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DOSSIER

ART MOVES:
PERFORMATIVITY IN TIME, SPACE AND FORM

by Mieke Bal

EL ARTE (SE) MUEVE:
PERFORMATIVIDAD EN EL TIEMPO, EL ESPACIO Y LA FORMA

por Mieke Bal

DOSSIER

TECHNIQUE: «MISTAKES» AS MOVEMENT

DISORIENTING IMAGES: A BUST WITH MULTIPLE FACES

IMÁGENES QUE DESORIENTAN: UNA INSTALACIÓN CON MÚLTIPLES CARAS

Aylin Kuryel[1]

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Abstract
In this article, I focus on three artistic tactics that I identify in Vahit Tuna's bust installation from the exhibition «We were always spectators...» in the art space DEPO, Istanbul, 2011: the reconfiguration of space, the superimposition of different visual elements, and the opening up of affective channels. The analysis of these tactics go beyond this specific installation and allows me to explore the role of distance, the correlation between physical closeness and the ability to grasp an image, the genre of portraiture and its subversion, and the role of affect in challenging the representational fixities of national symbols. In this way, I explore the notion of «disorientation» with regard to a more general discussion of aesthetics and politics.

Keywords
Art; politics; aesthetics; disorientation; space.

Resumen
En este artículo, me centro en tres tácticas artísticas que identifico en la instalación de Vahit Tuna, de la exposición «Siempre somos espectadores...» organizada en el espacio DEPO, de Estambul en 2011. Dichas tácticas son la reconfiguración del espacio, la superimposición de diferentes elementos visuales y la apertura de canales afectivos. El análisis de esas tres vías va más allá de esta instalación en concreto, loque permite explorar el rol de la distancia, la correlación entre la proximidad física y la habilidad para entender una imagen, el género del retrato y su subversión, el rol del afecto en el hecho de desafiar la fijeza en la representación de los símbolos nacionales. De este modo, se explorará la noción de la «desorientación» en relación a una discusión general de la estética y la política.

Palabras clave
Arte; política; estética; desorientación; espacio.

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FIGURE 1: VAHIT TUNA'S BUST INSTALLATION, FROM THE EXHIBITION «WE WERE ALWAYS SPECTATORS...», in DEPO, Istanbul, 2011.

IT IS JANUARY 2011. I enter the courtyard of one of the prominent contemporary art spaces in Istanbul, DEPO, formerly a tobacco warehouse. The weather is cold and the sky is dim. The courtyard seems a little depressing. After a moment, I realize that the depressing feeling is not totally independent from the bust I can see in a far corner of the courtyard, next to the second, smaller exhibition building. The bust, which looks exactly like the familiar Atatürk busts in public spaces in Turkey due to its material, style, and size, makes me feel like I am in a school building, or any other official institution for that matter. The architecture of the exhibition space amplifies this feeling since it is a former warehouse with concrete walls and small, barred windows. The dried leaves underneath the bust are also just like those in the schoolyards in the fall. As I move towards the bust, with an unsettled feeling and a sense of curiosity stemming from not being able to place this object in this particular space, I realize that there is also something wrong with Atatürk. He is not quite as he should be; his face has slightly different proportions than usual. It is certainly an uncanny feeling; a familiar image becoming unfamiliar as I approach it. Then comes the final twist: the name written on the pedestal is not Atatürk but Anthony Hopkins.[2] I clearly remember the first idea that crossed my mind due to this unexpected encounter with an «Atatürk bust» in an art space, which was that the images and objects of my research haunt me in a disturbing way wherever I go, since I was writing my dissertation on «the images of the nation» at the time. Their haunting quality was also probably the reason why they were my objects of analysis in the first place.

The bust, which does not have a title of its own, is a work by the well-known contemporary Turkish artist Vahit Tuna, and was placed in the courtyard within the context of his solo exhibition «We were always spectators...» in DEPO in 2011.[3] This bust provides a fruitful ground to discuss what I will suggest to call «disorienting images» in the context of the performative and dynamic relationship between the artwork and the viewer. Nicholas Mirzoeff historicizes the dual aspect of visuality through the opposition between the heroes of the empire and the ones seeking emancipation by creating an «inverse visuality», which is «any moment of visual experience in which the subjectivity of the viewer is called into question by the density and opacity of what he or she sees» (70).[4] Although the density and opacity Mirzoeff talks about is crucial for the example I will look at, contrary to Mirzoeff, I will argue that there is no neat distinction between the two realms of visuality and that the call to question subjectivity does not solely come from the image, but emerges out of the dynamics between the image and the viewer. Similarly, I will suggest that the density and opacity do not reside in the image (as representation) to be transferred to the viewer, but emerge in the relationship that the image and the viewer establish in a particular space and time.

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2. <*http://www.depoistanbul.net/en/activites_detail.asp?ac=44*>

3. The bust was made by the sculptor Hatice Gür. See www.depoistanbul.net. The complete title of Vahit Tuna's exhibition as it appears in the exhibition catalogue is: «We were always spectators, we always scrambled for the tickets to become spectators, now there are more 'things' to see and tickets are never sold out...».

4. Mirzoeff, Nicholas: «On Visuality», *Journal of Visual Culture*, 5.1, 2006, 53-79.

There has been a proliferation of artworks dealing with controversial political issues in Turkey starting from the 1990s, especially after the oppressive 1980 coup d'état regime and the (auto)-censorship system it engendered became less rigid. The art critic and theoretician Erden Kosova distinguishes the rise of nationalism, civil war, the war between the army and the Kurdish guerrillas, from the violence in everyday life as the reinforcing factors in art dealing with political issues since in this period (2009, n. pag.).[5] It is striking that, as the realm of the political is constricted due to the influence of nationalism, neoliberalism and conservatism in the 1990s and 2000s, the amount of works explicitly dealing with political matters in the contemporary art scene has increased.[6] In this period, works and collective exhibitions focusing on the issues of nationalism, discrimination, military coups, sexism, and human rights became significantly more visible. Thus, Tuna's work, which I analyze here, should be situated in the same historical period.[7]

However, the existence of these «political» artworks by itself neither constitutes conclusive proof of a critical atmosphere, nor implies a direct relationship between the political content of the works and their transformative impact. I argue that the presence of a rather explicit political content is not what necessarily constitutes the disorienting effect of images and that a detailed analysis of the particular tactics that generate the sense of disorientation is necessary. Kosova, with regard to certain images produced by artists in this period, argues that these gestures «that relied on a single visual effect and prompted astonishment/anger/smile seemed to be too fragile to resist instant consumption» (5).[8]

Rancière formulates a similar critique when he asks whether contemporary artistic images «can reshape political spaces or whether they must be content with parodying them» (2009a: 60).[9] Here, I will focus on three essential tactics that I identify in Tuna's installation to explore what makes an image more resilient to instant consumption and less willing to settle for parody. These tactics are, respectively, the reconfiguration of the space in which the artwork resides, the superimposition of different visual elements, and the affective channels the work opens up. Firstly, the analysis of spatial reconfiguration will allow me to look at the role of distance and the lack of a fixed point to look at an art object, which turns the process of orientation into a series of disruptions and disorientations. I will analyze how the Atatürk/Hopkins bust challenges the positive correlation between physical closeness

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5. Kosova, Erden: «Slow Bullet II.» *Red Thread* (online journal) 1, 2009.
Online source: <*http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=26*>

6. It would, however, not be fair to say that the artworks of the 1990s were the first ones to deal with social and political issues. In Turkey, there have been artists and artworks resisting the dominant currents in art and politics since the 1970s, feminist women artists being the most significant. However, works dealing with issues of nationalism and national identity, especially by Kurdish artists, did become significantly more visible towards the end of the 1990s.

7. Looking at the potential of art to create political spaces that challenge nationalism does not dismiss its significant role in the reproduction of the existing nationalist structures. Examples of this are as plentiful in government-sponsored, official, institutional, or even independent art circles in Turkey as elsewhere.

8. Kosova, Erden: «Slow Bullet II.» Red Thread (online journal) 1, 2009.
Online source: <*http://www.red-thread.org/en/article.asp?a=26*>

9. Ranciere, Jacques: *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009a.

and the ability to better grasp an object, semantically and cognitively. Secondly, the analysis of the superimposition of images will provide a basis for looking at the role of the genre of portraiture and its subversion, as well as the association among faces, acting, and political representation. And thirdly, I look at the affective channels opened between the viewer and the work, which possibly challenge the representational fixities of national symbols, disorient what is familiar, mobilize the senses, and generate ambiguity. The analysis of these tactics, which do not let the image be absorbed in one fell swoop, will frame my conceptualization of disorientation and what it does in the context of the relationship between aesthetics and politics.

SPACE RECONFIGURED

Tuna's bust was installed in the DEPO gallery's courtyard in a far corner away from the entrance door with its profile turned to the viewer. As one steps into the courtyard, there is no immediately recognizable work of art there, since the bust is not directly seen and is not registered as a work of art. After being perceived, unless the viewer already knew about the work, it is most likely to be taken as a common Atatürk bust, given that the viewer is familiar with the Turkish context, since it is a bronze statue on a black pedestal, the size of the usual Atatürk busts found in schoolyards and streets, which renders it unrecognizable as a work of art. Thus, the first relationship the viewer has with the «artwork» is not based on recognizing it as art. However, this phase is also the first concrete step in the viewer's encounter with the work, before any engagement with its aesthetic appeal or enticing content.

Bal, in the opening sentences of her book *Of What One Cannot Speak: Doris Salcedo's Political Art* (2010) describes her first encounter with Salcedo's work «Shibboleth», the long crack the artist opened up in the Tate Modern museum's Turbine Hall floor in 2007:

> Sometimes you go to see an artwork, and when you enter the space, you look around in bewilderment. Where is the artwork? Then, retrospectively, you realize that first turn of your head was already a response – something the work had made you do. And so the game called «art» begins. (1)[10]

This account is relevant for understanding how Tuna's installation «begins» to work. The bust has a comparable effect, not so much in causing visitors to wonder where the artwork is at first, but more in provoking confusion about what an ostensibly non-artistic object is doing in an art space: what can a mythic national leader possibly be doing in a gallery courtyard? Has the building been turned into something else, or has Atatürk started watching over artists and artworks as well now?[11] Is it perhaps a remainder from the previous owners of the space, which cannot be

10. Bal, Mieke: *Of What One Cannot Speak: Doris Salcedo's Political Art*. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

11. This is not a far-fetched idea, since at the entrance of Mimar Sinan Fine Art University in Istanbul a huge Atatürk quote about the difficulty of being an artist welcomes people.

easily removed, since it is usually a hassle to displace Atatürk statues?[12] Or am I just imagining that it is him? These questions, unanswered for the moment, are not «mistakes» that have to or will eventually be left behind, but are in fact strongly included in how the work is experienced. Thus, a sense of confusion about the space that one is in, and about the placement of the objects within it, turns out to be an important part of the work itself, proving that as soon as one enters the courtyard, in fact, «the game called art» begins.

The viewer moves towards the bust, both because it is in the direction of the building's entrance and because she is mobilized by the inevitable and semi-conscious recognition that the courtyard belongs to the art space and that, therefore, the bust must mean something else. Approaching it, most probably retaining the impression that it is Atatürk, the viewer realizes that there is something eerie about it. It does look like Atatürk, but not quite, which is confirmed after a few steps when the name Anthony Hopkins appears on the pedestal. The shifting thoughts and moods experienced in the process of approaching the bust and the confusion that accompanies it perhaps give way to nostalgia as one feels in an elementary school, which is then succeeded by other possible feelings, such as discomfort stemming from not being able to identify an image, awkwardness created by the gap between what one expects and receives, and joy due to the playful scene one finds oneself part of. The thoughts and feelings in relation to the object keep shifting and evolving as the viewer's position in space, as well as time, changes.

The distance between the subject and the object appears as a key factor in the signification process that the work triggers from the first instant. The moment at which one thinks «art did not begin yet» turns out to be the very moment that art begins; what was considered a non-artistic object turns out to be the art object itself; and what was thought to be an Atatürk statue turns out to be an Anthony Hopkins statue. What is striking is that these different phases do not necessarily exclude each other, but are constantly intermingling and shifting, depending on the viewer's expectations and distance. It is as though the apparently static and inanimate object sets invisible traps in the space around it, which in turn transforms the experience of the subject who orients herself towards it, turning the process of orientation into a series of disruptions and disorientations.

These different positions, which are not unidirectional but transitional, are made possible by reconfiguring the space in such a way that it provides various possible entry points into the work. The framing of the work does not allow a static point of view but turns the space into a heterogeneous one, full of traps, whose different locations offer different experiences. A crucial result of the fluctuations in the space around the object is that the viewer is deprived of her certainty about the sameness of the object, in a way that exceeds the effect of more familiar perspectival changes. A well-known national figure turns out to be a well-known international actor,

12. In her book on Atatürk statues, Tekiner explains that some Atatürk statues, which need to be removed for one reason or another, have to be buried since demolishing them is considered disrespectful (2010). Following the afterlife of this statue would be interesting, as is unlikely to share the destiny of «real» Atatürk busts.

disrupting the expected continuity between the signifier (the bronze, medium-sized, official-looking statue) and the signified (Atatürk). On yet another level, the disruption consists of the transformation of a work of art into a public statue, and then back to a work of art again, in various loops for different viewers. It may also remain a work of art for viewers who already know the trick, or it may remain a public bust for viewers who do not come close enough to experience the transformation.

It might seem as though, once the viewer's eyes are close enough to read the name of the famous actor on the pedestal and to realize that there is in fact no Atatürk statue in the exhibition space, the perception changes once and for all, and the continuity between the signifier and the signified is restored. It is not Atatürk, but Hopkins; it is not an official statue, but part of a contemporary art exhibition. Yet, this is not the case. It is true that one cannot go back to the entrance, walk towards the work again and feel the exact same confusion and surprise. However, although there are various possible ways of relating to the work, once one is standing by the bust, the discomfort is likely not to cease, despite the knowledge that it is a work of art that playfully superimposes the two images-identities. At this moment, the bust is indeed not seen as Atatürk anymore, but there is also a striking resistance in the eyes against seeing it merely and continuously as Hopkins. The eyes almost do not register what the brain knows and keep seeing it as Atatürk to a certain extent, in a peculiar way.[13]

Through this cognitive dissonance, the work challenges the positive correlation between physical closeness and the ability to grasp an object semantically and cognitively. Although getting close to the bust somehow means to be exposed to its meaning, it in fact does not ease but amplify confusion. Hence, proximity ceases to be the guarantee of a better grasp and getting close to the object does not make it easier to «see» and know it. A gap opens between physical and cognitive contiguity, between senses and thoughts. This process has a strong temporal dimension as well since the spatial reconfiguration does not allow a linear temporality to be at work in the relationship between the viewer and the work. The viewer strays further from the familiar Atatürk image and the feelings that this image evokes as she gets closer to it in space and time. Yet, she does not exactly get close enough to Hopkins either, since the «Atatürk feeling» keeps pulling her back. The dried leaves around the work seem to contribute to this in a subtle way by recalling that they cannot be under Hopkins's pedestal, but only Atatürk's, just like in the schoolyards. While distance is relatively more secure, closeness becomes the source of an uncanny feeling, first operating within, and then shaking off the sense of familiarity. In this sense, the dried leaves, which seem to prevent the viewer from getting too close to the work,

13. The instability of perception experienced here, going back and forth between different interpretations, is similar to the «multistability» quality of perception defined by the school of Gestalt psychology. Gestalt psychology focuses on visual patterns that are too ambiguous or difficult for human perception to grasp, without attempting to explain the reasons behind this. The example at hand here allows me to explore the role of cultural and political memory in these perceptional shifts and the political implications of this sensory phenomenon. On the multistability phenomenon in Gestalt psychology, see: Kruse, P. and Stadler, M.: *Multistable Cognitive Phenomena*, New York, Springer Press, 1995.

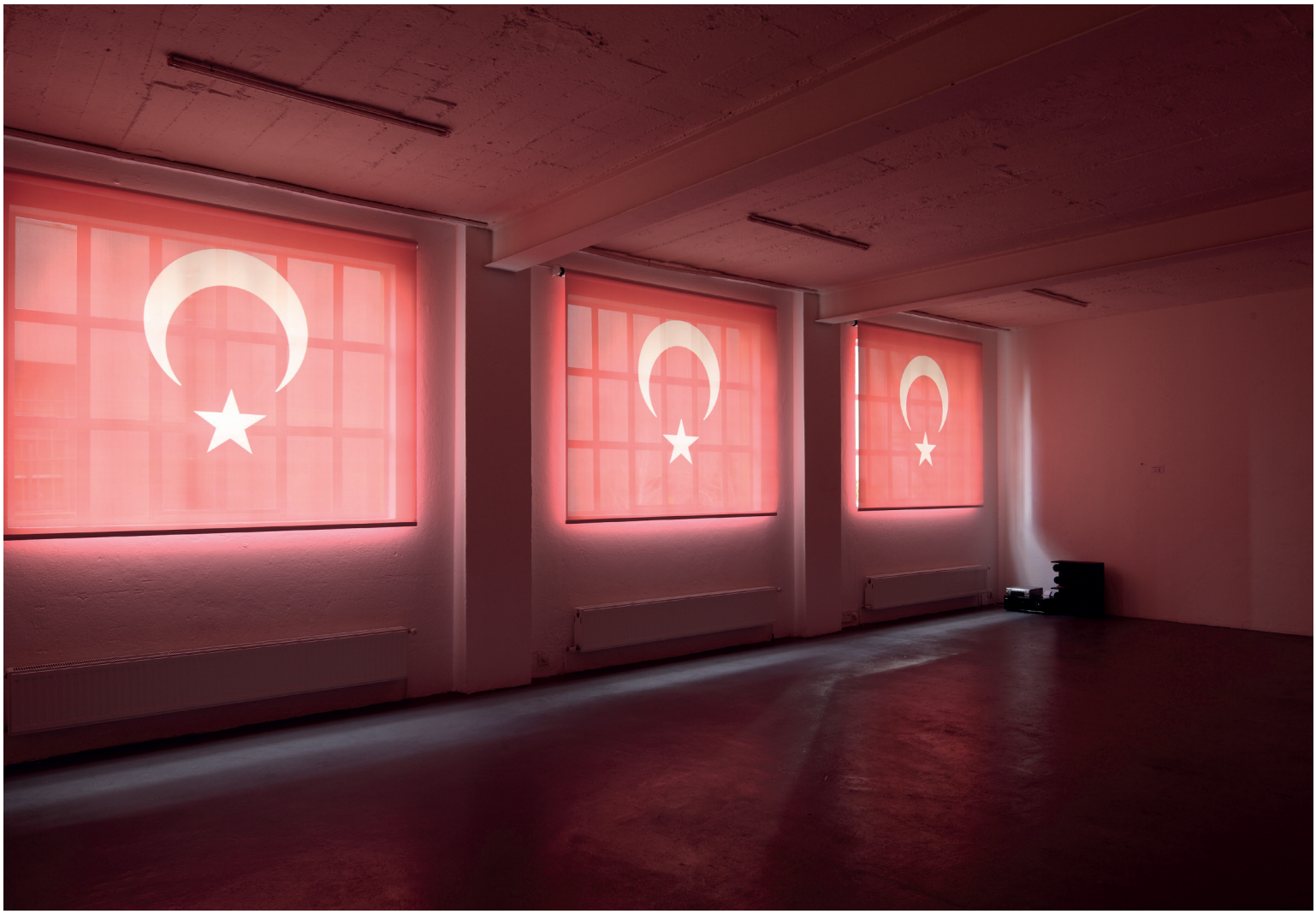

FIGURE 2: VAHIT TUNA'S ROLLER BLINDS INSTALLATION, FROM THE EXHIBITION «WE WERE ALWAYS SPECTATORS...», in DEPO, Istanbul, 2011.

can also be seen as operating as a metaphor for the inevitable distance between the work and the viewer, and thus, between the national symbol and the subject.

What loses its familiarity is indeed not a random image, but the image of Atatürk, one of the most familiar national symbols in the Turkish context, which is reproduced in myriad post-mortem forms. It is this national symbol that slips away by being transformed into something else as one gets closer. Yet, at the same time, it does not cease to haunt the viewer as it slips away, in between absence and presence, across spatialities and temporalities. In this sense, the bust's relation to space, developed through the interplay between closeness and distance, can be seen as a metaphor resonating with the ways the images of the nation work in general by asserting their totalizing premises while failing to fully realize them. Additionally, the striking resistance in the viewer's perception to seeing the bust as Hopkins, even after the «mystery» is solved, forces us to think of the tenacity of the culturally and

politically shaped quality of our perception, and the difficulty of reshaping this habitual ground that our perception is fed from.

The reconfiguration of space achieved by the work cannot be thought without considering the specific location of the gallery and how the work makes use of it. DEPO is in the Tophane district, a neighborhood in which several new art spaces opened in the last few years and which is marked by the conflict between the old, lower-class inhabitants, mostly with Islamic/conservative backgrounds, and the new middle-class tenants (hence the art spaces) brought to the neighborhood through the ongoing gentrification processes.[14] Firstly, the transportation of a national sign common in public space such as an Atatürk bust into the space of the gallery can be seen as pointing at the gap between these different spaces, populations, and thus, political orientations and socio-economic classes. This gap, marked and enacted upon by the bust, might refer to the schism between the supposedly Islamic background of most of the population in the area and the secular outlook of the newcomers, as well as the class conflict and the cultural differences brought to the surface by the gentrification processes. This gap the bust might be referring to can also be interpreted, on a more general level, as the discrepancy between the common signs of public space, which are «banal» from art's perspective, and the signs of art within the gallery space, which might appear inaccessible and perhaps senseless from the perspective of the people outside and not interested in it. In each case, the bust makes the role of the threshold of the gallery more visible, which has symbolic value in separating different economic, cultural and political groups. It can, thus, be seen as underlining the class dimension of art with a self-reflexive and ironic tone, implying that an image transforms and changes its meaning depending on whether the viewer stands outside (Atatürk) or inside (Hopkins) the gallery space. In doing this, the work might be seen as deepening this gap between the two spaces by turning a familiar image into an opaque one, which is probably not accessible to the general public anymore since it is not easy to recognize Hopkins's face unless the name on the pedestal is read.

However, the act of bringing an object, which at first sight looks as if it is supposed to be out in the street, into the space of the gallery can also be seen in the opposite manner, as a bridge between inside and outside. Precisely by making the passerby or the inhabitant of the neighborhood affiliate with a sign in a space that they usually are not affiliated with, and by alienating the art viewer from the space she is affiliated with, the bust not only underlines the gap between the two spaces, but also confuses their borders by disorienting the viewers. In addition, the fact that the work is in the courtyard rather than inside the gallery proper makes it viewable also when the gallery is closed, making it a part of public space and its gaze more than is usually the case for artworks inside art spaces. In that sense, it creates the

14. For a detailed analysis of the gentrification process in the Tophane district and the role of the art galleries in it, as well as the recent conflicts between the inhabitants and the galleries, see: Ahiska, Meltem: «Monsters That Remember: Tracing the Story of the Workers Monument in Tophane», *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 45, 2011, 9-47. Özden Firat, Begüm: «Bir Fotoğraf Bin Söze Bedel» (One Photograph is Worth a Thousand Words)
Online source: <*http://birdirbir.org/bir-fotograf-bin-soze-bedel/*>

impression that the statue has escaped from the gallery space and the other works exhibited inside towards the streets, or, conversely, that a national sign has escaped public space to take refuge in the gallery space. Both possibilities disorient notions of inside and outside by blurring the boundaries between, with the potential to make «living together a little bit easier» by having «fear and togetherness -join forces in a particularly *spatial* sensibility» (Bal, 2013: 67).[15]

Another work by Tuna in the same exhibition consists of roller blinds with Turkish flag motives that cover the windows of the exhibition space. The automatic flag blinds make a direct reference to the habit of hanging flags from windows, which became even more common within the period in which the exhibition took place, due to the nationalistic campaigns of the time. Putting the image of the flag on such a stable household object as a blind suggests that flags became part of the regular inventory of the house. The blind is also a special furnishing: hanging where private and public spaces meet, obscuring as well as revealing outside and inside to each other. The act of hanging a flag from a window is evidently performed to show it to others outside, yet closing the blinds is an act designed to hide the inside from the outside. Tuna's roller blind flags, which can be easily seen both from inside and outside the gallery, in a similar vein to the bust, created a disorientation between the two, again showing the ambivalent spatial and semantic configurations that Tuna's works are based on.[16] This ambivalence invites viewers to think of the similar ambivalences between the private and the public, the official and the non-official, tactics and strategies, as well as power and agency in the context of the everyday production of nationalism.

There is no clear answer to the question above whether the bust points at and deepens the cultural, political and economic gap between the inhabitants of the neighborhood and the people who visit the gallery, or whether it creates an unusual bonding between the different groups in its vicinity, albeit in its limited scope. Yet, as I have already argued, these two seemingly oppositional interpretations do not necessarily exclude each other, as the main characteristic of the work lies in being two things at the same time, which is also where its potential for disorientation lies. Similar to what Bal says about Salcedo's work, the relation of «irresolvable ambiguity» the work has to representation is the key to its political effectiveness (2013: 73).[17] Through the disorientation it creates, the bust invites viewers to think about

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15. Bal, Mieke: «Affect and the Space We Share: Three Forms of Installation Art», *The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-First Century* (ed. Pablo Baler). Plymouth, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013, 67-81.

Interestingly, during my personal conversations with the people working in and visiting the gallery, I was told that the people living in Tophane, who have a conflicting relationship with the new galleries, were content to have an «Atatürk bust» in their neighborhood, to the extent that some of them complimented the artist during the opening.

16. Another similar example would be a photography work by Tuna that depicts the artist sitting inside a house, in front of the window, holding his hands up and seeming to grasp the Turkish flag hung from the window of a house in the opposite building between his fingers. We get the impression that he has a tiny flag between his two fingers until we realize that it is a full-sized flag hung at a distance. For images of the roller blind flags, see <*http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/aysegul_sonmez/vahit_tunanin_sergisine_neden_gitmeliyiz- 1037651*>.

17. Bal, Mieke: «Affect and the Space We Share: Three Forms of Installation Art», *The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-First Century* (ed. Pablo Baler). Plymouth, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013, 67-81.

FIGURE 3: VAHIT TUNA'S BUST INSTALLATION, FROM THE EXHIBITION «WE WERE ALWAYS SPECTATORS...», in DEPO, Istanbul, 2011.

spatial and cultural demarcations, while avoiding any definite answer. In this way, it questions the protocol that more or less determines when, how and by whom an artwork should be seen and experienced, and through which mechanisms it becomes eligible as an artwork. Thus, the negotiation of the space conducted by this particular object can be seen as also a negotiation of the place of art and the place of the viewer in her relationship with it.

Bal's theorization of the significance of the artwork's «field» sheds light on this particular way spatiality functions in Tuna's work. In Bryson's words:

> The meaning of a work of art does not, for Bal, lie in the work by itself but rather in the specific performances that take place in the work's «field»: rather than a property the work has, meaning is an event; it is an action carried out by an I in relation to what the work takes as you. (2001: 5)[18]

The distance-specific appearances that the bust takes on and the demarcations it invites viewers to think about can be seen as such a specific performance that shapes what Bal calls the work's «field». The bust is a productive example to make explicit how this field is a heterogeneous, shifting ground, generating different meanings depending on the point that the viewer occupies in space. Thus, meaning becomes an «event» molded by interaction, rather than being the «property of the work». It is produced precisely at the moments in which the positions of the viewer and the artwork are negotiated and their encounter takes unexpected turns, since there is no determined beginning or end point in this interaction. Thus, what shapes the experience is not a possible destination, but a sense of disorientation, which makes the work more likely to resist immediate consumption by requiring more time and effort from the viewer to make sense of it, a sense that is perhaps never fully stabilized.

18. Bal, Mieke: «From Cultural Studies to Cultural Analysis: 'A Controlled Reflection on the Formation of Method.'» (interview) *Interrogating Cultural Studies: Theory, Politics and Practice*. (ed. Paul Bowman). Pluto Press, London, 2003, 30-41.

Thus, the effect of disorientation stems from the lack of a coherent and linear narrative, which is, as I have argued, achieved through the configuration of the work's field as heterogeneous and dynamic. Bal claims that visual images are almost always narrative in different ways and argues for certain cultural objects that challenge the notion of narrativity; images that do this do not always tell stories, but «they perform one, between image and viewer» (2003: 37). On these occasions, they challenge the notion of narrative, explore its limits, and extend its meaning by undermining the «referential fallacy attached to narrativity» (2003: 38).[19] It is productive to think of the challenge to narrativity in relation to space by considering how the bust rejects the notion of a starting point and a destination in its field, and underlines, or rather undermines, the implications of distance and the assumed spatial limits of the work. It opens up a space of performance «between image and viewer» by not telling an explicitly decipherable story and not allowing a fixed position for the viewer, but rather encouraging multiple interpretations and providing various entry points. As such, this performance carries the potential to create what Rancière calls «folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience» by disorienting the usual ground on which someone's encounter with an artwork, as well as with a national symbol, takes place (2008: 11).[20] I contend that the proliferation of interpretations and the resistance to the fixity of the meaning/content of the work is one of the key elements in constituting the disorienting effect of the work. While the reconfiguration of the spatial codes is one of the means through which this is achieved, the superimposition of images that I will analyze in the next section is another tactic that allows exploring the sources of disorientation further.

IMAGES SUPERIMPOSED

The particular ways in which the face of the bust is formed comes forward as another crucial locus for the disorienting effect of the work, which is strongly related to the spatial reconfiguration, yet deserves special attention. It is not only a significant factor for the initial assumptions made about the work, but is yet another source of shifting perceptions and senses. Since what is at stake is a face combining two faces. Firstly, it is fruitful to look at the genre of portraiture to understand the role of the face and how the «two faces» relate to each other.[21] In *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (1997), Joanna Woodall defines one of the goals of the genre of naturalistic portraiture as rendering «a subject distant in time, space, spirit, eternally present» (8). Therefore, «a 'good' likeness will perpetually unite the identities to which it

19. Bal, Mieke: «From Cultural Studies to Cultural Analysis: 'A Controlled Reflection on the Formation of Method.'» (interview) *Interrogating Cultural Studies: Theory, Politics and Practice*. (ed. Paul Bowman). Pluto Press, London, 2003, 30-41.

20. Ranciere, Jacques: «Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art», *Art&Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, 2: 1, 2008, 1-15.

21. Although an analysis could be made of the distinct ways in which a two-dimensional portrait and a three-dimensional bust work, the dynamics of conventional portraiture outlined here are at work in both.

refers» (17).[22] For Woodall, this is the reason why, in traditional Western art discourse, portraiture was based on exact resemblance and ideal likeness, which is thought to refer to the inner subjectivity of the portrayed. Similarly, Richard Brilliant, in *Portraiture* (1991), defines the distinctiveness of the genre as «the necessity of expressing this intended relationship between the portrait image and the human original» (7). The portrait is supposed to function as proof of the existence of the portrayed and his authentic personality. In this sense, we can say that the portrait works metonymically, standing for the depicted person's wholeness. As Lakoff and Johnson also argue, the tradition of portraits, then, is based on the metonymic assumption that the portrait stands for the person, as opposed to the body for instance (38).[23]

FIGURE 4: HAKAN AKÇURA, «DEFACED ATATÜRK», FEAR OF GOD EXHIBITION, in Hafriyat Gallery, Istanbul, 2007.

In *Art in Mind: How Contemporary Images Shape Thought* (2005), Ernst van Alphen elaborates critically on this relationship between the proof of existence assumed by the portrait and the authority that is attributed to it. He argues that there is a dual process determining the relationship between authority and portrait: it is not only likely that the person was portrayed in the first place because he had some kind of authority, but authority is constantly attributed to him because he has been portrayed (22).[24] Atatürk's portraits, appearing in a range of fields, mostly showing the intimidatingly serious and thoughtful expression of an important person dealing with important matters, clearly show this dual process.

Van Alphen extends his argument on authenticity by focusing on the notion of representation and argues that «the qualifications authenticity, uniqueness, or originality do not belong to the portrayed subject or to the portrait or portrayer but to the mode of representation that makes us believe that signifier and signified form a unity» (24). On this basis, he concludes that the bourgeois self depends on this specific mode of representation in order to appear authentic. This argument has explanatory value for the portrayal of cult figures of the nation-state like Atatürk, who can also be included in the conception of the bourgeois self, as authentic and heroic figures of modernity and nation- state. What is more important in Van

22. WOODALL, Joanna: Portraiture: *Facing the Subject*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997.

23. LAKOFF, George and Mark Johnson: *Metaphors We Live by.* London, The University of Chicago Press, 2003. Lakoff and Johnson give the following example: «If you ask me to show you a picture of my son and I show you a picture of his face, you will be satisfied. You will consider yourself to have seen a picture of him. But if I show you a picture of his body without his face, you will consider it strange and will not be satisfied. You might even ask, 'But what does he look like?'» (38).

24. ALPHEN, Ernst van: *Art in Mind: How Contemporary Images Shape Thought*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Alphen's discussion for the case of Tuna's bust is his emphasis on the illusion of the uniqueness of the portrayed subject that stems from the assumption of a unity between the signifier and the signified and its possible undermining: «As soon as this semiotic unity is challenged the homogeneity and the authenticity of the portrayed subject fall apart» (25).[25]

The claim made, in classical portraiture, to a stable identity, an inner subjectivity, and authenticity in a form of representation that strictly unites the signifier and the signified, is pertinent to the classical monumentalization of Atatürk.[26] Tuna's work can be said to use the form of the monument and the genre of portraiture against themselves, challenging both the promises of portraiture and the codes of monumentalizaton, such as authenticity, representational directness, immediate access to the person depicted, and a cohesive identity, which are crucial characteristics for nationalist myths to be perpetuated. By undermining the viewer's preconceptions about the portrait genre, which are inevitably shaped by the visual histories of the society she forms part of, and by making her oscillate between different meanings, Tuna's bust challenges the promise of the portrait to transfer a singular meaning through the unity of what is in front of the eyes and what it is thought to refer to. The face, by being Atatürk only briefly, does not provide the cohesive identity and the stable reference points promised by his usual portraits. Thus, it disorients the fixed subject position of the viewer, creating confusion, turning the face from a source of fixity into a cause of disorientation through which the work is experienced and conventional ways of seeing are negotiated.

It is striking that the superimposed face is not that of a controversial and oppositional figure or a political leader, which might have triggered a stronger reaction in the viewer. It is neither a sheer «defacement» of Atatürk, as in the case of Hakan Akçura's artwork entitled «Kemalism is a form of worship», which was displayed in the exhibition *Fear of God* in the Hafriyat gallery in Istanbul in 2007 (Figure 4).[27] Akçura's work, which consists of a black-and-white poster depicting a well-known Atatürk image with the face rendered blank, employs the same theme as Tuna's bust and it, too, creates an eerie feeling of encountering something else where you expect to see a familiar face, that of the national leader. Yet, the defaced image, as a mere act of negation, does not allow the viewer to explore the ambiguities in the same active way as the more ambivalent act of superimposing two faces does.[28]

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25. Alphen, Ernst van: *Art in Mind: How Contemporary Images Shape Thought*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005.

26. Practices related to monuments in Turkey, such as the protection of some of the Atatürk monuments by security forces, the illegalization of their physical violation, as well as certain incidents in which people took Ataturk monuments as hostage, show that monuments can operate in a way that goes beyond mere symbolism; they are thought to «be» the real, authentic figures in a way that closes the gap between the monument as sign and that which it signifies.

27. <*http://hakanakcura.com/2009/06/*>.

28. Before the Fear of God exhibition opened on 10 November 2007, the Islamic conservative newspaper Vakit targeted it and asked people to «react to it» <*http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/7639192.asp?m=1*>. The artists were worried about people's possible reactions during the opening, so they decided to provide security. During the opening, there were approximately three hundred people, six undercover policemen, and three security guards inside. The policemen, who were there to protect the artists, were instead focused on three specific posters in the exhibition and recorded them with photo and video cameras. After about forty minutes, a chief officer and several

While the defacement in Akçura's work is based on and feeds off the momentary shock it creates, the superimposition of two faces invites a reading that actually involves a multiplicity of roles and faces. It is important that the relationship between the two faces is neither exactly one of juxtaposition nor one of replacement. Thus, whereas defacement turns presence into absence, the disorienting effect of superimposition stems from the lingering in between. Oscillation, then, seems to be a more suitable way of describing the bust that is in constant flux from one person to another. This is also the source of disorientation due to the lack of a fixed destination of meaning and for representation. Hence, the challenge to conventional portraiture made by the bust is based on simultaneity rather than serialization and on the co-existence of different elements rather than on one coming after another to replace it.

The other face that co-exists with Atatürk's is that of an internationally acclaimed and successful actor, who has enacted a variety of characters from the American president Nixon to the famous scary and evil characters of Hannibal and Dracula. Hopkins was also one of the candidates to play Atatürk in the Hollywood movie that was supposed to be made in 1997. Although the movie was never realized, the fact that Hopkins was one of the actors whose name was uttered frequently in relation to the main part makes it possible to see the bust as a belated completion of Hopkins «playing» Atatürk, a reference that can be read in multiple ways. Despite the hesitations about the appropriateness of making a movie about Atatürk, it was possible to detect some pride among people from the cinema sector and authorities in the plan to have a world-famous Western artist bring Atatürk to life on the screen. In addition, Hopkins's accepted talent and fame, the «Sir» in front of his name, and his ties with royalty cause him to be perceived as a powerful figure, much like Atatürk.

The long and ambiguous relationship of the Turkish Republic with what is considered the West, as well as the ongoing discussions at the time about joining the European Union, add other possible layers of meaning to the superimposition of Atatürk's face with that of a Western actor. In fact, considering the pride evoked by a national figure becoming even more internationally known through a famous and respected Hollywood actor makes it possible to see the inclusion of his persona as adding to the power of the bust, rather than a mere act of erasure or subversion. Although it is obvious that invoking two authoritative faces at the same time does not necessarily make a bust more powerful, and although in this case it evidently remains an ironic gesture, these two figures feed into each other in intricate ways, instead of creating a simple antagonism.[29]

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other policemen with official suits arrived, including members of the «Prevention of Terrorist Acts» team. They started to examine the three posters and interrogated the artists about them. Apparently not satisfied with the answers, they told the artists that the posters would be investigated further and that they would inform the office of the public prosecutor. It is ironic that, although it was the Islamic newspaper that targeted the exhibition, the posters that were subject to police inquiry were not the ones about God and Islam, but the ones about Atatürk, including Akçura's «Kemalism is a form of worship».

29. The distortion of Atatürk's features has an additional personal relevance for the artist. In 1995, Vahit Tuna applied to the «Today's Artists» group with his hand-painted Atatürk portraits and was not accepted due to the

Consequently, it is difficult to answer the question of whether Hopkins only detracts from Atatürk's «authentic power» or also adds to it. On the one hand, the extra face undermines the one that was first seen; on the other hand, it builds upon it. Hopkins's face enters into a certain dialogue with Atatürk's and the viewer witnesses their interaction as the face resists settling into one character and the senses resist seeing it as one person. In this way, Atatürk's face, as a sign, is made part of a more complicated reference system, instead of merely being erased and replaced with another. This ambivalence that the choice of Hopkins allows the bust to sustain is another crucial element in constituting the disorienting effect of the work. The questions about the two faces that are left unanswered do not allow the viewer to hold a stable position and keep her contact with the work in constant movement and ambiguity. The prevalent, dictating image of Atatürk enters into a debate on various levels; it is made to speak, rather than being silenced and rejected altogether, opening up more space for the viewer in choosing how to relate to it, actively.

In addition, the various roles and personalities played by or assigned to the cult figure of Atatürk, depending on the historical period, the political orientation and the interests of the person who employs it (even if the claim to authenticity remains intact in each case), are emphasized by turning him into an «actor». Due to the multipurpose employment of Atatürk's public persona, as well as the general effect of cultification and iconization, it is impossible to discern a real person behind this face. The replacement of his iconic face with the face of an actor whose main task is to play other people underlines the performative character of Atatürk's image in the political history of Turkey. Tuna's statue, oscillating between a politician and an actor, invokes the foundational theatricality and performativity, as well as «confusion» that is at the core of representational politics and the position of leadership. From this perspective, the oscillating face, which is in fact not two but many faces and none of them at the same time, point to the impossibility and needlessness of the search for authenticity and sincerity in representational politics, as well as in the manifestations of national identity.

Additionally, the bust and its invocation of a famous actor can be interpreted as making a statement about the cult political figure of Atatürk being part of the «society of the spectacle», which is explicitly referenced in the title of the exhibition: «we were always spectators...». The notion of the spectacle, in the sense that Debord used it not as «a collection of images», but as a «social relation between people that is mediated by images», emphasizes not the images per se, but the alienating relationships between people and the illusionary sense of community created through them (25).[30] The increasingly visible process of Atatürk's image becoming part of popular culture in the form of movies and commodity items in the same period in which the artwork was made makes this reference stronger and, like the exhibition title, accentuates the position of the spectator. In this way, the viewer's

inadequate quality of the drawings. The deliberately malformed bust can thus be seen as a personal revenge. It can also be read as a reference to the expectation that artists in Turkey should be able to draw Atatürk «well».

30. Debord, Guy: *Society of the Spectacle*. Sussex, Soul Bay Press, 2009.

act of watching is also stressed over Atatürk's usual surveilling character, making the viewer more active, even in the spectacle.

Thus, the power of the bust does not stem from its critique and «détournement» of the spectacle, but from its embracement and amplification of it, as well as from commenting on the complicit role of the viewer in its production.[31] Rather than providing the necessary knowledge and formulas of action to get rid of the nationalist spectacle and its theatricality as embodied by the image of Atatürk, it emphasizes and magnifies the various layers in the spectacle and the spectator's gaze by superimposing the faces of a national leader and a famous actor in the form of an official bust. In this sense, what the bust does with the notion of spectacle and spectator follows Rancière's intervention in the Debordian critique of the spectacle.

Rancière argues that the passive spectator was challenged by Brecht's epic theater and Artaud's theater of cruelty in favor of a spectator who must, on the one hand, become more distant, and on the other, lose his distance and end up with a more «active way of looking» (2009b: 6).[32] Rancière argues that the oppositions between looking/acting and passivity/activity assume a gap, an inequality between different groups of people. He invites us to dismiss these oppositions in order to conceptualize looking as a form of acting and the spectator as already active.

This understanding resonates with my emphasis on not looking *at* but looking *with* images in my attempt to highlight the performative power of images as actors. The spectator interprets what she looks at, which is already a form of transforming it for Rancière, as opposed to the alienated subject position immersed in the spectacle in Debord's understanding. In the case I am discussing here, the title of the exhibition, «we were always spectators…», and the bust itself can be seen under the light of Rancière's logic that the spectator might not be as passive as she is assumed to be, suggesting that nationalism does not simply create spectacles to be consumed by spectators passively, but that the spectator is complicit in its construction, as well as its deconstruction. This increased agency of the spectator in Tuna's work is also strongly connected to the fact that the work does not give directions to follow, but bases itself on ambiguity and disorientation. As such, it mobilizes the senses in a curious way, which is the last disorienting aspect of the work that I want to explore.

AFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

The bust is neither a familiar national symbol, nor an easily recognizable counter-symbol, but oscillates in-between, thus challenges any solid representational basis on which the viewer makes sense of it. It works through an intervention on the level of the senses and the habitual experience offered by the national/visual

31. The tactic of «détournement» is defined by Situationist International, the French political and artistic collective active in the 1950s and 1960s, as «the mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions» in a way that would supersede «the original elements and produce[s] a synthetic organization of greater efficacy» (Debord qtd. in Knabb 55).

32. Ranciere, Jacques: *The Emancipated Spectator*. London, Verso Press, 2009b.

communities. Thus, the impact of the bust lies not in its representation of «the other» who is left outside the borders of national identity, but in its opening up of an affective realm around the work. Kate MacNeill makes a distinction between, on the one hand, what she calls the «identity art» of the 1980s, which was based on representing an identifiable other and, on the other, artworks that disrupt the binary of self and other, and are based on a non-unitary understanding of subjectivity, which open up more space for political intervention (118). Tuna's bust can be situated in the latter category, since in such artworks the identity invoked is not that of an other, but of the viewer, which «provokes the affective response wherein lies the possibility of a politically strategic moment» (118).[33]

In a similar vein, Bal defines affect as «intensity circulating in the domain of the sensible, between work and viewer, and without specific semantic content», considering them the «primary material for politically effective art» (2013: 67).[34] In the case of Tuna's bust, it is perhaps less the lack of a specific semantic content and more the lack of a fixed semantic content that makes it work affectively. Its semantic content is not undetectable, yet the senses trying to detect it are not allowed to settle in one particular interpretation. In this way, it is similar to the «visual tricks» Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan writes about, which «constantly tease the eye and never let our interpretative faculty come to rest» (9). She points out that two mutually exclusive images which are perceived alternately (duck or rabbit) create an «impossible» situation for us, the viewers, in which we cannot hold them both and cannot find clues for choosing one rather than the other: «all we can do is oscillate between the two conflicting readings as long as we join in the game» (10).[35]

Rimmon-Kenan employs the notion of ambiguity to define these «mutually exclusive» objects, which makes it impossible and undesirable to choose: «when the two hypotheses are mutually exclusive, and yet each is equally coherent, equally consistent, equally plenary and convincing, so that we cannot choose between them, we are confronted with narrative ambiguity» (10). This formulation explains clearly what happens on the level of the senses relating to space and visuality, since every different spatial position brings another experience and Atatürk's and Hopkins's faces cannot be seen at the same time. These spatial and visual narratives are equally convincing narratives. Hence, the work does not reject representation as a tactic and a technique, but unfixes the anchor of representation, and thus, starts working more affectively. Ambiguity, then, can be identified as an important way in which the effect of disorientation can be made to work affectively.

However, Rimmon-Kenan's account does not adequately explain the source of the affective and semantic power of Tuna's work, since it is only through the togetherness of the incoherent facts, which are more than just two in this case, that

33. Macneill, Kate: «Art That Matters: Identity Politics and the Event of Viewing», *The Shock of the Other: Situating Alterities*, *Thamyris/Intersecting: Place, Sex, Race (15)*. (eds. Silke Horstkotte and Esther Peeren). Amsterdam, Rodopi Press, 2007, 117-126.

34. Bal, Mieke: «Affect and the Space We Share: Three Forms of Installation Art», *The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-First Century* (ed. Pablo Baler). Plymouth, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013, 67-81.

35. Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith: *The Concept of Ambiguity: The Example of James*, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1977.

the effect of the work emerges. In that sense, the conflicting readings are not mutually exclusive as Rimmon-Kenan argues, but complementary. They gain meaning from each other's presence, since neither Atatürk nor Hopkins alone would be enough to make suggestions about the intricate relationship between people and prevalent national symbols frozen in the form of busts, the claimed authenticity of portraiture, and the mystified theatricality of representation. Hence, the presence of the alternative loci in the work that gain meaning from each other is different from Umberto Eco's «open work» and Roland Barthes's «infinite plurality», as well as Rimmon-Kenan's «ambiguous work», which she differentiates from the first two due to the existence of two strictly opposing and mutually exclusive systems. The bust is neither infinitely open, calling for multiple readings «without any necessary relation, any necessary 'propositional operation' to link them», nor does it consist of two oppositional and exclusive systems as in Rimmon-Kenan's «ambiguous work», since the two main loci of the work and the ambiguity they create is precisely the source of the effect of the bust (13).[36] Thus, in this case, the incompatibility between the two images is not the source of exclusivity, but a curious basis for a jointly built meaning. Rimmon-Kenan's definition of ambiguity as simultaneously calling for choice and making it impossible to choose between disjuncts that both «refer to the totality» is similar to what the bust does (15). Yet, the bust differs from Rimmon-Kenan's account through the disorientation of the senses, which is the source of the political impact of the work, since the impossibility of the two claims to totality is precisely the source of meaning both for each disjunct and for the work as a whole.

In addition, it is productive to think of how the bust works affectively in relation to Rancière's definition of the aesthetic experience, the political effect of which is affiliated with a certain loss of destination that «disturbs the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations» (2008: 11). This political effect does not try to convince the viewer about what has to be done and does not frame a new collective body, but is rather

> a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world where they live and the way in which they are «equipped» for fitting it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. (2008: 11)[37]

This intervention into to the fabric of common experience and the reshuffling of the habitual paths of perception and action are best achieved by what Rancière calls the «metamorphic image», which attempts to displace the representational quality of imagery «by changing their medium, by locating them in a different mechanism of vision, by punctuating or recounting them differently» (2007: 27).[38]

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36. *Op. cit.*
37. Ranciere, Jacques: «Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art», *Art&Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, 2: 1, 2008, 1-15.
38. Ranciere, Jacques: *The Future of the Image*. London and New York, Verso Press, 2007.

Rancière classifies the images exhibited in contemporary art spaces into three categories: naked, ostensive and metamorphic. According to this categorization, the naked image does not constitute art because «what it shows us excludes the prestige of dissemblance and the rhetoric of exegeses» (2007: 22).[39] Photographs of the Nazi camps constitute an example of this category; although signed by famous artists, what they do is witness a reality that can scarcely be represented in any other way without interpreting it. The ostensive image also «asserts its power as sheer presence, without signification», but this time in the name of art. It includes, in its presence, its relationship with media, discourses around it, institutions and its historicization (2007: 23). The metamorphic image is a more modest type of image that questions the radicalism of its powers and plays with the products of imagery, rather than mystifying them. In this way, it is distinguished from those forms claiming to represent reality without interpretation (naked image) or confining themselves to self-reflexivity within the rather safe frame of art and settling for different forms of representation rather than challenging the notion of representation itself (ostensive image). Rancière is careful not to formulate these three categories as able to function only within their own limits, since each category is forced to borrow something from the others, making them transitive in their functioning to a certain extent.

A metamorphic image plays on «the ambiguity of resemblances and the instability of dissemblances, bringing about a local reorganization, a singular rearrangement of circulating images» (Rancière, 2007: 24). As such, this type of image transforms «the distribution of the sensible», which is the structure that determines «who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do on the time and space in which this activity is performed» (Rancière, 2004: 13). I would argue that this transformation is not strictly bound to the specific «type» of the image, hence to its inherent aesthetic qualities, but is made possible by the image's relationality and the space it opens up. Therefore, it is important that Rancière associates this transformation with the clash of different senses and the suspension of the sensible that is at work in the community. In this way, the stable codes of the representative regime with regard to the distinction between appearance and reality can be questioned. The affective aspect of an image can be thought of, independently from the specific or fixed semantic content of the work, precisely in this ability to intervene in the «distribution of the sensible» that is at work in a community. In this positioning, the affective dimension of the work helps us to see the ways in which an image becomes eligible to the senses and how it may intervene in the usual path of this eligibility.

The affective reactions that the Atatürk-Hopkins bust triggers, as explored through the reconfiguration of space and the superimposition of images, can be thought of in this framework. The work puts the viewer in a quarrel with her senses and visual habits, since her perception does not stay in one sensory phase for long, but instead goes back and forth among them, like ascending and descending M. C.

39. *Op. cit.*

Escher's stairs.[40] This process of a constant questioning of the relationship between appearance and reality is experienced not so much as a systematic and detectable stream of thoughts as in an affective manner. Thus, the bust does not change the viewer's perception through a revelation, nor by a formulation of a political critique. The encounter with the bust does not liberate the viewer by providing a particular knowledge or inviting her to be detached from or take part in a particular community. Nor does it claim to be «the privileged medium that conveys the knowledge or energy that makes people active» (Rancière, 2009b: 15).[41] Rather, it provides a different sensory experience in relation to what is «common to the community», in this case to the realm of national symbols. It deliberately misreads and misrepresents the usual codes and signs of the visual culture, makes its «image acts» unhappy and builds an affective play on them.

Thus, the affective dimension is crucial for the disorienting effect of the image since it conveys a sense of ongoing ambiguity, rather than the achievement of a new stasis. In this sense, disorientation, by allowing an interaction that does not yield to a destination but rather anchors in oscillation, differs from the notion of redistribution, which seems to assume a new settling. Although the disorienting images act by challenging the existing distribution of the sensible and thus the familiar ways of seeing, acting and thinking, they do not so much redistribute them as make the viewer oscillate between different possibilities. As Sara Ahmed argues, «'getting lost' still takes us somewhere; and being lost is a way of inhabiting space by registering what is not familiar» (2006: 7).[42] Disorientation, as a way of inhabiting space by itself, created by the alteration of the senses and the re-shuffling of affects, meanings and appearances, as well as the codes concerning artistic forms, monuments and national symbols, constitutes the political power of the work.

«SPECTRAL DUST»: ART AS AGENT

In all three tactics, the reconfiguration of space, the superimposition of images, and the affective engagement, as channels through which the work disorients, a certain ambiguity dominates. There is no «right» point and distance from which to look at the work, no appropriate way to decipher the meaning of the elements brought together, and no stable affective orientation to define how the work «feels». However, these very ambiguities provide the viewer with a certain agency in deciding her own entry point to, interpretation, and experience of the work. The notions of agency and intervention in relation to these three tactics are crucial to see the political impact of art from a broader perspective, especially in relation to its potential for challenging fixated national imaginations.

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40. The Dutch artist M. C. Escher's lithograph prints *Relativity* (1953) and *Ascending and Descending* (1960) are examples of works known for creating constant shifts of perception.

41. Ranciere, Jacques: *The Emancipated Spectator*. London, Verso Press, 2009b.

42. Ahmed, Sara: *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2006.

Firstly, I argued that the way Tuna's bust employs space and dwells on distance is a crucial factor in the relationship between the viewer and the object. It challenges the positive correlation between physical closeness and achieving a better grasp of the work, the demarcations between art and non-art, as well as between art and public space. Moreover, the parallel shifts in space and experience do not allow the viewer to hold a static point of view and provide different perspectives as the distance changes. As a result, the positive correlation between the non-fixity of meaning and its disorienting effect gives the viewer more agency in her relationship with the work, and thus with the national symbol the work alludes to, as she is able to shift between different points of views and relate to the work and the national symbol from different entry points. In one gesture, the viewer intervenes in the field of the artwork, while the artwork also intervenes in the orientation the viewer has in public space, art spaces, and in her perception of conventional national signs.

Secondly, the particular use of the face against the way it appears in the classical genre of portraiture and monumentalism undermines both the expectations associated with portraiture and with the ubiquitous portraits, images and statues of the national leader. The bringing together of two different images, in a way that the senses cannot dissociate them anymore, destabilizes the authenticity and the fixed identity of the portrayed, which are indispensible features of Atatürk representations. In this way, it is not only the artwork that is denied a stable reference point and a fixed meaning, but also a dominant national symbol and identity. The bust triggers this process, not by replacing one face with another, one representation with another, but by intermingling them, thus questioning the nature of representation itself. The work preserves a certain ambiguity by doing this, leaving open the question whether the face of Atatürk is actually empowered or deprived of its power and again giving more agency to the viewer in the ability to choose from various ways of bonding with the work. Although the work is critical of the ways in which national symbols work and construct communities around them, it does not offer a clear formula of criticism or a recipe for changing it, which also makes it hold a modest position in relation to the political role of art.

Thirdly and finally, the affective channels that the work opens up, through the gap opened up between, on the one hand, physical and cognitive contiguity and, on the other, the unsettled senses relating the act of seeing, turns the encounter between the viewers and the work into an intense and heterogeneous experience without a fixed beginning and endpoint. The affective intervention disorients the feeling of familiarity and comfort, which is another crucial factor for the political effect of the work, especially considering the role of familiarity in the way national symbols work and communities form. The relationship of the viewer and this image, then, is not one between a completed work that evokes certain thoughts and emotions and a subject who already carries certain attributes that would determine how she would be affected by the work. Even the affective aspect avoids such an understanding and instead allows us to focus on their encounter, which carries the potential to shape both the work and the viewer in their relationality. In that sense, affect as a conceptual tool, as Bal suggests, transforms «the centrality of representation», which anchors the effect of the artwork in the figurative quality

of a given artwork and facilitates the «analysis of the *agency of art*» (2013: 68). The affective aspect, in contrast, «compels agency without prescribing what the agent must do» (Bal, 2013: 75).[43]

These three tactics are strongly connected with each other, working in separate realms yet feeding into each other and forming different ways of providing multiple entry points to the work and revealing the mutually transformative relationship between the image and the person. The superimposition of images allows a questioning of the specific coordinates of the space, while the reconfiguration of the space allows interpretation not to rely solely on the effect of combined visual elements, but also on how they act in the space they are in. This enriching connection between space and images amplifies the effect of disorientation, which shakes habitual ways of seeing and approaching an object, turning the act of looking *at* into the act of looking *with*. These aspects cannot be separated from the affective dimension of the artwork, since both the way the viewer relates to the space and the images evoke a clash between what one knows, sees and feels, which is another key factor for the political effect of the artwork.

These maneuvers, which allow a general questioning of national identity, are reminiscent of one of the identifying features of Mirzoeff's «inverse visuality», namely a visual experience in which «the subjectivity of the viewer is called into question by the density and opacity of what he or she sees» (70). These moments, for Mirzoeff, are «spectral dust in the eyes of visuality that cause it to blink and become momentarily unsighted» (70).[44] What becomes unsighted in the face of this type of visuality is in fact the person who is looking, whose subjectivity «is called into question» by what she sees, due to the clash of senses that disorients the relationship between the signifier and the signified. In this case, what is called into question is the usual function an Atatürk bust has as a founding and perpetuating myth of national identity. This troubling position of becoming momentarily unsighted carries a crucial potential as a basis for agency for political action, since «perhaps only by risking the *incoherence* of identity is connection possible» (Butler, 1997: 149).[45]

I have stated in the beginning that Rancière identifies as one of the main questions of our contemporary times whether images «can reshape political spaces or whether they must be content with parodying them» (2009a: 60).[46] The distinction Rancière makes here between parodying, which functions within the realm it parodies, and an act of reshaping, which transforms the shape of the realm that it deals with, is crucial. When Rancière's words are thought in the context of national identity, one of the questions that arises is whether images that tackle national identity reject the ways in which a particular national identity is represented by parodying it or, alternatively, whether they disorient the notion of identity and representation itself. In the first case, another form of representation or identity can be an

43. Bal, Mieke: «Affect and the Space We Share: Three Forms of Installation Art», *The Next Thing: Art in the Twenty-First Century* (ed. Pablo Baler). Plymouth, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013, 67-81.
44. Mirzoeff, Nicholas: «On Visuality», *Journal of Visual Culture*, 5.1, 2006, 53-79.
45. Butler, Judith: *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997.
46. Ranciere, Jacques: *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009a.

answer to the critique, whereas in the latter case, the notion of representation is undermined in a way that what is criticized cannot be simply replaced by another identity, community and collective body.

This is the point at which we can see the broader implications of the analyzed tactics with regard to the relationship between artistic production and the existing national imaginations, as well as for the political potential of images in other places and times. The visual tactics I analyzed here point to the ability of certain images to go beyond parodying or replacing one identity with another by disorienting ways of seeing and thus reshaping cultural and political spaces. They evoke a sense of disorientation rather than destination, work through implication instead of direct representation, and involve mobile affects rather than fixed meanings. The spatial, semantic, and affective disorientation challenges the existing distribution of the sensible and the sense of the familiar, of what and who is in the «family». Hence, disorientation is not simply the first step towards redistribution, but a process at play on the spatial, visual and affective level that avoids moving towards a fixed destination. In this way, disorienting images can contribute to the alteration of the hegemonic codes that shape everyday life and communities. The possibility of a way of seeing, thinking, and being together in an alternative way to the established nationalist imaginaries and identitarian notions cannot be theorized, then, without considering the capability of images in intervening and «unmaking» existing worlds, and cannot be realized without taking the risk to be disoriented by them.

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