcu Karabey shows us the boundaries to be exceeded while sharing the organic structure realized by the metaphors and she builds bridges in between.

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