Serhat Tanyolacar
Art Portfolio
2024 - 2009



Bio:

Serhat Tanyolacar is a Turkish-born artist known for his mastery in printmaking, multimedia art, and political activism, as well as his advocacy for First Amendment rights and neurodiversity awareness. His work spans traditional and innovative printmaking, public performances, and interventions aimed at fostering dialogue, challenging power structures, and addressing societal issues. As a father to a neurodiverse son, Tanyolacar's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility informs his art and teaching, amplifying marginalized voices and fostering empathy through creativity.

Tanyolacar's printmaking integrates traditional techniques like relief and intaglio with innovations such as laser engraving and CNC technologies. His works explore identity, labor, nationalism, and socio-political dynamics, blending meticulous craftsmanship with experimental processes. Large-scale relief prints infused with nostalgia and popular culture critique political paradigms and encourage reflection on global complexities.

His social practice includes public performances and interventions that use humor, satire, and absurdity to engage audiences in unconventional spaces. Projects like Farewell (Elveda) and Denationalization Project address censorship, militarism, and civil liberties, transforming public spaces into platforms for critical reflection and engagement.

Recent exhibitions, including In-between Poetical Absurdities at Linfield Gallery (2023) and Equilibrium: The Influence of Caretaking on Printmaking Practices at Constellation Studios (2025), highlight his ability to merge personal narratives with societal themes. Equilibrium explores how caregiving shapes artistic perspectives, fostering empathy and adaptability.

Tanyolacar's work transcends boundaries, using printmaking and public art to challenge societal norms, amplify marginalized voices, and inspire change. Through innovation, activism, and inclusivity, he continues to provoke meaningful dialogue and engage global audiences.

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Serhat Tanyolaçar – Portfolio. 2024

Printmaking (on paper):

- 2024 – Monochrome Cravings. 30”x24”. Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing, painting.
- 2024 – Thoughts about Labour. 36”x24”. Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing, painting.
- 2024 – School of Reason. 80”x48”. Graphite, relief printmaking.
- 2024 – American Fable. 48”x27” Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing.
- 2024 – Lada Deal. 25”x25”. Graphite drawing, Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2023 – 100 Years of Kader Kismet (Four Panels Turkish-coffee Prints)”. 80”x48” Turkish-coffee ink, relief printmaking.
- 2023 – My Sultan Your Sultan What is the Difference? 48”x24” Drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking on 19th Century Ottoman Emperors Diorama. Digital collage.
- 2023 – Bindik Bir Alamete Gidiyoz Kıyamete: 36"x24” Embossing, graphite drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2021 – In-exile Series. Simitci’s Dream. 36”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2021 – In-exile Series. Bazaar Morning with Everyday Protests. 40”x24” Drawing, laser engraved printmaking
- 2021 – In-exile Series. Bir Istanbul Bogazi Hatirasi. 32”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2021 – Rebuild. 48”x27” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2021 – More Than Puzzle Pieces. 48”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing.
- 2021 – American Flag: 24”x48” x2 Relief engraving and embossing.
- 2024-2017 – Justice. 48”x27” Laser engraved relief printmaking (Critique over the past and contemporary justice systems, with the inclusion of Syrian war victims and protesters in front of The Justice Department).
- 2017 – Death of Innocence. 96”x25x2. Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2015 – Circus is in Town: 58”x52” Laser engraved relief printmaking (Visual implication of social hysteria of Turkish society and Western misconception over the Orient’s connection to Turkish Republic).
- 2014 – Meanwhile 221 Miles from The Cornfields: 52”x52” (Artist’s response to the killing of Michael Brown Jr. by a police officer in Ferguson Missouri).
- 2014 – Detroit Stacking: 30”x24” Embossing and laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2014 – Cycling: 24”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2014 – Governing: 30”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing.
- 2014 – The Man Who Sold the World: 42”x22” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2014 - Atlas Carrying Turtle Island: 34”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing.
- 2014 - May 1st is Always the Same: 16”X10” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
- 2014 – Invisible Black: 24”x24” x2 Laser engraved relief printmaking, embossing.
- 2024-2015 – Sername. Contemporary (satirical) Ottoman Miniatures. 42”x28”x10.
- 2014 – To the Assembly: 36”X24” Embossing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Prints in Dimensional Practices and Public Interventions:

- 2024 – Letters to the Ocean. Site-specific Public Performance. Pacific North West Coastal Line.
- 2019 – Backwards. Repetitive, backwards Constitution reading without the Second Amendment. Florida.
- 2015 – Elveda (Farewell) Public Performance and Government Censorship in Turkiye.
- 2013 – Arzuhalci (Public Scribe). Public Intervention. Mobile seating arrangement, typewriter, recording device, 1980s' formal dress, and eyeglasses. Ankara during Gezi Protests.
- 2014 – 4 minutes and 20 seconds of praying, 4 minutes and 20 seconds at US 90 - after Gezi Park: Video Performance.
- 2011 – Denationalization. Installation: Screen-printed anti militarist manifesto on BDU (battle dress uniform), disassembled military attire, and Turkish flag.
- 2011 – Mutual Dialogue, New York City. Public Intervention. (Divided) Screen printed Islamic jubbahs, artist's voice in the National Anthem and Fatiha surah.
- 2011 – My Left Arm, and The Women and The Children
- 2011 – Kiss: Mix media sculpture; screen printed the New York Times articles. New York City, NY.
- 2010 – In Their Shoes. Public Intervention. Washington D.C. Stiffened robe with screen printed imagery of the racist history of America. Tar, vinyl, cyanoacrylate, fabric.
- 2010 – Autism Interventions. Florida.



2024. Monochrome Cravings. 24inx30in. Laser engraved relief printmaking, drawing, and painting.

This work blends personal memory, cultural nostalgia, and political critique. Drawing inspiration from the ambiance of Turkish meyhanes depicted in films such as Züğürt Ağa, Gölge Oyunu, and Duvara Karşı, the scene juxtaposes monochromatic tones with bursts of vivid color, particularly in the striking portrayal of Donald Trump. Nostalgic elements, such as classic video games Duke Nukem and Lemmings, heighten the emotional resonance, creating a dialogue between past and present. The work is a poignant exploration of reality, memory, and the craving for an idealized past amidst today's complex sociopolitical climate.

Donald Trump and the Surreal Paradigm

At the center of the composition, a vividly rendered and saturated image of Donald Trump disrupts the nostalgic tone, acting as a provocative symbol of contemporary power and cultural spectacle. His flamboyant presence contrasts starkly with the subdued grayscale of the surrounding figures, serving as a jarring reminder of modern political and societal realities.

This juxtaposition creates a paradigm where nostalgia for the past's perceived simplicity collides with the chaotic and surreal nature of the present. The artist superimposes these realities, exploring the tension between personal memories and collective histories, and questioning how the past and present coexist within an individual's psyche.

Reality, Memory, and Craving

Through this interplay of vivid imagery and cultural references, the artist highlights the yearning for an idealized past while grappling with the complexities of the present. The work underscores a shared human experience: the craving for the authenticity of memory while navigating a distorted modern reality. The vivid Trump figure encapsulates this clash, symbolizing a contemporary world overshadowing personal and cultural nostalgia.



2024. Thoughts About Labor. 24in x 36in. Laser engraved relief printmaking, and drawing.

Thoughts About Labor examines the complexities of labor within printmaking. Measuring 24 by 36 inches, the piece combines laser engraving, relief printmaking, and drawing, blending traditional and modern techniques to explore both the physical and intellectual dimensions of artistic labor. At its core is a historical photograph from late-1920s Eskişehir, a city with personal significance for Tanyolacar due to his family's ancestral ties. The photograph depicts Turkish artisans meticulously crafting sepiolite smoking pipes, a labor-intensive tradition that embodies both economic survival and creative expression.

Tanyolacar's unique approach to printmaking is evident in his commitment to creating a single print from the matrix, reinforcing the individuality of each piece. For him, the matrix is not merely a tool of replication but a source of singular identity for each print. This concept of uniqueness parallels the individualized craftsmanship seen in the historical artisans' work, where each sepiolite item, though similar in form, carries distinct characteristics. By incorporating his own likeness among the artisans, Tanyolacar bridges past and present, reflecting on the shared struggles, pride, and dedication intrinsic to labor across generations.

This work moves through various stages of labor, from digital design to the hands-on process of printing and the final embellishments of drawing or painting. Each phase embodies Tanyolacar's belief that labor in art is meaningful and multifaceted. The final touches of drawing or painting transform each print into a unique work, reinforcing that labor in printmaking is not merely mechanical but imbued with thought, history, and personal expression.

Through Thoughts About Labor, Tanyolacar invites viewers to reconsider the role of artistic labor as a deeply resonant process that connects tradition with innovation. The work honors labor as an act of cultural preservation and individual expression, bridging past and present through each meticulously crafted, unique print. This piece stands as a testament to the value of labor in art, illustrating that the act of creation is not merely a means of reproduction but a profound process interwoven with heritage, resilience, and personal identity.



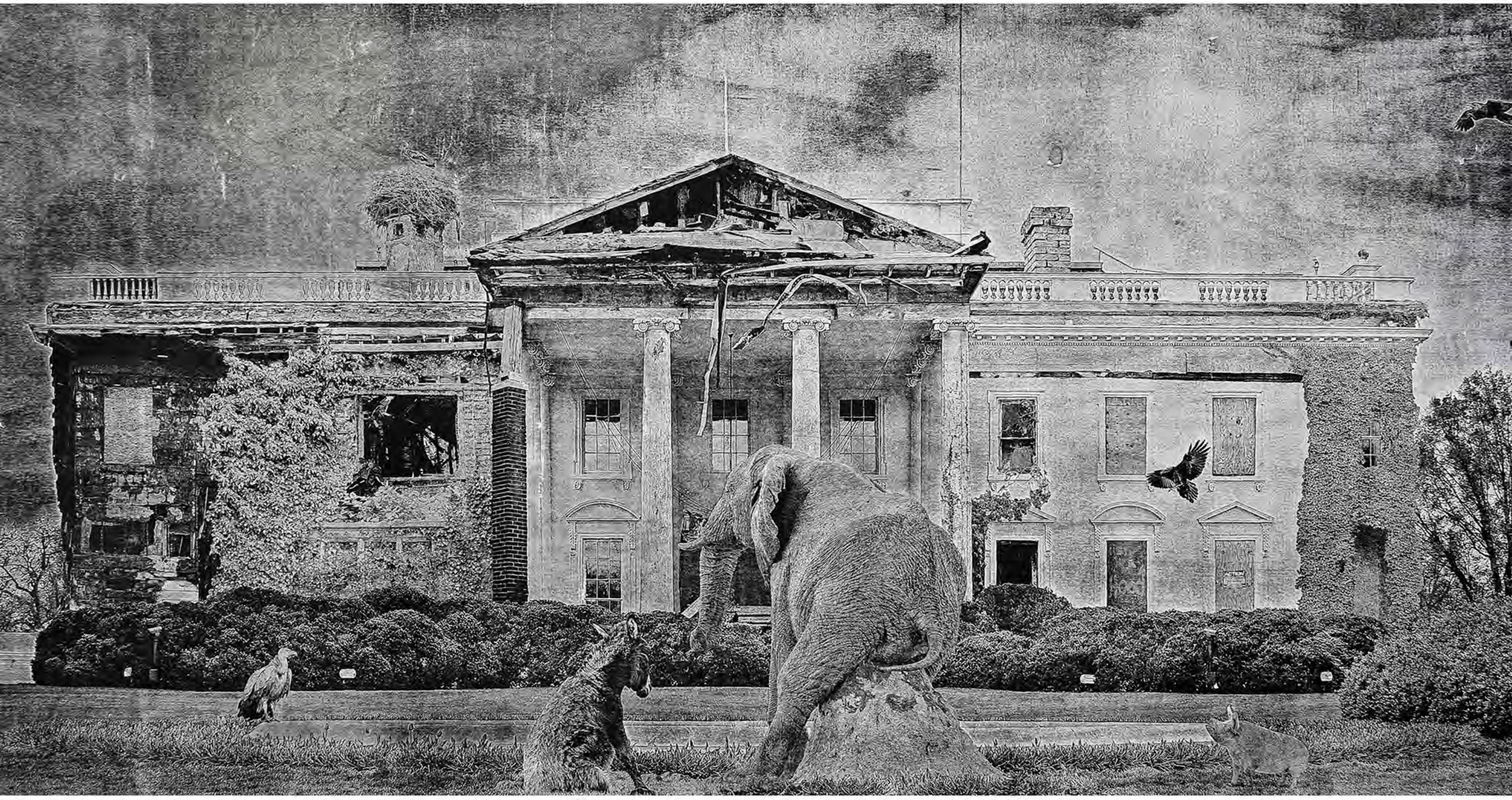
2024-2014. School of Reason. 65”x48” Graphite drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Serhat Tanyolacar’s School of Reason is a masterful critique of the transformation of intellectual, political, and academic landscapes in the modern era. Inspired by Raphael’s School of Athens, the work reimagines the classical gathering of philosophers as a void, highlighting the erosion of collective reason in contemporary society.

The composition retains Raphael’s architectural grandeur but deliberately erases the Western philosophers who originally symbolized rational thought and discourse. This absence speaks to the collapse of intellectualism and the growing prevalence of ideological extremism. Relief sculptures that once celebrated classical ideals are replaced with scenes from the Kama Sutra, offering a provocative critique of Western stereotypes about the Orient. By juxtaposing sensual imagery with the austerity of Western tradition, Tanyolacar challenges the colonialist and orientalist biases embedded in academic and cultural frameworks.

In the lower-left corner of the piece, the contemporary political turmoil is starkly depicted through an image of Capitol Riot officers barricading Capitol Hill. This visual anchors the work in the present, reflecting on the violent insurrection of January 6, 2020, and the fragility of democratic institutions. By including this imagery alongside the reimagined School of Athens, Tanyolacar underscores the disintegration of reasoned governance and the increasing susceptibility of society to disinformation and division.

The work also critiques the suppression of academic and artistic freedom, drawing historical parallels to the censorship of Allen Ginsberg’s Howl in 1957. Like Ginsberg’s trial, School of Reason reminds viewers of the precarious nature of intellectual and creative liberties. Through its intricate layers of symbolism, School of Reason interrogates the shifting mechanisms of knowledge and power. The erasure of the philosophers, the clash between East and West, and the depiction of political unrest all contribute to a narrative that questions the resilience of reason in a world marked by chaos. Tanyolacar’s work serves as both a reflection on the past and a call to reclaim spaces for intellectual and cultural dialogue.



2024. American Fable. 48”x27” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Following multiple trips to Detroit during his Grant Wood Fellowship at the University of Iowa, Serhat Tanyolacar meticulously documented the city’s abandoned neighborhoods, where homes, vehicles, and entire communities bore the scars of arson, neglect, and economic decline. These photographs became the foundation of American Fable, a work that reimagines The White House as a decayed ruin, symbolizing the erosion of the American Dream.

In this piece, Tanyolacar overlays elements of Detroit’s decay onto the iconic architecture of The White House, transforming it from a symbol of national stability into a haunting vision of abandonment and collapse. The imagery confronts viewers with the fragility of American ideals, juxtaposing the grandeur of the nation's most recognizable structure with the stark realities of systemic neglect.

The scene is populated with allegorical animals, each contributing to the work’s complex narrative. Atop the ruined White House sits a stork, symbolizing fragile hope and the potential for rebirth, its precarious perch reflecting the uncertainty of renewal. In the foreground, an elephant and a donkey, emblematic of the Republican and Democratic parties, engage in dialogue. Their setting within the decayed landscape underscores the ineffectiveness of partisan politics to address deeper societal issues.

A vulture and a crow, scavenger birds synonymous with death and decay, loom ominously in the composition, emphasizing the inevitability of collapse but also hinting at the possibility of regeneration. Meanwhile, a pig, representing greed and corruption, lurks nearby, critiquing the unchecked self-interest that exacerbates societal decline.

American Fable is a striking commentary on the state of political and societal decay in America. By combining the documented ruins of Detroit with allegorical and political symbolism, Tanyolacar challenges viewers to reflect on the causes and consequences of division, neglect, and greed while contemplating the possibility of renewal amidst the ruins.



2024. Lada Deal. 24”x24” Drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

The work envisions the future departure of Donald Trump from the political stage. Lada Deal depicts Trump driving a Lada—a vehicle favored by Vladimir Putin—swarmed by ominous birds in a nod to Alfred Hitchcock’s The Birds. This imagery critiques Trump’s influence, likening him to the birds in the film, whose presence heralds disruption and chaos.

The Lada, a symbol of Russian ties, underscores the controversies surrounding Trump’s connections with foreign powers. His retreat in this modest car symbolizes the collapse of his grandeur and the unraveling of his political dominance. The swarm of birds represents the societal issues magnified during his presidency, including attacks on women’s rights, education, and immigration, all circling him as symbols of backlash and consequence.Tanyolacar’s satirical yet sobering composition offers a reflection on accountability, illustrating the chaos of Trump’s legacy and inviting viewers to consider its lasting impact on American democracy.



2023. 100 Years of Kader Kismet (Four Panels Turkish-coffee Prints)". 80"x48" Turkish-coffee ink, relief printmaking.

Serhat Tanyolacar's 100 Years of Kader Kismet transforms a century of Turkish history into an intricate, tactile narrative that bridges personal reflection with collective memory. This striking series of four panels combines the warmth of Turkish coffee with the precision of relief printmaking to create a multilayered exploration of identity, history, and human connection.

The work frames historically significant events in Turkey since the establishment of the republic in 1923. Encased within ornate, hand-crafted frames, each moment feels both monumental and intimate, as though observed through a treasured family heirloom. These visual artifacts are rendered with ink made from Turkish coffee, a medium rich in cultural significance. By incorporating coffee, Tanyolacar draws on its role as a shared ritual, a symbol of hospitality, and a means of divination, layering the medium with metaphoric weight.

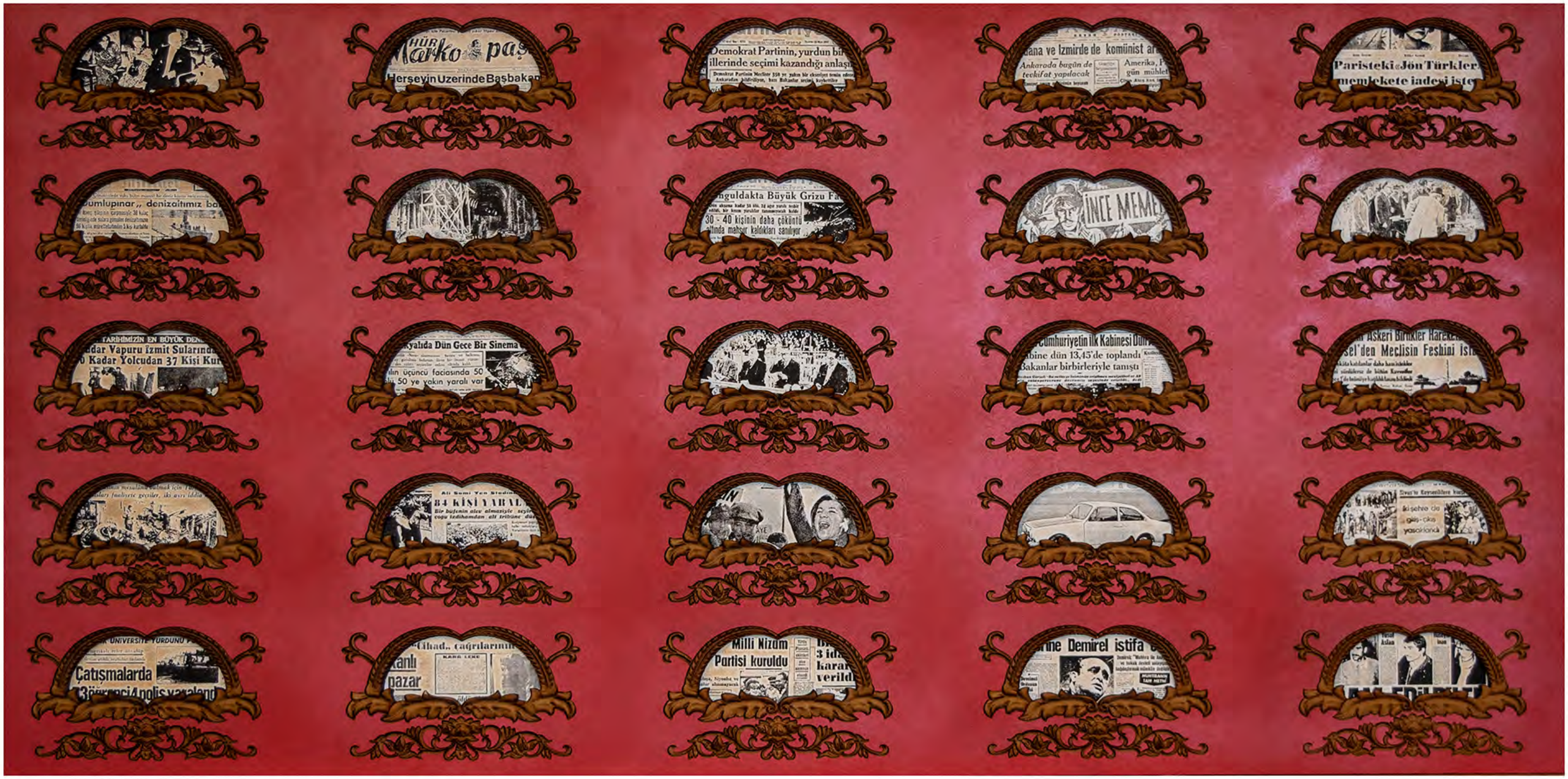
The flattened coffee cups and Turkish coffee fortune patterns surrounding the prints add another dimension to the work, invoking the practice of "reading the cup" (kahve falı). These fortunes, steeped in mystery and tradition, serve as an allegorical pathway, connecting past events to the viewer's own experiences and uncertainties. In doing so, Tanyolacar transforms history into something alive and participatory, blurring the line between collective and personal memory.

Here, Tanyolacar draws parallels between shared rituals and shared struggles, asserting that even in times of chaos, despair, and confusion, commonalities such as coffee and hardship become the threads of our humanity. The ornate frames, traditionally symbols of reverence and preservation, juxtapose the transience of history and daily life, emphasizing how beauty, pain, and destiny (kader) intersect in the human experience.

Ultimately, 100 Years of Kader Kismet is a deeply resonant work. It invites the viewer to not only reflect on Turkey's political and cultural history but also to find empathy and connection within the mundane and profound moments of human existence. It is an ode to shared experiences and a hopeful call for compassion amidst chaos.

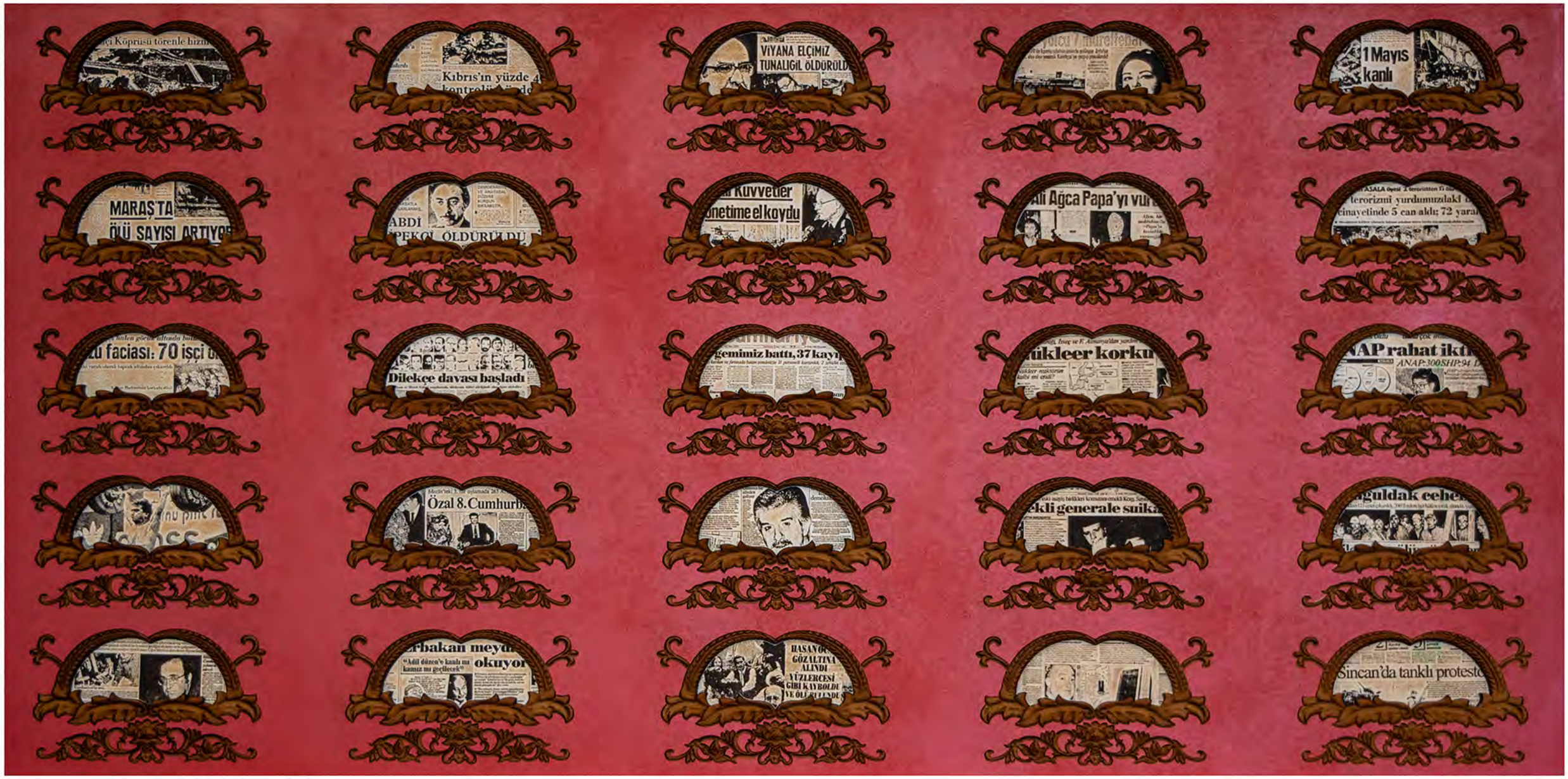


1923. The Republic of Turkiye was proclaimed on October 29, 1923.
1924. Sultan Abdulmecid was deposed and the Islamic caliphate was formally abolished
1925. The fez hat was outlawed.
1926. Assassination Attempt to Ataturk in Izmir.
1927. Ataturk's Nutuk Speech to the Nation.
1928. European Alphabet Revolution from Arabic.
1929. Melahat Senger-Ruacan. Turkish high court judge and the first woman elected to any supreme court in the world.
1930. Menemen Rebellion and the decapacitation of Turkish Officer Kubilay.
1931. Revolution in calendar hours and measurements.
1932. Turkish woman Keriman Halis Ece was declared the World Beauty Queen at a contest in Belgium.
1933. Turkish Adhan. The first time the Islamic Prayer was called in Turkish language.
1934. Hagia Sofia became a national museum.
1935. Assassination Attempt to Ataturk.
1936. A law determining the size and ratios of the star and crescent in the Turkish flag was accepted.
1937. Dersim Rebellion. (Sometimes called the Dersim genocide) Thousands of Kurds were killed and many others were internally displaced.
1938. Death of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.
1939. Erzincan Earthquake.
1940. Village Institutes Law was constitutionalized to educate the civilians in rural Turkiye.
1941. Refah Vapuru Faciasi. Refah tragedy: The cargo liner was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea 40 nautical miles (74 km) south of Mersin by Ondina (Regia Marina) with the loss of 168 lives.
1942. Halide Edip Adivar. Adivar's The Clown and His Daughter, was first written in English, later rewritten in Turkish; the novel was given a literary prize in 1942. The book won international fame and went through 25 editions.
1943. Istanbul Technical University was established.
1944 Nuri Demirag. The first Turkish-made airplane.
1945. Tan Incident. Tan incident or Tan newspaper raid is the event of the looting of the left-leaning daily newspaper Tan on 4 December 1945 by a group.
1946. Democrat Party was established.
1947. Death of the prominent Turkish cartoonist, Cemal Nadir Guler.



1948. The law of Child Prodigies was established.
1949. Turkish novelists Aziz Nesin and Rifat Ilgaz were arrested.
1950. Democrat Party won the General Elections.
1951. Communist Party members were hunted and arrested.
1952. Prolific Turkish folk musician Ruhi Su was arrested, linked to alleged communist propaganda.
1953. Dumlupinar Disaster. Turkish submarine sank in the Canakkale Strait after colliding with a Swedish cargo ship. Only five of the 86 sailors on board survived after rescue efforts failed to reach the sunken vessel.
1954. Grand Bazaar Fire.
1955. Zonguldak Mine Collapse.
1956. Yasar Kemal's Masterpiece Memed, My Hawk Published.
1957. ¬¬Middle East Technical University established.
1958. Uskudar Pasenger Ferry Disaster. The accident killed 272 people on board including seven crew, 39 survived the incident.
1959. Nese Cinema collapsed in Istanbul.
1960. May 27 Coup D'etat. The 1960 Turkish coup d'état was the first coup d'état in the Republic of Turkey, resulting in the execution by hanging of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes.
1961. The first national coalition was formed to establish a government.
1962. Coup D'etat attempt.
1963. Ankara Mid-air Collision. The 1963 Ankara mid-air collision occurred on Friday, 1 February 1963 over Ankara, Turkey when Middle East Airlines Flight 265, a Vickers 754D Viscount completing a flight from Cyprus, came in for landing and collided in the air with a Turkish Air Force Douglas C-47A; after which both planes fell directly onto the city below them. All 17 people on board both aircraft died, along with 87 people on the ground.
1964. Ali Sami Yen Turkish stadium stampede.
1965. Karanlikta Uyananlar. Turkish film about labor rights.
1966. Anadol. Establishment of Turkey's first domestic mass-production passenger vehicle company.
1967. Kayseri – Sivas Spor Holiganism. The Kayseri Atatürk Stadium disaster refers to an occurrence of football hooliganism, resulting in 43 deaths and at least 300 injuries.
1968. Sixth Fleet Protests. Protests after the United States Sixth Fleet arrived in Turkey.
1969. Bloody Sunday. Bloody Sunday (Turkish: Kanlı Pazar) is the name given to a counter-revolutionary response to a leftist protest that occurred on February 16, 1969, in Istanbul's Beyazıt Square, Turkey.
1970. Milli Nizam Partisi. National Order Party was founded on 26 January 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan. It was closed down on 20 May 1971 by the authorities on the grounds, that it violated the Constitution, specifically the articles dealing with secularism.
1971. The 1971 Turkish Military Memorandum, issued on 12 March that year, was the second military intervention to take place in the Republic of Turkey, coming 11 years after its 1960 predecessor. It is known as the "coup by memorandum", which the military delivered in lieu of sending out tanks, as it had done previously.

1972. ÜÇ FİDAN. On 6 May 1972, Turkish youth revolutionaries Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin Inan were hanged in Ankara.



1973. Boğaziçi Köprüsü (Bosporus Bridge) which connects Europe and Asia was completed.
1974. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus[24][a] began on 20 July 1974 and progressed in two phases over the following month. Taking place upon a background of intercommunal violence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and in response to a Greek junta-sponsored Cypriot coup d'état five days earlier, it led to the Turkish capture and occupation of the northern part of the island.
1975. Assassination of the Turkish Ambassador in Viana. Hüseyin Daniş Tunalıgil (1915 – 22 October 1975) was a Turkish diplomat. He was assassinated by Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide during his duty as the Turkish ambassador to Austria.
1976. Antalya Plane Crash. Turkish Airlines crashed near Isparta on 19 September 1976 while en route from Istanbul Atatürk Airport (IST/LTBA) to Antalya Airport (AYT/LTAI), killing all 144 passengers and 11 crew members on board. The crash is the deadliest aviation accident in Turkey's history.
1977. Kanli Bir Mayis. The Taksim Square massacre was an attack on leftist demonstrators on 1 May 1977 (International Workers' Day) in Taksim Square, Istanbul, Turkey. Casualty figures vary between 34 and 42 persons killed and 126 and 220 injured.
1978. Maraş Massacre (Turkish: Maraş katliamı was the massacre of more than one hundred leftists nd Alevi Kurds in the city of Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, in December 1978, primarily by the neo-fascist Grey Wolves.
1979. Abdi İpekçi (9 August 1929 – 1 February 1979) was a Turkish journalist, intellectual and an activist for human rights. He was murdered while editor-in-chief of one of the main Turkish daily newspapers Milliyet which then had a centre-left political stance.
1980. The 1980 Turkish coup d'état (Turkish: 12 Eylül Darbesi), headed by Chief of the General Staff General Kenan Evren, was the third coup d'état in the history of the Republic of Turkey, the previous having been the 1960 coup and the 1971 coup by memorandum.
1981. Attempted Assasination of Pope Jean Paul II. Mehmet Ali Ağca who murdered left-wing journalist Abdi İpekçi on 1 February 1979 and later shot and wounded Pope John Paul II on 13 May 1981, after escaping from a Turkish prison.
1982. The Ankara Esenboğa Airport attack was an attack on Ankara Esenboğa Airport, 28 km (17 mi) northeast of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, on 7 August 1982. The attack was perpetrated by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). Nine people were killed and 72 injured during the attack.
1983. Zonguldak Disaster. Mining accident in Zonguldak resulted in 79 deaths.

1984. Turkish intellectuals' Petition to The Government. "Intellectuals' Petition," demands for a democratic order are listed, with an emphasis on freedom of thought, expression, and assembly.

1985. Turkish Navy tank landing ship sank in a storm. The ship was part of the "Denizkurdu-85" exercise in the Aegean Sea.
1986. Chernobyl Disaster and its direct impacts on Northern Turkiye.
1987. Motherland Party (ANAP) was founded by Turgut Ozal.
1988. Nicknamed "The Pocket Hercules", Naim Süleymanoğlu was the first weightlifter to claim gold at three different Olympic Games.
1989. Turkish Presidential Election. Turgut Özal was elected as the eighth President of Turkey. He was the second civil president in Turkish history.
1990. Assassination of Çetin Emeç. Çetin Emeç was assassinated in the morning of March 7, 1990 in front of his home in Suadiye, Istanbul as he got in his car to go to his office. Two gunmen wearing ski mask and sunglasses approached the car he was already sitting in. While one gunman opened the right back door and fired his gun with a silencer, the other one shot from the left back door's window. His driver, Sinan Ercan, tried to escape, however, was shot down as well. Soon after the attack, someone called the newspaper Hürriyet and told that "he was calling on behalf of the organization 'Türk İslam Komandoları Birliği' (literally: Union of Turkish Islamist Commandos, an Iranian-based militant group) and took on the responsibility for the murder of Çetin Emeç.
1991. Retired Turkish General Hulusi Sayin was assassinated outside his home in January 1991; the assassination was claimed by Dev Sol, a leftist organization. At the time of his death, Sayın was known to be advocating a peaceful solution to the Kurdish–Turkish conflict.
1992. Zonguldak Mine Disaster. Kozlu coal mine, located in Turkey's Zonguldak basin suffered a disaster in 1992, which killed 263 miners.
1993. Assassination of Eşref Bitlis. Esref Bitlis was a general in the Turkish Gendarmerie, who died in a controversial plane crash as he was working on a peace plan for the Kurdish militia.

1993. Assassination of Ugur Mumcu. Uğur Mumcu was a Turkish investigative journalist for the daily Cumhuriyet. He was assassinated by a bomb placed in his car outside his home.

1994. Erbakan Jailed. A Turkish court on Friday convicted Necmettin Erbakan, a former prime minister and Islamist leader, of "provoking hatred" in a 1994 speech.
1995. Disappearance of Hasan Ocak. Turkish communist Hasan Ocak disappeared on 21 March 1995 when he was taken into custody by the Turkish Political Bureau of Investigation.
1996. Assassination of Ozdemir Sabanci. Özdemir Sabancı was gunned down on January 9, 1996 in his office in the strongly-guarded Sabancı Towers in Levent, İstanbul along with the general manager of ToyotaSA and a secretary by assassins hired by the leftist armed group DHKP-C. They had been given access to the building by Fehriye Erdal, a female member of DHKP-C, who was an employee at that time.
1997. Sincan or The 1997 military memorandum (Turkish: 28 Şubat, "28 February"; also called Post-modern darbe, "Post-modern coup") in Turkey refers to the decisions issued by the Turkish military leadership on a National Security Council meeting on 28 February 1997. This memorandum initiated the process that precipitated the resignation of Islamist prime minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party, and the end of his coalition government.



1998. Shooting of Akin Birdal. Two assailants shot and wounded a leading Turkish human rights activist in his Ankara office on Tuesday. Akin Birdal, president of Turkey's independent Human Rights Association, was in critical condition with six bullet wounds in the leg, chest, and shoulder. An ultra-nationalist group claimed responsibility for the attack.
1999. Marmara / Izmit Earthquake. On 17 August 1999, a catastrophic magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck the Kocaeli Province of Turkey, causing monumental damage and between 17,127 and 18,373 deaths.
2000. Hezbullah Operation. Turkish Government cracked down on a fundamentalist group with possible links to the government is killing off outspoken Kurds in Turkey.
2001. Assassination of Ali Gaffar Okkan. Ali Gaffar Okkan was a Turkish police chief who was assassinated in an ambush in Diyarbakır, southeastern Turkey.
2002. Assassination of Necip Hablemitoglu. Necip Hablemitoğlu was a Turkish historian and intellectual. He was assassinated in front of his home in 2002. The perpetrators of this assassination have still not been found.
2003. Neve Shalom Synagogue Attack. On November 15, 2003, two car bombs exploded at two synagogues in Istanbul during Sabbath services. The attacks killed 24 people. The synagogues were the city synagogue and the Beth Israel synagogue, which was about 3 miles away. The attacks were part of four car bomb attacks that took place in Istanbul that week. The militant Islamic group, Great East Islamic Raiders Front (IBDA-C - Islami Buyuk Dogu Akincilar Cephesi), was responsible for two of the attacks on November 14.
2004. An 11-story building in the city of Konya collapsed.
2005. Cartoonist Musa Kart was fined $3,500 by an Ankara court on charges of assailing Erdogan's honor in a cartoon that depicted him as a cat entangled in a ball of yarn.
2006. Orhan Pamuk Nobel Prize in Literature. The Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk (born 1952) "who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures."
2007. Assassination of Hrant Dink. The prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink was assassinated in Istanbul on 19 January 2007. Dink was a newspaper editor who had written and spoken about the Armenian genocide and was well known for his efforts for reconciliation between Turks and Armenians and his advocacy of human and minority rights in Turkey.
2008. Murder of Ahmet Yildiz. The murder of Ahmet Yıldız occurred on 15 July 2008 in Üsküdar, Istanbul.[1] The anti-LGBT hate crime was committed as an honor killing by his father Yahya Yıldız,[2] in what has been widely referred to as the first known case of an anti-gay honor killing in Turkey.[3] To date, Yahya Yıldız has become a fugitive and has yet to be captured and put on trial.
2009. Mardin Massacre. The Mardin engagement ceremony massacre was a massacre carried out by Mehmet Çelebi,[1] a village guard of Kurdish origin, at an engagement ceremony where at least forty-four people were killed on May 4, 2009, in the village of Bilge in the Mazıdağı district of south-eastern Mardin Province in Turkey. The attack was perpetrated using grenades and automatic weapons by at least two masked assailants, who authorities believe are involved in a feud between two families. According to some sources, it was an internal feud of the Kurdish Çelebi clan.
2010. Regime Change. A constitutional referendum on a number of changes to the constitution was held in Turkey on 12 September 2010. The results showed the majority supported the constitutional amendments, with 58% in favour and 42% against. The changes were aimed at bringing the constitution into compliance with European Union standards.
2011. Hakkari Attack. The October 2011 Çukurca attacks are the PKK's attacks targeting Turkish Armed Forces units in Hakkâri's Çukurca district on October 19, 2011. After midnight, 200 PKK members opened fire on police and gendarmerie buildings and security points in the district center with heavy weapons, resulting in 24 Turkish soldiers killed and 18 wounded. Between 21 and 23 PKK militants were killed in the conflict, and around 250-270 PKK militants were killed in the post-conflict operations, and 210 were injured.
2012. Arrest of Ilker Basbug. A former military chief has been detained and accused of leading a terror organization and conspiring to bring down the Turkish government, his lawyer has said. General Ilker Basbug will be the most senior officer to face trial in a series of investigations into alleged anti-government plots. He was arrested and put in prison near Istanbul on Thursday night after seven hours of questioning by prosecutors investigating allegations that the military funded dozens of websites aimed at discrediting the Islamic-rooted government of the prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in 2009.
2013. Gezi Park Protests. A wave of demonstrations and civil unrest in Turkey began on 28 May 2013, initially to contest the urban development plan for Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park. The protests were sparked by outrage at the violent eviction of a sit-in at the park protesting the plan. Subsequently, supporting protests and strikes took place across Turkey, protesting against a wide range of concerns at the core of which were issues of freedom of the press, of expression and of assembly, as well as the AKP government's alleged erosion of Turkey's secularism.
2014. Soma Mine Explosion. On 13 May 2014, blasting at Eynez coal mine in Soma, Manisa, Turkey, caused an underground mine fire, which burned until 15 May. In total, 301 people were killed in what was the worst mine disaster in Turkey's history.
2015. Murder of Özgecan Aslan. Özgecan Aslan was a Turkish university student who was murdered while resisting attempted rape on 11 February 2015 on a minibus in Mersin, Turkey.
2016. Ankara, Kizilay Bombings: The February 2016 Ankara bombing killed at least 30 people and injured 60 in the capital of Turkiye. According to Turkish authorities, the attack targeted a convoy of vehicles carrying both civilian and military personnel working at the military headquarters during the evening rush hour. The Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK) took responsibility for the attack and said they targeted security forces. Censorship monitoring organization Turkey Blocks reported nationwide internet restrictions beginning approximately one hour after the blast pursuant to an administrative order.
2017. Reina Nightclub Attack. At least 39 people, including at least 15 foreigners, have been killed in an attack on a nightclub in Istanbul. A man from Uzbekistan arrested in Turkey has confessed to carrying out the deadly New Year's gun attack at Istanbul's Reina nightclub, the city's governor has said, dubbing the shooting an ISIS-influenced terrorist attack.
2018. Murder of Cemal Kasikci. Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi was a Saudi journalist, dissident, author, columnist for Middle East Eye and The Washington Post, and a general manager and editor-in-chief of Al-Arab News Channel who was assassinated at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October 2018 by agents of the Saudi government at the behest of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.
2019. Yıldız Kenter, a veteran actress of Turkish cinema and theatre, passed away in Istanbul on Sunday.
2020. Hagia Sophia's Islamic Transformation. In July 2020, the Council of State annulled the 1934 decision to establish a museum in the Hagia Sophia. The Hagia Sophia was reclassified as a mosque.
2021. Turkiye Wildfires. In July and August 2021, a series of more than two hundred wildfires burnt 1,700 square kilometers of forest in Turkey's Mediterranean Region in the worst-ever wildfire season in the country's history.
2022. Refugee Crisis. In 2022, Turkey hosted the highest number of Syrian refugees, with 3.5 million refugees. The refugees came from many countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Ukraine.



2023. My Sultan Your Sultan What is the Difference? 48”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

The work reimagines the trajectories of leadership and power, drawing critical parallels between Ottoman Sultans and U.S. Presidents. Using the map of Ottoman Sultans as the base image, Tanyolacar replaces the Ottoman figures with all the U.S. Presidents, weaving a narrative that critiques the cyclical nature of governance, historical violence, and systemic oppression.

The composition features a grid of ornate oval frames, each containing a portrait of a U.S. President. These frames, traditionally symbols of reverence, are juxtaposed with depictions of key historical events, exposing the darker realities of their legacies. Among these vignettes are scenes of the Jim Crow era, the Native American Genocide, the Wounded Knee Massacre, and the Mexican-American conflicts, illustrating the profound human cost of expansionist and oppressive policies throughout U.S. history.

Anchoring the center of the piece is an Ottoman Sultan holding both Ottoman and American flags, a potent metaphor for the shared mechanisms of dominance, control, and imperialism that transcend cultural and historical boundaries. The deliberate choice to align these two leadership traditions invites viewers to consider the universality of authoritarian structures and their enduring impact on society.

In the bottom-right corner, a dynamic and provocative element disrupts the otherwise orderly grid. Here, Donald Trump is depicted deliriously running in front of the Capitol Riot backdrop, a chaotic and symbolic moment that highlights the culmination of systemic failures. This imagery ties the broader critique to contemporary politics, using Trump as a figurehead for the erosion of democratic norms and the amplification of division and spectacle. His frantic presence amidst the chaos contrasts sharply with the stoic portraits of past leaders, underscoring the shift from traditional governance to a cult of personality and performative politics.

By asking What is the Difference?, Tanyolacar challenges viewers to confront the parallels between past and present, imperial and democratic systems, and the recurring patterns of violence and oppression embedded in leadership. The work compels us to reflect on how these legacies shape the present, urging a critical reevaluation of the figures and systems we revere. Ultimately, My Sultan, Your Sultan, What is the Difference? is a powerful meditation on power, history, and accountability. It transforms the past into a lens for understanding the present, revealing the shared humanity and failings behind the mythos of leadership.



2023. Bindik Bir Alamete Gidiyoz Kıyamete: 36”x24” Embossing, graphite drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Bindik Bi Alamete Gidiyoz Kiyamete critiques Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s authoritarian rule, depicting him in a state of delusion. Set on the Presidential Palace staircase, the composition features figures representing Turkish history, resistance, and tragedy, including Hrant Dink, Bahriye Üçok, Deniz Gezmiş, and Uğur Mumcu. The inclusion of Gollum from The Lord of the Rings references Erdoğan’s infamous lawsuit against a citizen for comparing him to Gollum, symbolizing greed and power obsession.

Tanyolacar’s use of his performance imagery alongside symbols like the Hollow Suit and Klansman critiques the emptiness of authority and systemic oppression. This powerful piece is a call to confront repression and reflect on the fragility of freedom and justice.



In-exile Series. 2022. Simitçi’s Dream. 36”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Contemplation on the notions of otherness and the experience of being an alien. In the literal sense, the feeling of being a non-American and a Turk can be akin to the sensation of being in outer space.

The artwork delves into the idea of culture, highlighting the fundamental elements that constitute it: food and art. In the case of many Turks, simit stands as a cultural signifier, a representation of both identity and memory. It's not just a simple snack; it's a repository of sweet recollections for the artist, encapsulating a deep connection to their heritage.



In-exile Series. 2021. Bazaar Morning With Everyday Protests. 40”x24” Laser engraved relif printmaking

Bazaar Morning with Everyday Protests transforms a vibrant Turkish marketplace into a surreal commentary on the absurdity of contemporary realities. Set in Izmir, a city the artist has strong personal ties to, the work juxtaposes the mundane rhythm of a public bazaar with protest imagery and nonsensical elements, illustrating the disjointed logic of a world grappling with systemic violence, patriarchal oppression, and political chaos.

At its core, the piece depicts protesters holding banners addressing urgent issues such as femicide, police brutality, and state violence against demonstrators. These serious themes are seamlessly integrated into the bazaar, a bustling, everyday setting, emphasizing the tension between the gravity of societal crises and the distractions of daily life. Protest placards—amid stalls brimming with produce—serve as a reminder of the persistent presence of dissent, even in spaces of routine.

Yet, the nonsensical elements disrupt this seemingly cohesive narrative, injecting a layer of absurdity into the scene. Scattered throughout the composition are figures from pop culture: Pac-Man, endlessly consuming in a metaphor for cyclical societal problems; Dumbo, a symbol of naivety and resilience; the White Rabbit from Alice in Wonderland, evoking disorientation and a sense of chasing the unattainable; and ED-209, the militarized robot from RoboCop, representing excessive state force and authority. These surreal inclusions reflect the fragmented, almost laughably absurd nature of modern reality, where profound issues are often overshadowed by distractions or reduced to spectacles.
Through laser-engraved relief printmaking, Tanyolacar captures the chaotic textures of a bazaar while amplifying its symbolic depth. The layering of ordinary life, political resistance, and absurdity forces viewers to reconcile the dissonance between pressing social issues and a world where reality often feels like parody.

Bazaar Morning with Everyday Protests critiques not only systemic violence but also the surreal, contradictory nature of a society where urgent crises coexist with trivial distractions. By combining nostalgia, absurdity, and political critique, Tanyolacar’s work invites viewers to question the logic—or lack thereof—of the world we navigate daily.



In-exile Series. 2021. Bir Istanbul Bogazi Hatirasi. 32”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Bir Istanbul Bogazi Hatirasi transforms nostalgia into a powerful tool for cultural critique. Set against the iconic backdrop of the Bosporus and Istanbul’s historic skyline, this artwork layers personal, cultural, and surreal elements, evoking both longing and a sharp reflection on Turkey's shifting cultural landscape.

The composition juxtaposes a serene, idyllic scene with dissonant symbols that challenge the boundaries of memory and reality. Central to this work is the iconic Turkish drag queen Zeki Müren, an emblem of mid-20th-century artistic freedom and identity, juxtaposed with a military policeman (MP) wielding a gramophone, a surreal image hinting at authoritarianism’s paradoxical relationship with culture. The Komodo dragon, an unusual addition, disrupts the scene, representing a sense of alien intrusion or perhaps the absurdities embedded in cultural memory.

Tanyolacar’s personal elements, such as his Turkish tea brewer and family dog, infuse the work with intimate nostalgia, grounding the viewer in the artist’s own connections to Istanbul. Meanwhile, the inclusion of a saz player, a quintessential figure of Anatolian folk traditions, serves as a reminder of Turkey’s deep-rooted cultural heritage, adding layers of sound and storytelling to the visual narrative.

Through the surreal interplay of figures and objects, Tanyolacar critiques the complexities of modern Turkish identity. The nostalgic beauty of the Bosporus contrasts with the incongruence of the figures, symbolizing the tension between tradition, memory, and the impositions of contemporary power structures. The visual language of the piece invites the viewer to question how nostalgia can both preserve cultural essence and highlight the fractures within it.

Rendered through laser-engraved relief printmaking, the tactile quality of the work mirrors the richness and complexity of the themes it explores. The meticulous attention to detail captures the intricate textures of Istanbul’s architecture, the Bosporus’s rippling waters, and the eclectic figures that populate the composition. Bir Istanbul Bogazi Hatirasi is more than a nostalgic homage; it’s a layered reflection on cultural memory, identity, and the surreal absurdities that shape both individual and collective histories. It invites the viewer to find meaning in the dissonance and beauty in the chaos.

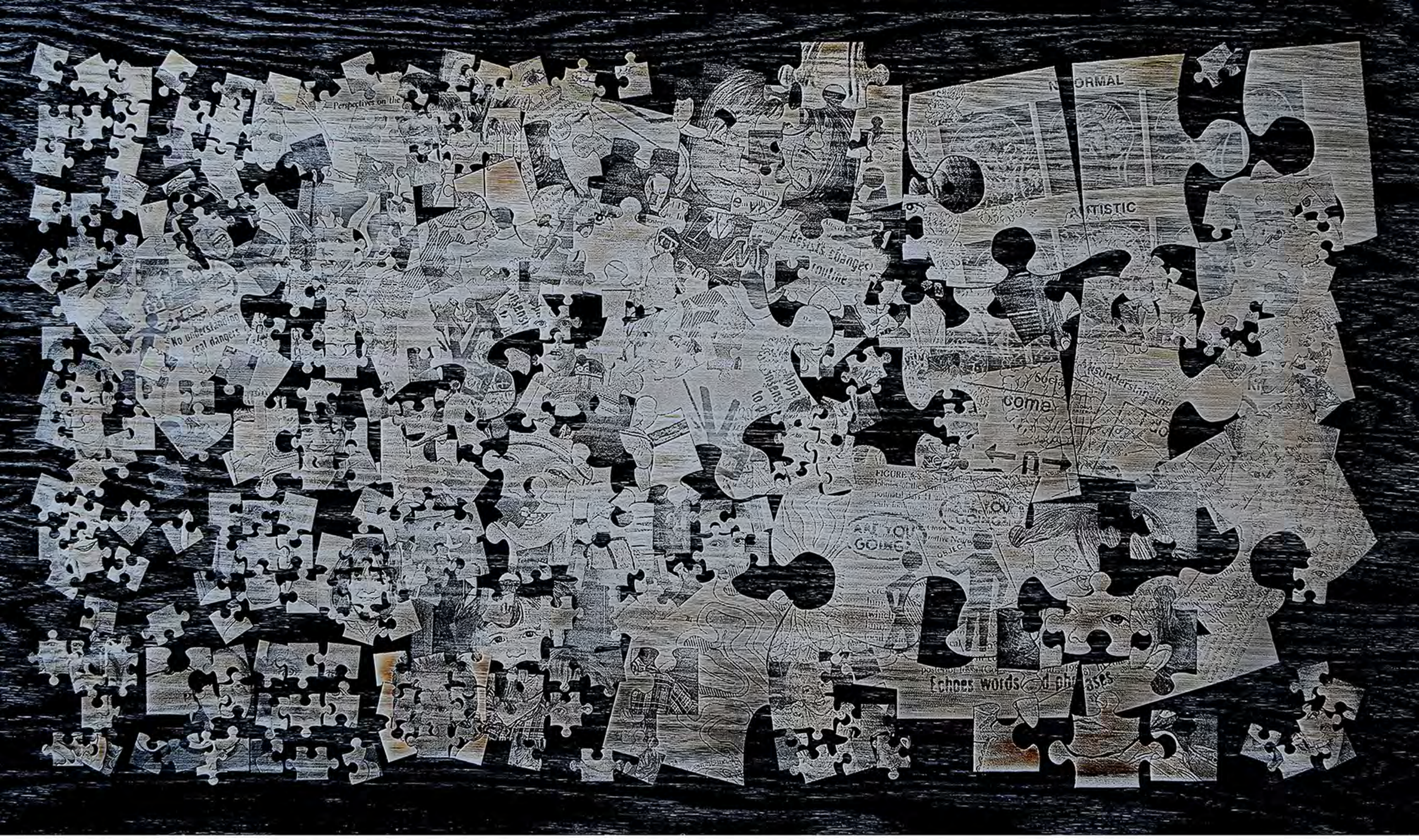


2021. Rebuild. 48”x27” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Rebuild is the inaugural work in a series of prints featuring the White House as a backdrop. Following multiple trips to Detroit during his Grant Wood Fellowship, Tanyolacar documented the city’s abandoned and burned-out houses, neighborhoods, and vehicles. These decaying structures inspired his depiction of the White House in a state of profound ruin, with crumbling walls and vines overtaking its once-pristine façade. The scene transforms the symbol of American power into a haunting reflection on the fragility of institutions and ideals.

Rendered with laser-engraved relief printmaking, the work’s textured details evoke the tactile quality of weathered stone and aged photographs. A bird’s nest perched on the roof provides a glimmer of hope and renewal, juxtaposed against the desolation. The absence of human presence intensifies the sense of abandonment, prompting viewers to reflect on societal collapse and the possibility of reconstruction.

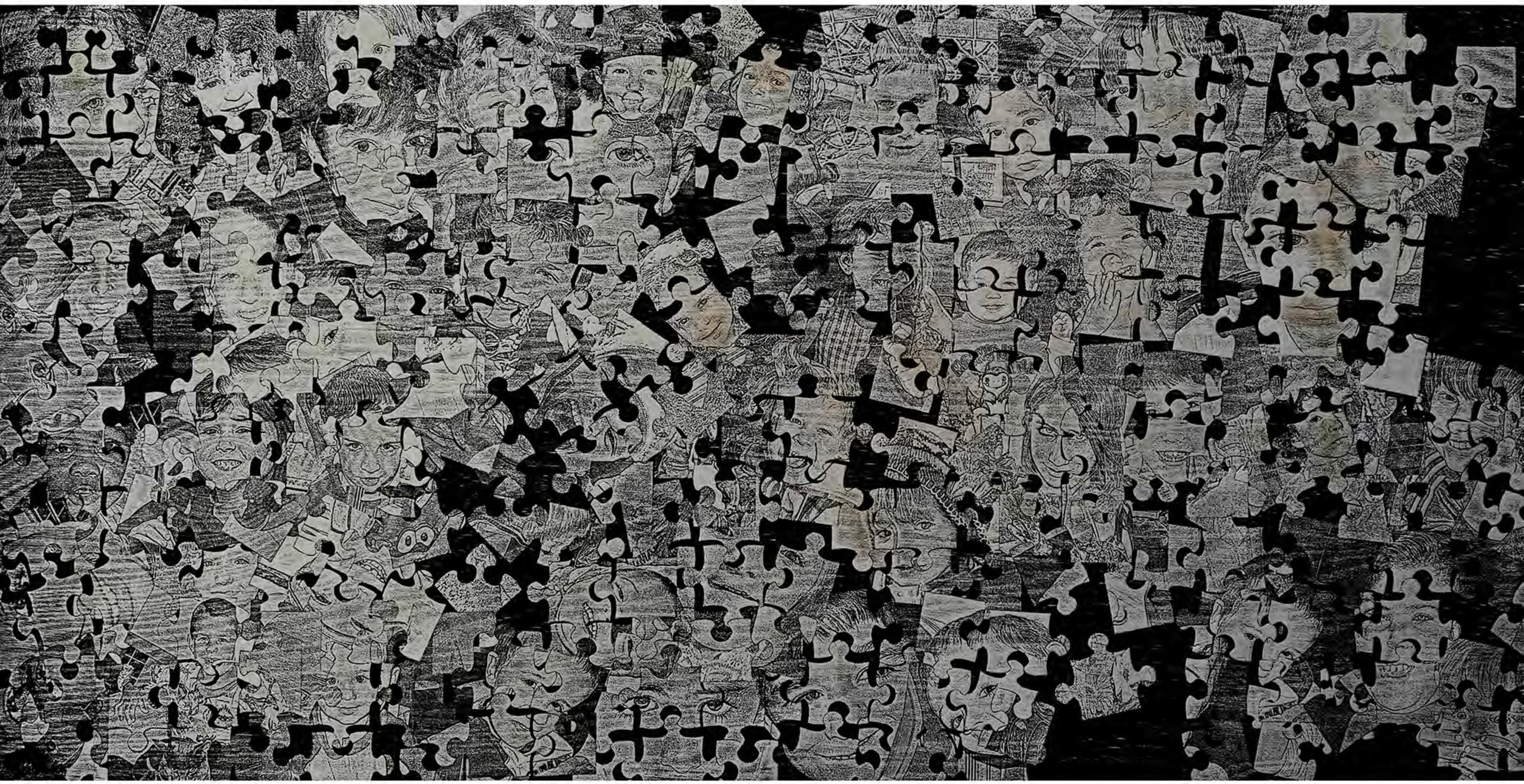
Rebuild sets the tone for a series exploring decay, resilience, and renewal, confronting viewers with the cyclical nature of history.



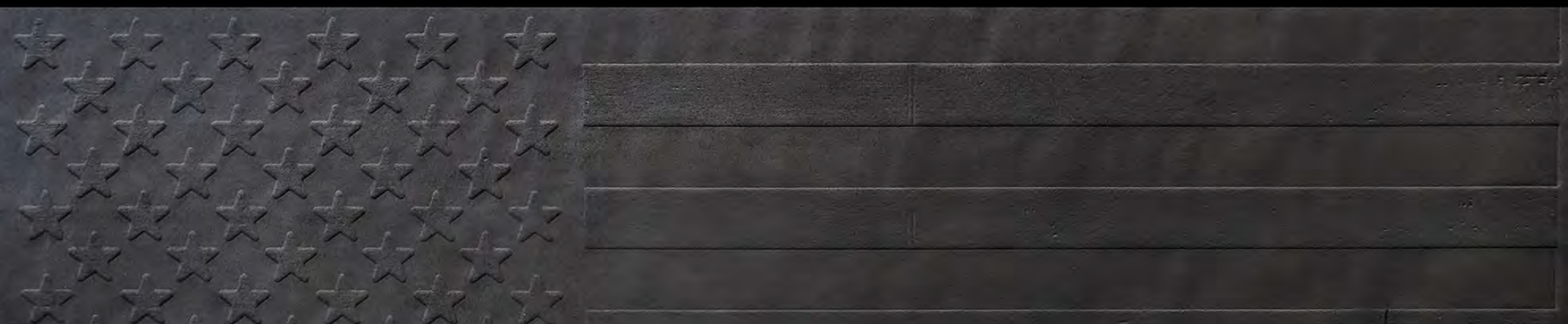
2020. More Than The Puzzle Pieces (Two Versions). 48”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

The composition brings together 52 portraits of joyful and laughter-filled children on the autism spectrum. These portraits overlap with the scientific description of autism represented as puzzle pieces.

Notably, this artwork holds special significance as it was acquired by the USF Contemporary Art Museum and generously donated to the USF CARD (Center for Autism & Related Disabilities), further highlighting the profound connection between art and the autism community.



2024. More Than The Puzzle Pieces (Two Versions). 48”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.



2021. American Flag. 24”x48” Embossing.

Serhat Tanyolacar’s American Flag transforms a symbol of national identity into a stark and sobering critique of systemic oppression. Rendered entirely in black embossing, the work reimagines the American flag to address the invisibility of Black pain and the enduring struggles against police brutality, white nationalism, and racial prejudice in the United States.

The deliberate “blackened” treatment of the flag’s surface transcends the mere absence of color. It speaks to a deeper societal blindness, particularly among communities that benefit from systemic privilege, to the ongoing suffering and resilience of Black Americans. The absence of vibrant hues mirrors the muted acknowledgment of Black pain, especially in regions where Confederate heritage continues to exert influence over cultural narratives.

The tactile nature of the embossing reinforces the conceptual depth of the work. The raised stars and stripes invite viewers to engage physically with the piece, offering a stark reminder that the history of racial oppression is deeply embedded in the fabric of American identity. The flag’s blackened surface becomes a metaphor for the erasure and marginalization of Black voices in a society still grappling with its own legacy of racism.

By reclaiming a patriotic symbol and subverting its visual language, Tanyolacar challenges viewers to reflect on the flag’s meaning in a contemporary context. Is it a unifying emblem or a relic of systemic exclusion? Through its minimalist aesthetic and layered symbolism, American Flag invites a necessary dialogue about justice, equity, and the ongoing fight for visibility and recognition in America.
This powerful work serves as both a memorial and a call to action, reminding us that the ideals represented by the flag remain incomplete until they fully encompass the experiences and struggles of all Americans.



2024-2017. Justice. 48”x27” Laser engraved relief printmaking.
(Critique over the past and contemporary justice system, with the inclusion of Syrian war victims and protesters)

The work was sparked by the Leo Frank Exhibition at Kennesaw History Museum in 2016. He was an American factory superintendent whose conviction in 1913 for the murder of Mary Phagan resulted in his lynching. His trial and death shaped the nascent Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and spurred the first resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Frank was pardoned in 1986.

The artist took several pictures of himself in a similar dress that Leo Frank was wearing during his trial. Even if the end/physical work is printmaking, the work has performative strategies. The work includes the faces of the innocent people who were being murdered and lynched in America; they pose in front of the Justice Department as a social justice protest. Justice has multiple versions: One with only the police victims, one as a blind embossed print. The late version shows the civilians from Syria/Aleppo and Iraq.

While the police killings in America is happening regularly there are parallel human-right crimes that have been committed in the Middle-East. From 2019 to 2020 the artist collected the images of the victims of the wars in Middle-East to show a parallel empathy and compassion to the often alienated and not-heard people who deeply suffer in the wars that America has been directly involved.

From left to right:
Serhat Tanyolacar(walking), Tom Robinson (standing), Dalvin Hollins (standing), Tamir Rice (sitting), Walter Scott (standing), Sandra Bland (standing), Keith Vidal (sitting), Medgar Evers (standing), Frank Smart (standing), Kimani Gray (standing), John H. Crawford (sitting), Kendra James (standing), Darrien Hunt(Standing), Deniz Gezmis (sitting), Michael J. Brown (standing), Sean Bell (standing), Trayvon Martin (sitting), Leo Frank (sitting), Feras Morad (standing), Eric Garner (standing), Antony Hill (standing), Abner Loima (half-way standing), Jim Davis (sitting), Rumain Brisbon (standing), Jeremy Mardis (standing), Mack Charles Parker (1959, standing), Matthew Ajibade (sitting), Walter Scott (standing), Renisha McBride (sitting), Aiyana Stanley Jones (standing), Jordan Davis (sitting).



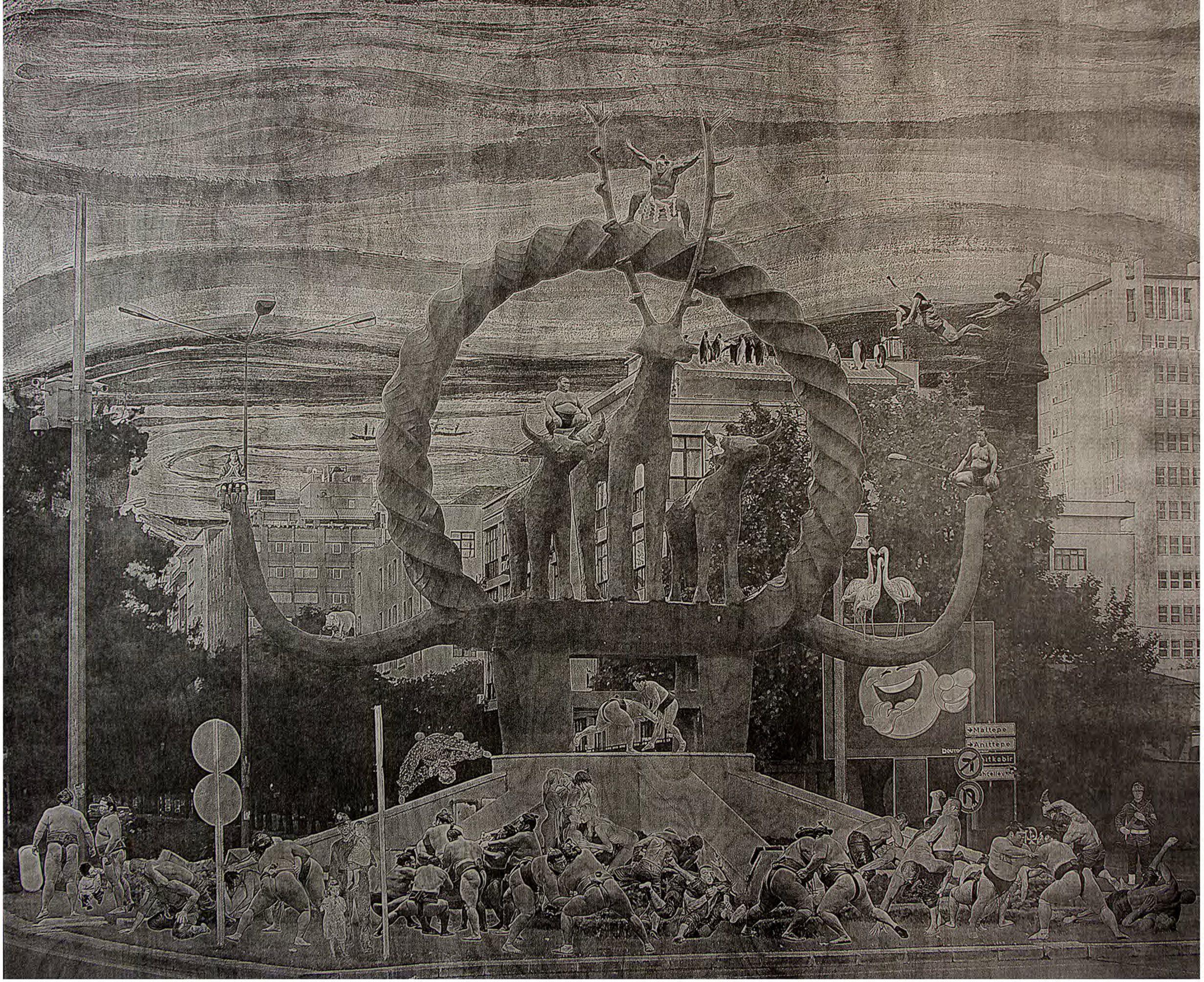
2017. Death of Innocence. 96”x25x2. Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Serhat Tanyolacar’s Death of Innocence confronts the viewer with a provocative and layered narrative exploring the dichotomy between moral decay and the enduring ideals of justice, freedom, and love. Spanning two distinct visual realms, the left side of the work depicts a chaotic, explicit scene involving fictional characters and Donald Trump in an uninhibited state. The right side transitions into an idyllic garden populated by poets, philosophers, and cultural figures who embody acts of creativity, justice, and individuality.

The left panel is a dystopian visual cacophony, heavily inspired by Patrick Süskind’s Perfume. Here, a multitude of bodies—diverse in race, gender, and orientation, engage in a surreal and pornographic scene, where Donald Trump features prominently. This chaotic imagery critiques modern politics, authoritarianism, and the commodification of identity under Trump’s presidency. The visual absurdity underscores themes of moral decay, cultural narcissism, and the exploitation of difference.

In stark contrast, the right panel offers a serene yet vibrant homage to creative luminaries, including T.S. Eliot, Voltaire, Walt Whitman, Allen Ginsberg, Sylvia Plath, Nazım Hikmet, and others. These figures, fictionalized and idealized, symbolize ideals of love, peace, and artistic expression. The garden, lush with flowers and harmony, represents the persistence of hope and the transformative power of creativity amidst chaos.

The artwork’s censorship from an annual Faculty Show by Polk State College in Florida highlights the fraught relationship between art, free expression, and moral authoritarianism. Tanyolacar’s bold use of explicit content juxtaposed with intellectual reverence challenges notions of decency, inviting viewers to confront discomfort and engage with the broader sociopolitical critique. Death of Innocence is a provocative exploration of innocence lost in the face of authoritarianism and cultural commodification, juxtaposed with the enduring power of creativity to challenge and inspire. It serves as a bold testament to the necessity of art in confronting societal contradictions.



2015. Circus in Ankara. 48”x42” Laser engraved relief printmaking..

Serhat Tanyolacar’s Circus in Ankara critiques the contradictions in Turkish society, focusing on the dissonance between national tragedies and government propaganda. Inspired by Turkey’s largest coal mining disaster, the central figure—a coal miner with his daughters—symbolizes the immense human cost of the tragedy and the resilience of laboring families.

Surrounding the miner, scenes of absurdity and chaos feature circus performers and exaggerated human forms, critiquing the government’s response to the disaster. State-controlled media censored reports on the causes of the accident, filling the airwaves with entertainment instead. This surreal imagery reflects a society distracted by spectacle, ignoring fundamental issues of accountability and justice.The Hittite Monument, a national symbol of unity, becomes a stage for this critique. Figures grotesquely interacting with the monument and incongruous elements like flamingos amplify the absurdity, exposing tensions between tradition and modernity. Tanyolacar’s work memorializes victims of negligence and critiques a system prioritizing spectacle over substance.



2014. Meanwhile 221 Miles From The Cornfields: 52”x52” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Artist's response to the tragic killing of Michael Brown Jr. by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. The piece was prominently featured in the Hands Up Don't Shoot regional exhibition in September 2014.

In the artwork, set against a backdrop of cornfields, stands Michael Brown Jr.'s street monument, a testament to the respect and remembrance of the Ferguson citizens in honor of his tragic passing.



2014 - Detroit Stacking: 30”x24” Embossing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Detroit Stacking delves into the themes of consumerism, the collapse of the auto industry in Detroit City, and the profound socio-economic consequences this has had on the city.



2014. Cycling: 24”x24” Laser engraved relief printmaking.

Cycling invites viewers to contemplate the nature of religion and its cyclical relationship with humanity. The composition features 30 mosque minarets arranged in a spiraling formation, drawing the eye toward an enigmatic central void. This spiral evokes notions of infinity, continuity, and introspection, symbolizing the perpetual human search for divine connection and meaning.

The minarets, meticulously rendered, represent more than architectural forms—they embody cultural, historical, and spiritual narratives that converge in the concept of divine power. Their spiral arrangement suggests a rhythmic cycle, reflecting how religious structures and ideologies repeat and evolve over time, influencing societies across generations.

Cycling offers a minimalist yet deeply philosophical exploration of faith, tradition, and the structures that shape belief. Its simplicity belies a complex narrative, encouraging viewers to reflect on their relationship with religion and its enduring presence in the human experience.

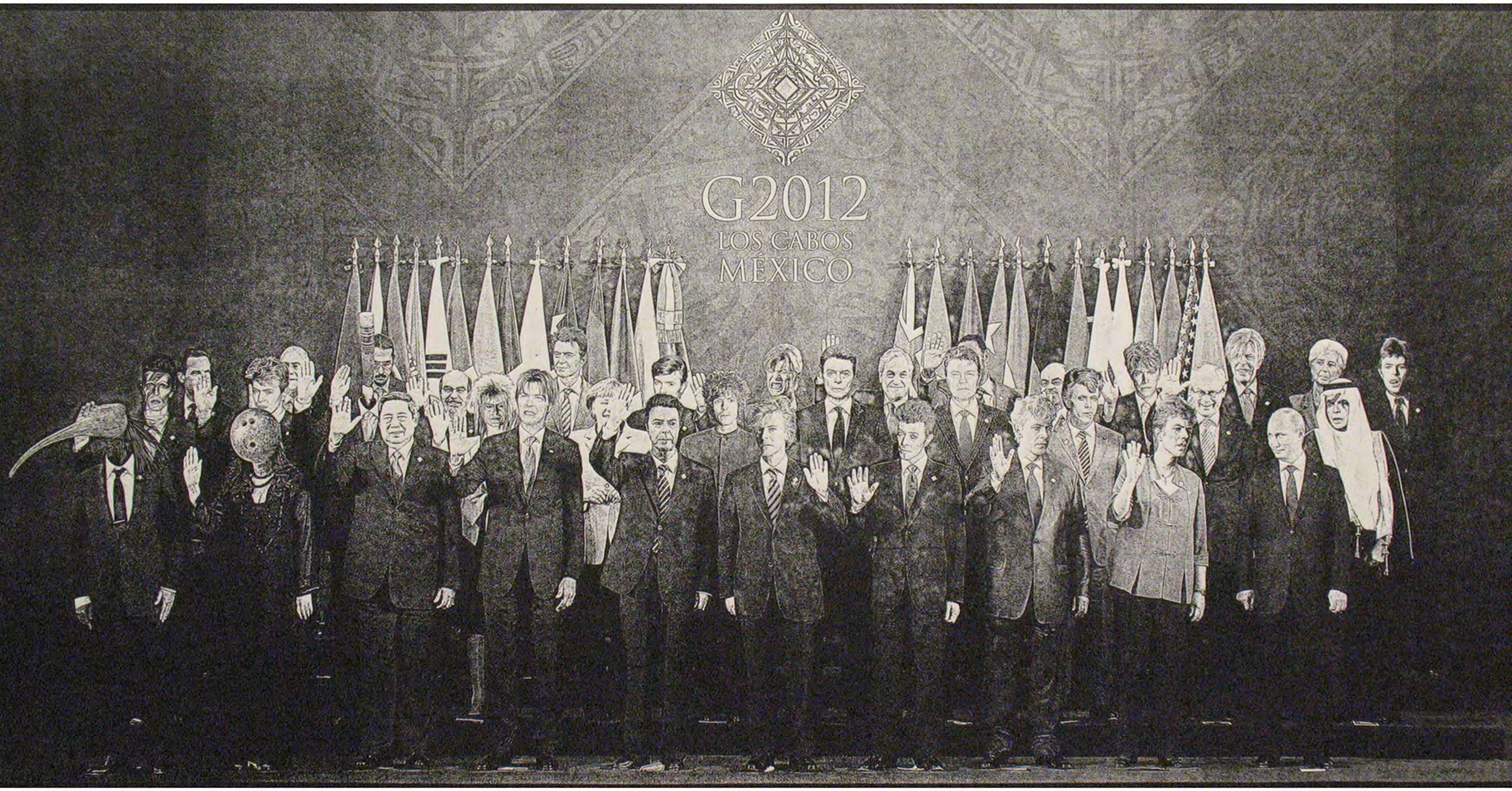


2014. Governing: 30”X24” Embossing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Governing explores the symbolism of power and authority through an eclectic juxtaposition of historical and cultural artifacts. The piece features a collection of headwear traditionally worn by Ottoman sultans, alongside iconic elements of popular culture, such as Michael Jackson’s shoes and Charlie Chaplin’s bowler hat.

The Ottoman kavuks, historically associated with imperial authority and governance, serve as a reference to traditional systems of power and their enduring visual legacy. By contrasting these kavuks with globally recognized symbols of entertainment and charisma, the artist examines the evolving nature of leadership and influence. Michael Jackson’s shoes, embodying performance and mass appeal, and Charlie Chaplin’s hat, representing satire and social critique, highlight the shifting dynamics between cultural authority and traditional governance.

Through this interplay of past and present, Governing invites viewers to reflect on how symbols of power adapt to societal changes, questioning the permanence and perception of authority.



2014. The Man Who Sold The World: 42”x22” Laser engraved relief printmaking

Serhat Tanyolacar’s The Man Who Sold The World offers a biting critique of contemporary global politics by reimagining the 2012 G20 Summit group photo. In this piece, the faces of 20 world leaders are replaced with various iconic personas of David Bowie, transforming the image into a satirical commentary on the performative and transactional nature of governance.

While Bowie’s fluid identities symbolize artistic reinvention, their juxtaposition with political figures underscores the facade of leadership. The title, borrowed from Bowie’s famous song, alludes to the literal and metaphorical "selling of the world" by these leaders—not as creators, but as figures complicit in environmental degradation, economic exploitation, and social inequities.

Tanyolacar’s work highlights the hypocrisy embedded in global leadership, where decisions often prioritize power and profit over collective welfare. By merging pop culture’s theatricality with the gravitas of international politics, the piece critiques how political systems commodify the world, obscuring justice and accountability in favor of spectacle and self-interest.



2014. Atlas' Burden. 24"x32" Embossing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Serhat Tanyolacar's Atlas' Burden reimagines the mythological figure of Atlas in a deeply symbolic and cinematic context. In this piece, Atlas no longer carries the globe but a colossal turtle, representing an isolated island-America. Beneath his feet, toy soldiers from various eras, including Janissary Ottoman soldiers, are crushed under his weight, critiquing the cycles of militarism and the oppressive legacy of armed conflict.

Notably, Atlas' face is a direct homage to Rutger Hauer's iconic soliloquy moment from the climactic scene of Blade Runner. This cinematic reference imbues the piece with a haunting sense of existential reflection, evoking questions of mortality, resilience, and the fleeting nature of human endeavors. By merging this moment of emotional vulnerability with the mythic strength of Atlas, Tanyolacar creates a layered narrative about the burdens of history and power. In a personal act of defiance, Tanyolacar subtly superimposes his own form onto Atlas, transforming the mythic figure into a vessel for his protest against militarism and compulsory military service in Turkey. The juxtaposition of the crushing soldiers beneath Atlas' feet with the turtle's symbolism of longevity and perseverance highlights the tension between destruction and endurance.

Through its melding of mythology, cinema, and sociopolitical commentary, Atlas' Burden challenges viewers to confront the weight of historical cycles, the costs of militarism, and the role of the individual in bearing and resisting these forces. The evocative use of Rutger Hauer's expression adds a deeply human dimension to the work, urging reflection on the personal and collective burdens we carry.

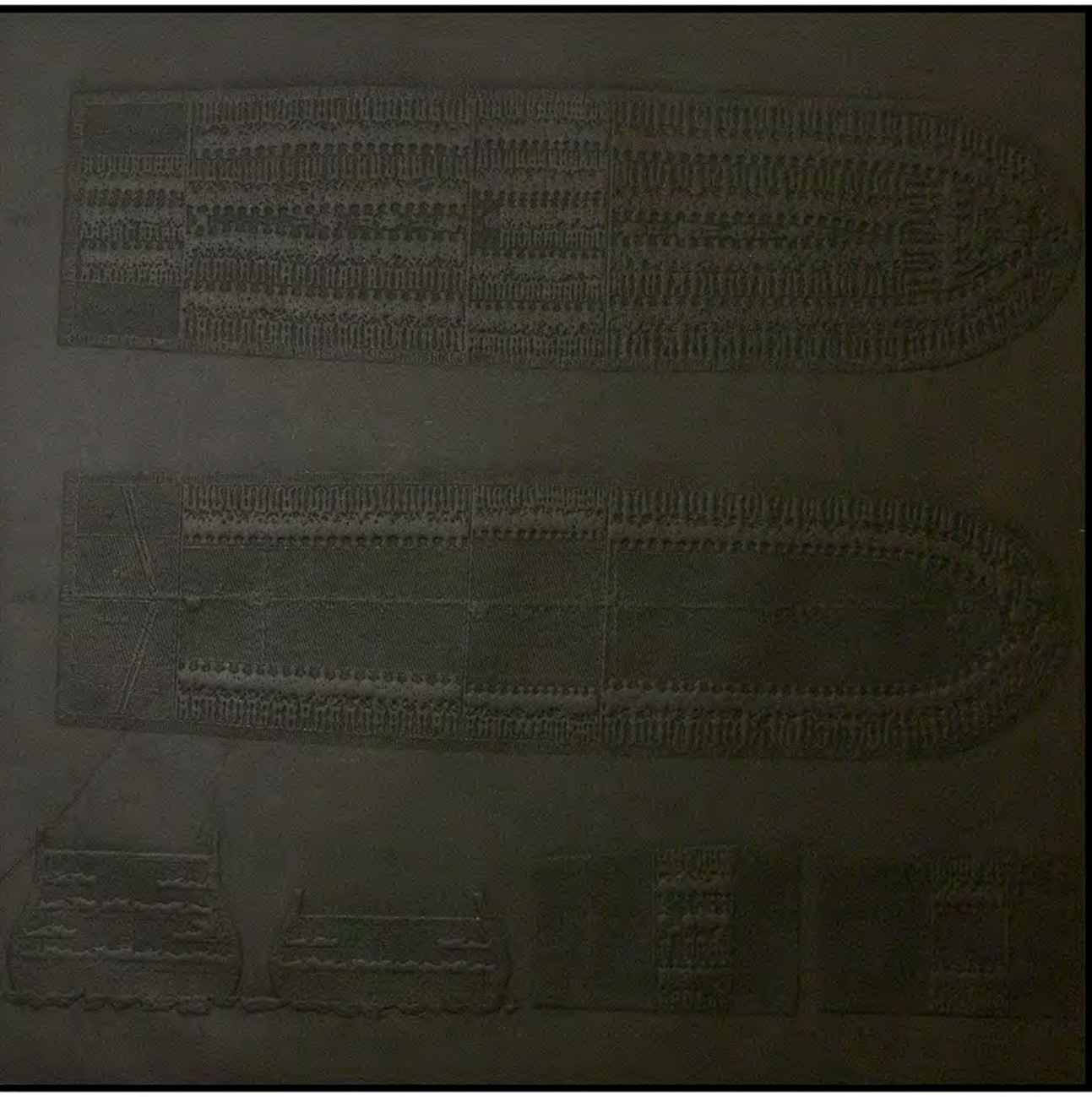


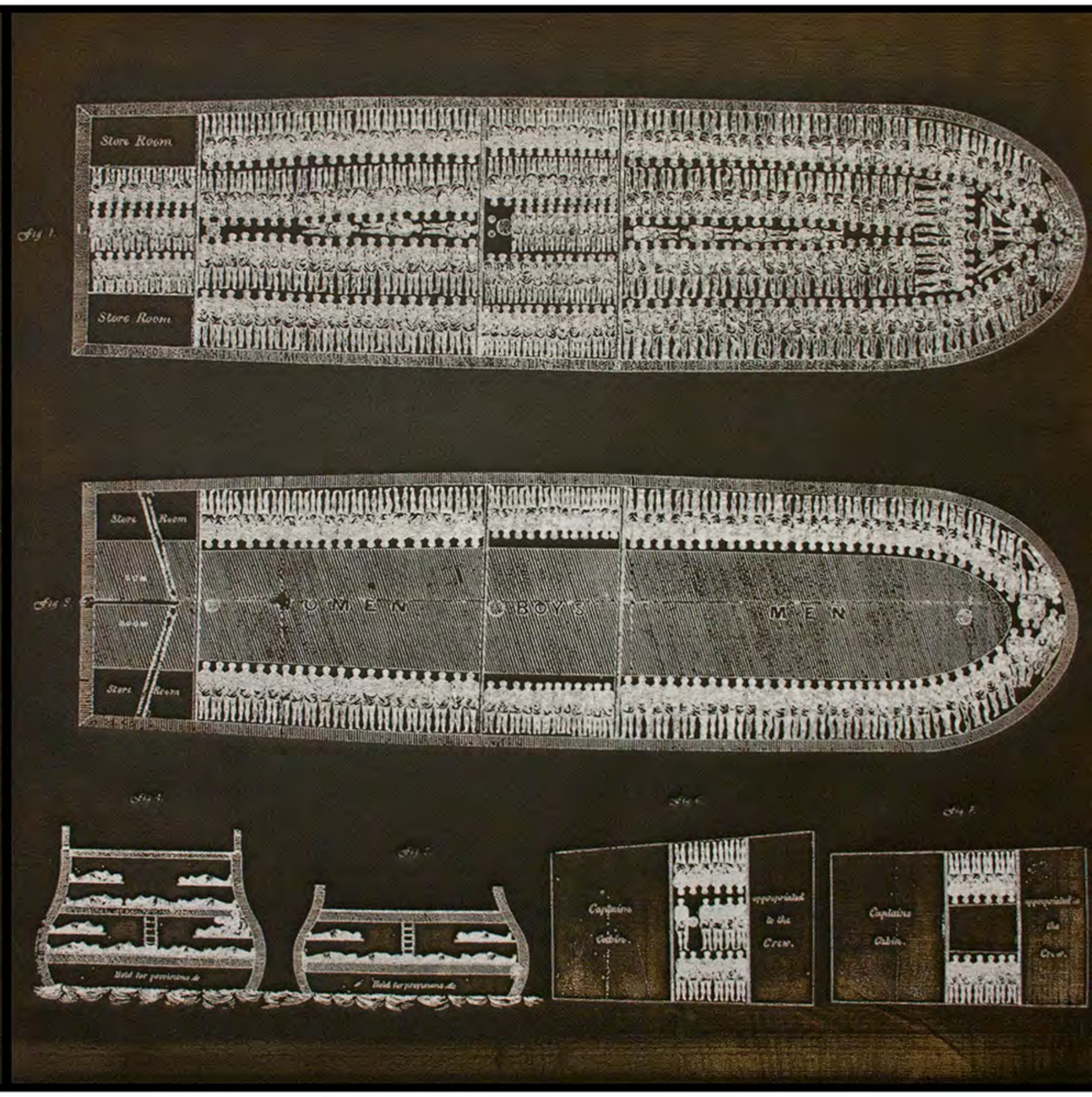
2014. May 1st is Always The Same: 16”X10” Laser engraved relief printmaking, embossing.

In May 1st is Always the Same, Serhat Tanyolacar juxtaposes historical tragedy, political critique, and surrealism to address the enduring struggles for freedom and justice in Turkey. The scene portrays Turkish citizens fleeing the 1977 Taksim Square Massacre in Istanbul, where state forces violently suppressed a May Day demonstration. At the center of this chaos, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is depicted playing a violin, echoing Nero's infamous indifference as Rome burned—a symbol of political apathy and self-interest amidst national suffering.

Adding to the surreal tone, Mickey Mouse appears casting a spell, bridging the scene between the fantastical and the tragic, while Van Gogh’s iconic room forms the backdrop, symbolizing isolation and a distorted sense of comfort in times of crisis. The interplay of these elements critiques both systemic oppression and society’s detachment from recurring patterns of violence.

Tanyolacar's work challenges viewers to reflect on the cyclical nature of human suffering and political failure.





2014. Invisible Black 14”x10” Embossing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Black is not White confronts the erasure of black pain through a stark visual metaphor. The work features the diagram of a slave ship, printed twice but presented in contrasting forms. The first rendition, an embossing, is nearly invisible, perceptible only under specific lighting conditions, representing the silenced or overlooked history of black suffering. The second print contrasts sharply, rendered in white ink on a black-inked surface, forcing the viewer to confront the image’s haunting reality.

This juxtaposition critiques the whitewashing of historical atrocities, wherein systemic oppression and trauma are rendered invisible to mainstream narratives. The work challenges viewers to acknowledge the ways in which society selectively remembers, highlighting the layers of denial and complicity surrounding black history. Black is not White serves as both a memorial and a demand for recognition, exposing the fragility and urgency of confronting historical and contemporary injustices with clarity and accountability.

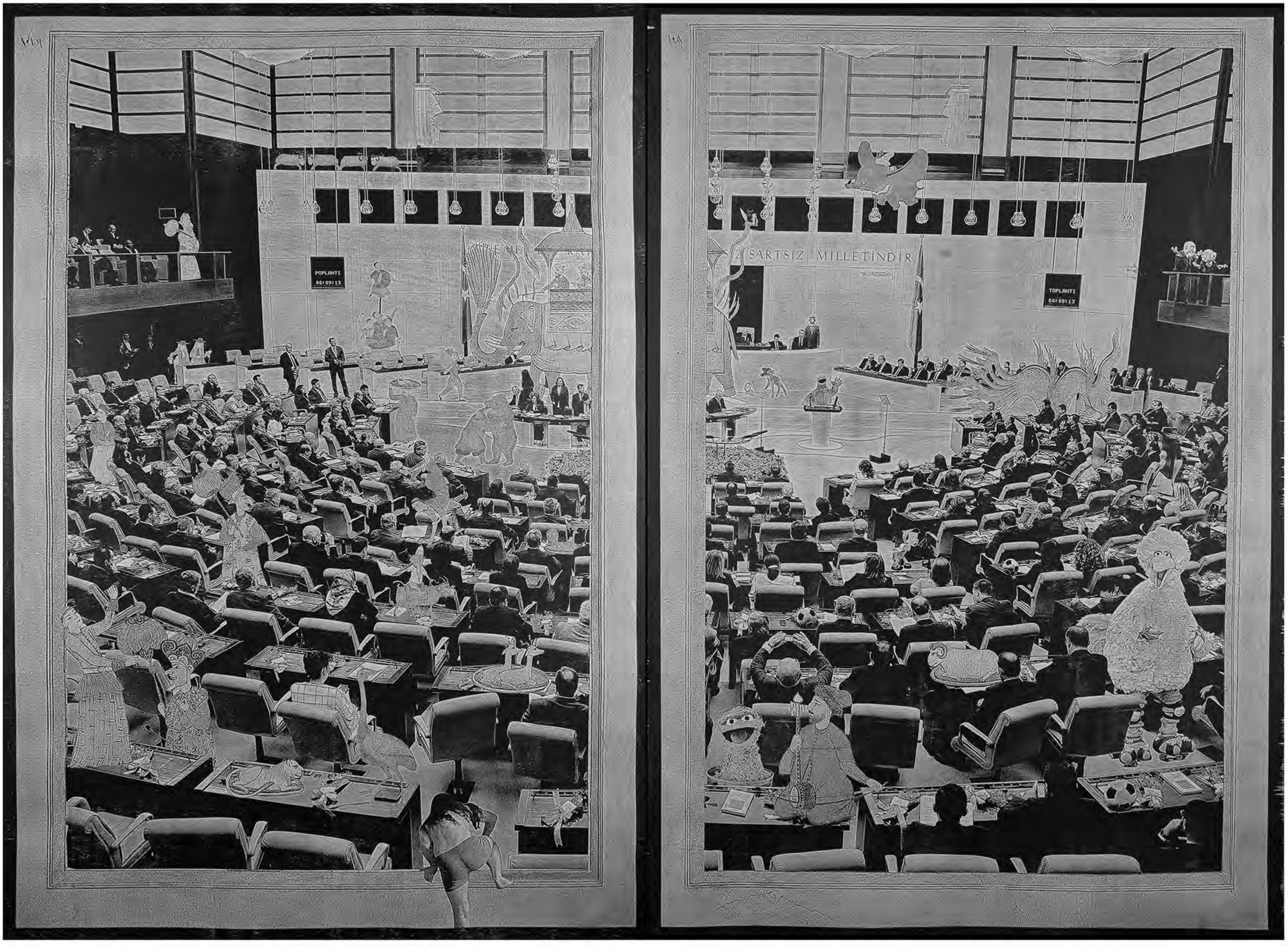




2024. Sername (page 4-Hand painted, laser engraved relief printmaking, page 8): 42”x28” x2 from unfinished miniature printmaking book. Drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking and embossing.

Page 4: The page presents a layered critique of power, intertwining references from Goya’s The Colossus, Turkey’s Külliye (Presidential Complex), The Last Emperor, and Robocop’s ED-209. The towering Colossus, drawn from Goya’s symbol of oppression and societal turmoil, looms over the scene as a specter of historical authoritarianism, now tied to the Külliye’s grandiose architecture. This juxtaposition highlights the continuity of oppressive structures across time, where past and present authoritarian systems rely on monumental imagery to project dominance. Meanwhile, the vibrant imperial processions, inspired by The Last Emperor, evoke ceremonial pageantry, emphasizing the theatricality of power and how it is staged to legitimize authority.

Page 8: This panel reimagines the symbolic deer hunt as a chaotic battle, reflecting the loss of innocence through the lens of contemporary pop culture. The juxtaposition of traditional hunting scenes with modern iconography critiques the exploitation of cultural heritage and identity. Some of the known references: Dear Hunter(Robert Deniro, General Patton, Sarah Palin, Dick Cheney.



2015. Sername (page 8&9&10): 42”x28” x2 from unfinished miniature printmaking book. Drawing, laser engraved relief printmaking and embossing. - Sername is part of an unfinished miniature printmaking book by Serhat Tanyolacar, blending satire, cultural critique, and surrealism into a compelling visual narrative.

Page 9 & 10: These panels depict a fantastical invasion of the Turkish Parliament by characters from popular culture, including Muppet Show puppets, Eastern miniature figures, and cartoon icons. Cookie Monster replaces—or becomes—the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a satirical critique of political authority and absurdity. The artist inserts himself into the scene, breaking the fourth wall and highlighting the relationship between art, society, and governance. The whimsical elements challenge the sanctity of political spaces while exposing the surreal underpinnings of real-world power structures.



2014. To The Assembly: 36”X24” Embossing, laser engraved relief printmaking.

Serhat Tanyolacar’s To The Assembly presents a striking visual allegory of the artist’s role as both observer and protector. Depicted as a gargoyle, the artist soars above the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), a setting symbolizing the epicenter of political authority. The gargoyle, traditionally seen as a guardian warding off evil, here embodies the artist’s self-assigned mission to protect society from governmental overreach and encroachments on civil liberties.

The composition juxtaposes the rigid, imposing architecture of the TBMM with the fluid, almost spectral form of the artist-gargoyle. This contrast underscores the tension between institutional power and the transformative force of art. The gargoyle’s watchful posture conveys both vigilance and defiance, a reminder of the artist’s enduring commitment to critique and safeguard societal values.

To The Assembly encapsulates the power of art as a vehicle for resistance, reflection, and the preservation of collective conscience. Its imagery is both a critique of authoritarianism and a call to recognize the artist’s essential role in safeguarding democratic ideals.



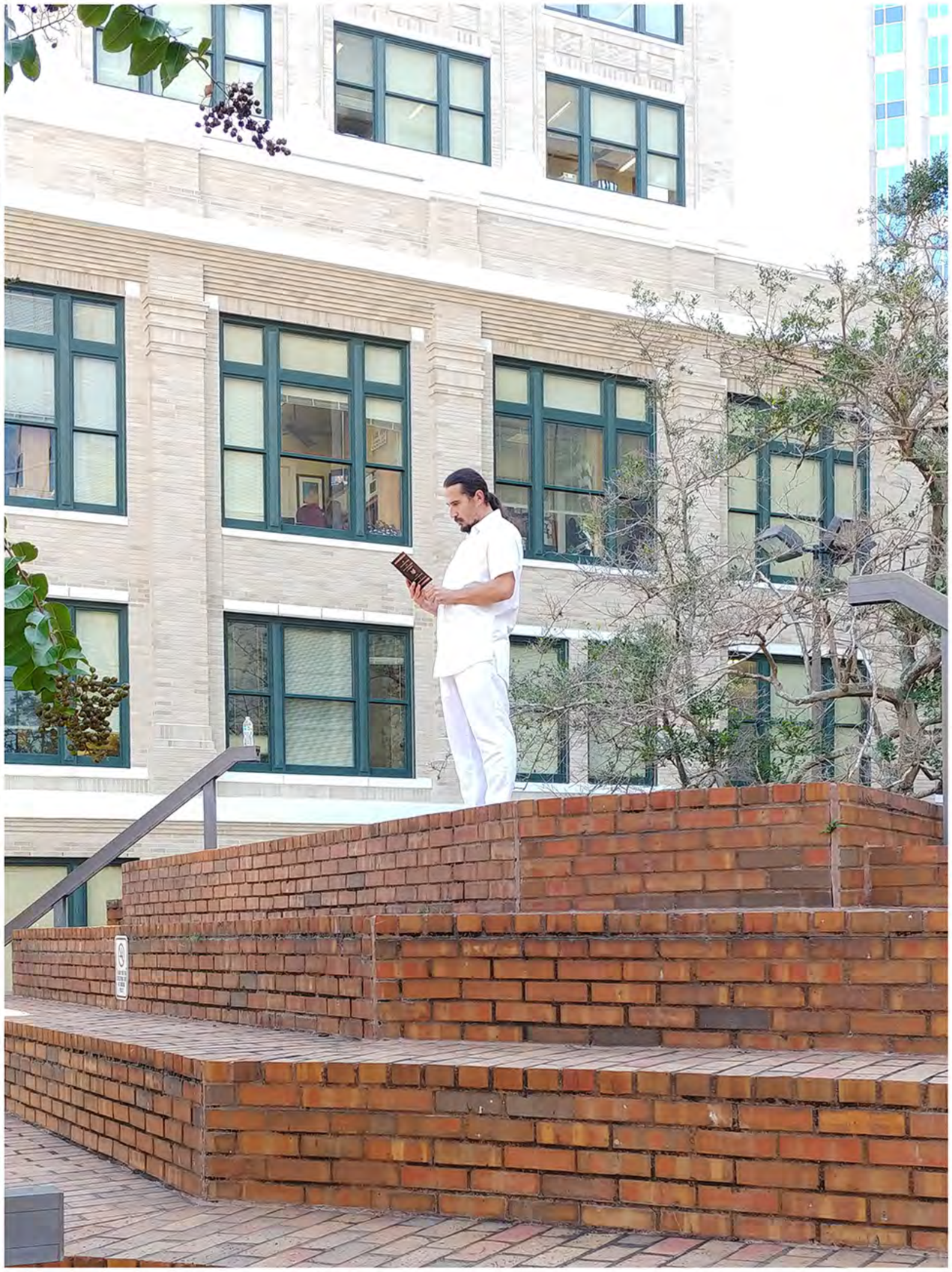
2023. Letters to The Ocean. Site-specific Public Performance.

During the street protests that raged in Turkey from 2013 to 2014, Serhat Tanyolacar staged a rather risky public performance named "Arzuhalci" or "Public Scribe." In this thought-provoking act, Tanyolacar embodied the role of a scribe, transcribing petitions directly from the Turkish public to the Turkish Government. The performance served as a powerful expression of political dissent and a call for change.

As his continuation, in "Letters to the Ocean," Tanyolacar engages in the act of writing and recording letters and poems from the audience to the vast expanse of the ocean. These letters encapsulate the hopes and desires of those who contribute, effectively transforming the performance into a symbolic wish tree. This poetic performance underscores humanity's deep connection to the natural world, emphasizing our place within it and the potential for a positive and hopeful life, even in the face of adversity in our uncontrollable surroundings. Letters, in this context, bridge the gap between people and nature, fostering a sense of intimacy and connection.

Tanyolacar is all set to commence "Letters to The Ocean" at Cape Disappointment North Head Lighthouse on December 14th, 2023 at 2 pm, and journey north along the captivating Pacific coastline. He will carry with him a mobile yet stationary letter-writing setup, complete with two chairs, a table, and a typewriter. These props will be transported using a cart. Tanyolacar will employ two distinct types of typewriters to craft letters and poems on behalf of the public, adding an element of spontaneity and unpredictability as he adapts to the ever-changing weather conditions that are sure to infuse the performance with an organic and playful dimension. This performance promises to be a beautiful and evocative exploration of the relationship between humanity and the natural world.





2019. Backwards. Site-specific Public Performance.

The performance piece "Backwards" is a stark response to the escalating racial violence, white nationalism, and mass gun violence in the United States. Referencing critical moments such as the 2019 mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, the Charleston church massacre, and the 2017 Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally, the piece critiques systemic neglect and the failure of leadership to unequivocally condemn such acts. Statements, including those by the President following these tragedies, often fell short of addressing the root causes, reflecting a troubling erosion of accountability and justice.

Staged in downtown Tampa, across from the courthouse, the artist read the U.S. Constitution backwards for 3 hours and 12 minutes, symbolizing the reversal of democratic ideals. Notably, the artist purposefully skipped the Second Amendment, a deliberate critique of its role in perpetuating gun violence and the prioritization of rights over lives. The omission highlights how systemic inaction enables cycles of violence, challenging viewers to confront their complicity and demand accountability.

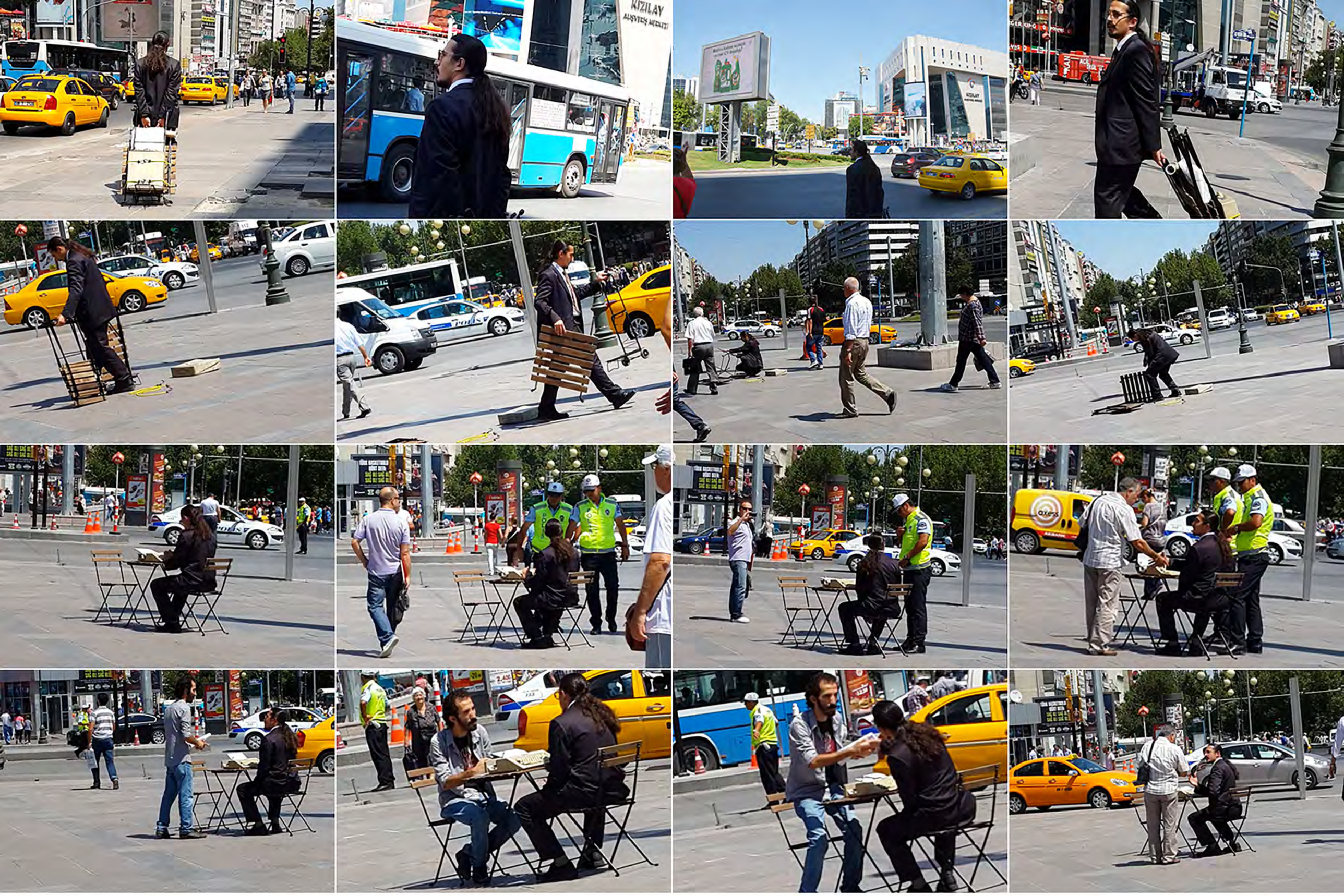


2015. Elveda (Farewell): Public Performance and Government Censorship in Turkiye

The "Farewell" performance series in 2015 marked a pivotal moment in Serhat Tanyolacar's career as a public performance artist and political activist. From March 10th to 17th, Tanyolacar courageously explored socio-political themes, shedding light on pressing issues in Ankara and Turkey at large. These performances served as powerful acts of resistance and provocation, urging reflection on identity, authoritarianism, and the tension between cultural heritage and modern governance.

Rooted in his artistic journey in the United States, Tanyolacar assumed the role of the "Oriental other" to interrogate the existence of contemporary Ottoman identity, particularly its association with neo-Ottomanism. This exploration delved into the complexities of intertwining Oriental and Ottoman identities within the Republic of Turkey and their perception in Western society. More than performances, these interventions created spaces for dialogue, fostering engagement with cultural otherness in dynamic and unpredictable settings. Central to the "Farewell" series was Tanyolacar's symbolic attire—a golden brocade Ottoman kaftan meticulously crafted from historical Ottoman references. This garment embodied the intricate intersections of cultural and national identity, portraying the lived experience of a privileged white Turk within a modern nation-state. By visually embodying this dichotomy, Tanyolacar invited viewers to question and reflect on the constructs of identity, privilege, and assimilation.

The apex of this series occurred on March 17, 2015, when Turkish authorities forcibly stopped a performance near the Turkish Presidential Palace. Special Law Enforcement Officers, acting under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's orders, deleted captioned images and video documentation of the event. This act of censorship underscored Tanyolacar's critique of neo-Ottoman assimilation and the Oriental Turk stereotype.

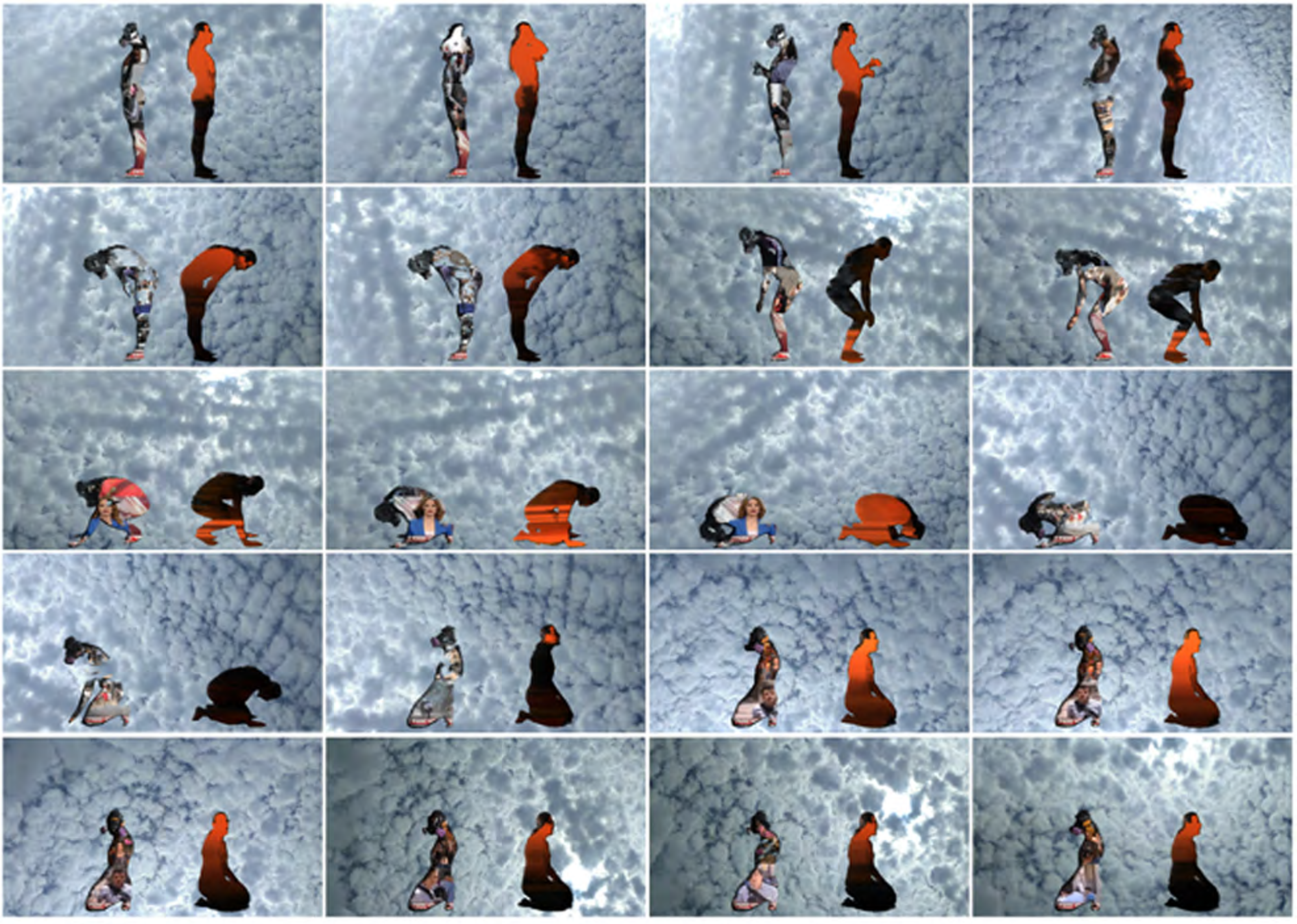


2013. Arzuhalci (Public Scribe). Public Intervention. Seating arrangement, typewriter, recording device, 1980s formal dress, and eyeglasses.

Arzuhalci" or Public Scribe, was enacted in Ankara during the Gezi protests of 2013. The main purpose of this project was to create a dialogue between the citizens of Turkey and the Turkish Parliament, which stands as the center of authority in the country. Yet, beneath this official intention lay a deeper motivation – to confront, deal with, and critique the state and the authoritarian police government.

In this performance, the awareness of it likely being halted by the authorities was ever-present. Nevertheless, the artist pushed forward, striving to engage in dialogues with those in power and expose their flaws and corruption.

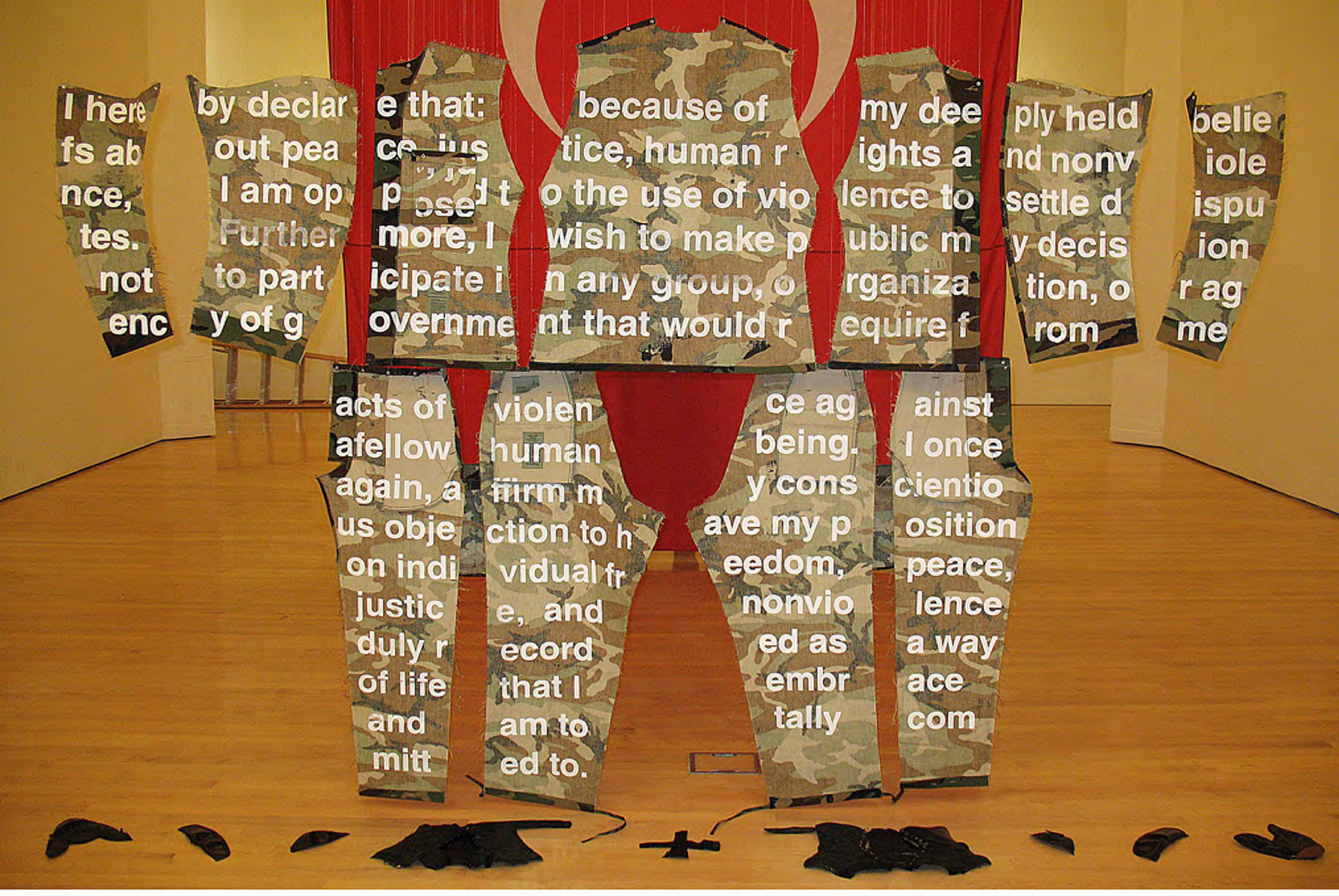
In a moment that became a turning point, the peaceful performance was abruptly stopped in Kizilay Square as threats of arrest were issued by officers from the Political Investigation Bureau. However, the artist's quick thinking allowed them to evade arrest. In a clever move, the entire conversation between the artist and the officers had been recorded, thanks to a hidden camera discreetly positioned underneath the typewriter. Upon concluding the performance, a folder containing petitions from Turkish citizens was compiled and sent to the office of Mr. Cemil Çiçek, who was serving as the President of The Grand National Assembly of Turkey at the time.



2014. 4 minutes and 20 seconds of Praying, 4 minutes and 20 seconds at US 90 - after Gezi Park: Video Performance.

In the video, Serhat Tanyolacar engages in an act of prayer, specifically Salah, lasting for precisely 4 minutes and 20 seconds. During this spiritual act, the street violence videos from the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey are projected and reflected within his body, creating a powerful juxtaposition of faith and the harsh realities of the world.

The choice of imagery, particularly the rolling clouds, symbolizes a sense of peace that Turkey has often struggled to attain, especially in the context of its progressive-minded citizens. This performance serves as a visual and emotional representation of the tension between faith, peace, and the unsettling social and political backdrop within which it unfolds. Through this art form, the artist successfully conveys a complex narrative that invites viewers to reflect on the intersections of spirituality and social upheaval.



2011. Denationalization. Installation: Screen-printed anti militarist manifesto on BDU (battle dress uniform), disassembled military attires, Turkish flag.

Serhat Tanyolacar's Denationalization Project offers a striking critique of militarism, national identity, and the tension between personal experience and state-imposed ideologies. By deconstructing military uniforms—symbols of compliance and state authority—the work becomes an act of defiance against Turkey's mandatory military service. The disassembled and reconstructed uniforms embody a duality: one is stiffened into a rigid, freestanding sculpture, representing the unyielding nature of militaristic ideology, while the other is fragmented, symbolizing resistance and personal agency.

What sets this work apart is its infusion of deeply personal elements. Tanyolacar overlays the uniforms with screen-printed images of cherished memories from his life in Turkey, humanizing these symbols of institutional control. These vibrant, intimate moments contrast sharply with the cold, authoritarian connotations of military attire, illustrating how personal identity can disrupt oppressive narratives. This tension between the personal and the political creates a powerful visual and conceptual dialogue.

The backdrop of a semi-transparent Turkish flag, coupled with projected images of political leaders from Atatürk to the present, contextualizes the work within Turkey's broader political history. This layering critiques the continuity of authoritarian structures while examining the state's role in shaping individual identity and freedom. The manifesto printed on the disassembled uniform further transforms the piece into a declaration of peace and autonomy, reclaiming these symbols as tools of resistance.

Tanyolacar's work transcends its immediate context by addressing universal themes of militarization, nationalism, and individual resilience. However, its heavy reliance on Turkish sociopolitical references may limit accessibility for those unfamiliar with its cultural and historical nuances. Despite this, its universal themes—resistance, autonomy, and the critique of authoritarianism—ensure its broader relevance.







2011. Mutual Dialogue, New York City. Public Intervention. Screen printed jubbahs, artist's voice in the National Anthem and Fatiha surah.

Mutual Dialogue unfolded between the Ground Zero site and the Park 51-Cordoba House. The primary objective of this performance was to foster mutual dialogues between the American Muslim community and the wider public.

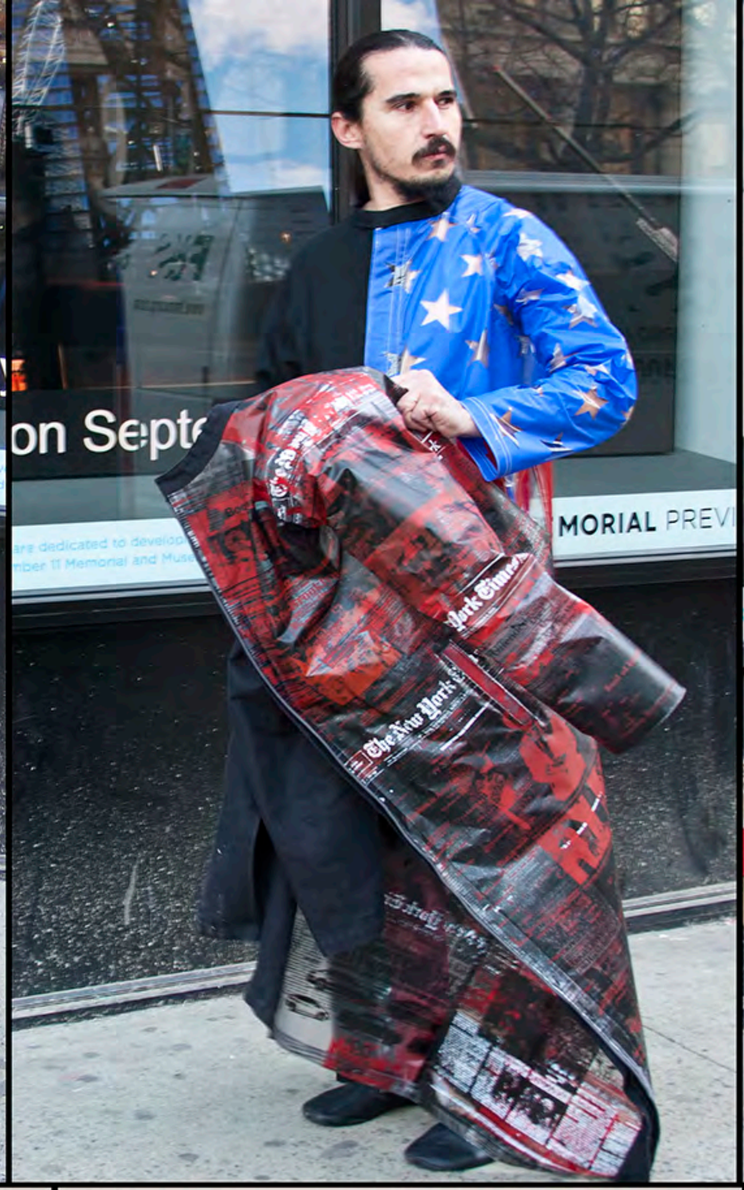
It's worth recalling that the general public had expressed opposition to the establishment of the Muslim community center, known as Park 51, located in Lower Manhattan. The performance aimed to raise awareness regarding the issues faced by the American Muslim community, with a particular focus on cultural stereotypes and prejudices.

The artist's attire for this performance was noteworthy. They had screen-printed 153 newspaper articles from The New York Times onto their performance garment, the jubbah. These articles revolved around the Park 51 issue, effectively encapsulating the broader public discourse. During the performance, the artist donned two distinct garments: one adorned with newspaper articles and another featuring the American flag.

Throughout the performance, the artist recited the National Anthem multiple times and concluded the act with a recitation of the first chapter of the Quran in front of the Ground Zero site at 1:00 pm. This recitation, known as Al-Fatiha, is a customary Islamic practice to honor the deceased and invoke peace upon them.


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2011 – My Left Arm, and The Women and The Children. Free-standing fabric sculpture.

Serhat Tanyolacar's My Left Arm, and The Women and The Children examines the far-reaching effects of militarism on families, particularly women and children. The sculpture, constructed from children's clothing donated by military families, a replica of an M-4 rifle, lingerie, and disassembled BDU (Battle Dress Uniform) patterns, critiques the human cost of war and its infiltration into domestic life. By cutting the BDU patterns into pieces and expanding them to increase the sculpture's scale, Tanyolacar emphasizes how militarism disproportionately impacts society beyond the battlefield.

The children's clothing represents innocence and vulnerability, juxtaposed against the M-4 rifle, a symbol of violence and destruction. Lingerie introduces a gendered narrative, reflecting the intimate and societal burdens placed on women in militarized cultures. The act of deconstructing and reassembling the BDU patterns symbolizes the fragmentation and distortion of lives affected by conflict, with the enlargement of the sculpture amplifying the pervasive nature of military influence.

This work powerfully critiques how war disrupts familial roles, turning personal and domestic spaces into extensions of the battlefield. The use of personal, repurposed materials transforms these objects into universal symbols, underscoring the resilience of those indirectly caught in cycles of war.

Through My Left Arm, and The Women and The Children, Tanyolacar creates a multidimensional narrative that challenges viewers to reflect on the sacrifices of marginalized groups, the cost of militarism, and the societal structures that sustain cycles of violence and oppression.





2011. Kiss, CUNY, New York City. Screen printed jubbahs.

Serhat Tanyolacar's Kiss reimagines Auguste Rodin's iconic sculpture as a commentary on the fraught relationship between American and Muslim identities in the aftermath of 9/11. Using repurposed jubbahs from his Mutual Dialogue performance, Tanyolacar's fabric sculpture addresses the bias, prejudice, and alienation faced by Muslims and Middle Eastern migrants in America following the attacks.

Rodin's The Kiss (1882), inspired by Dante's Divine Comedy, depicts the tragic love story of Paolo and Francesca, condemned to eternal suffering for their forbidden embrace. Tanyolacar draws a parallel between this narrative of love punished and the collective scapegoating of Muslim communities post-9/11. The suspicion, hatred, and systemic discrimination Muslims endured reflect the societal judgment that continues to define their relationship with American culture.

Tanyolacar's fabric sculpture transforms Rodin's marble into a layered, textured composition, employing jubbahs—a garment symbolic of Muslim identity—adorned with prints of political and cultural headlines from the post-9/11 era. The bold red and blue tones evoke both American national identity and the fiery cultural tensions that emerged. The fabric material, soft and malleable, contrasts with Rodin's rigid marble, symbolizing the fragility of cultural reconciliation and the challenges of healing after division.

This adaptation underscores the tragedy of bias and the resilience of marginalized communities. Just as Paolo and Francesca suffered eternal punishment for their love, Muslims and Middle Eastern migrants have been condemned by prejudice, denied understanding, and subjected to fear-based narratives in America. However, Kiss is not without hope. Tanyolacar's embrace gestures toward unity, encouraging empathy and mutual understanding between cultures.

Through this piece, Tanyolacar connects timeless themes of love and condemnation with contemporary struggles for acceptance and dialogue. His work stands as a testament to art's ability to confront prejudice and inspire social change.

















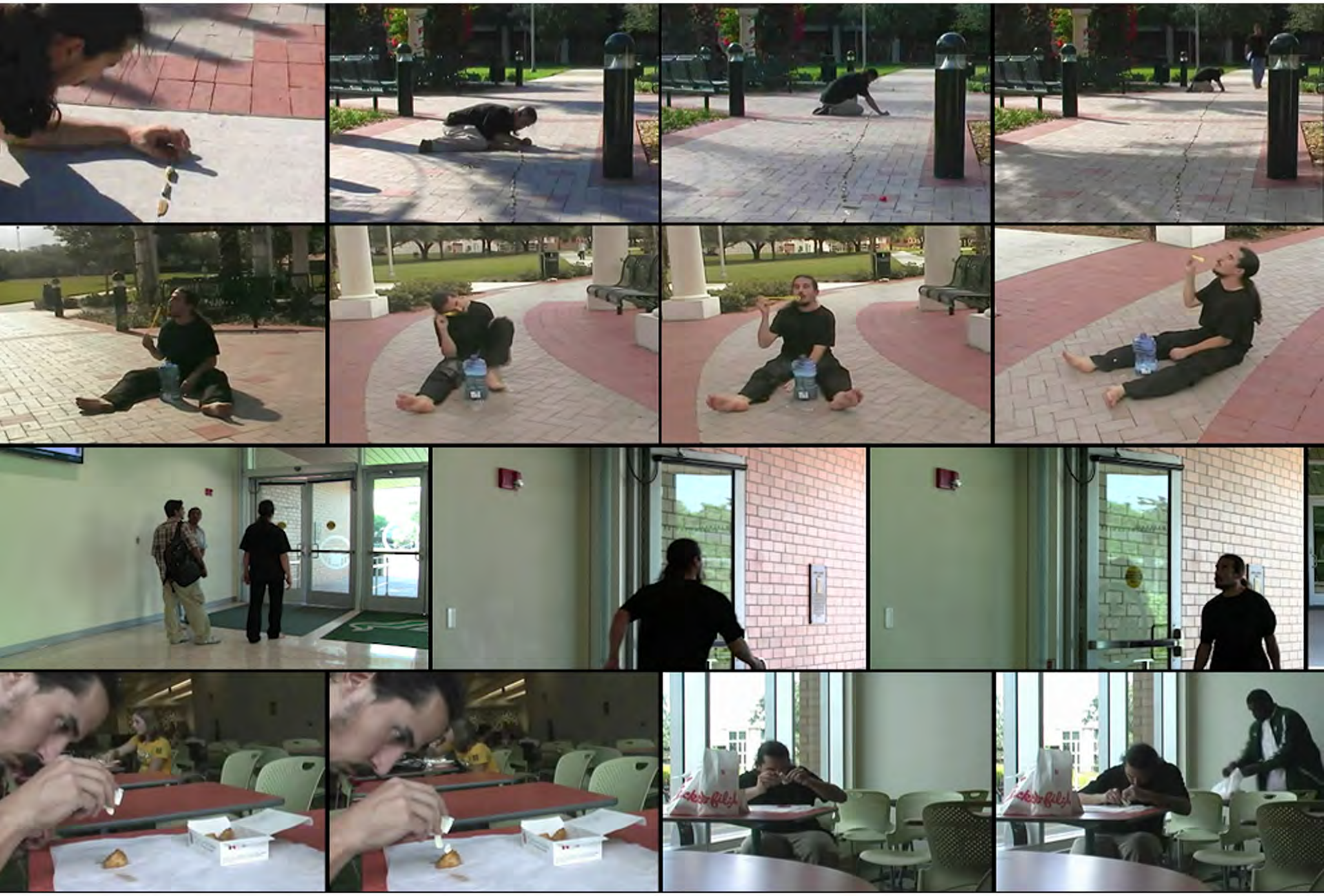
2010. In Their Shoes. Public Intervention. Washington D.C. Stiffened robe with screen printed imagery of the racist history of America. Tar, vinyl, cyanoacrylate, fabric.

On October 26th, 2010, at 12:54 pm, Serhat Tanyolacar orchestrated a thought-provoking one-person performance art piece entitled "In Their Shoes," right in front of The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This remarkable piece served a dual purpose: to pay tribute to Officer Stephen Tyrone Johns and to spotlight the increasing prevalence of organized racism and prejudice in the United States of America.

During the performance of "In Their Shoes," Tanyolacar personally interacted with the audience, embodying an anti-ideology symbolized by a modified historical emblem. For this performance, he donned a custom-designed, rigid costume: a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) outfit. However, this was not a celebration of the KKK but a powerful critique. Prior to sewing the costume, Tanyolacar screen printed 218 distinct newspaper images onto the fabric, employing tar as an ink substitute. These images represented the stark reality of racist and prejudiced activities throughout history, including devastating events like the Tulsa Race Riot on May 31, 1921, and the tragic shooting at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on June 10, 2009. Notably, the hood of the KKK costume was semi-transparent vinyl, allowing the audience a partial view of what lay beneath.

The crux of this anti-ideology performance lay in the physical manifestation of Tanyolacar's actions as he retraced the path once taken by James Wenneker von Brunn, a white supremacist and Holocaust denier, who took the life of Stephen Tyrone Johns, the Holocaust Museum's security guard. Tanyolacar's symbolic journey served as a powerful commentary on the growing presence of racism and prejudice in the United States.

By utilizing the medium of performance art, Serhat Tanyolacar confronted the most pressing societal issues head-on, delivering a poignant message aimed at honoring the past and stimulating dialogue about the present and future.



2009 – 2010: Autism Interventions.

These performances explored themes of identity, inclusion, and isolation in the daily life of an individual with autism. Inspired by and modeled after my son, who has classic autistic disorder, these works reflected the unique experiences of autistic individuals through a deeply personal lens.

Central to these performances were representations of stimming behaviors, actions often observed in individuals with autism as a form of self-regulation or sensory engagement. Activities such as counting grass, blowing bubbles, sifting and lining up woodchips, sensing fractions or particles, and rubbing clothes or skin were integral elements of the performances. These repetitive motions captured the sensory-driven and introspective world of autism, offering viewers a glimpse into the lived experiences of autistic individuals.

Performed in public spaces, these interventions highlighted the social isolation and prejudices faced by autistic individuals. By situating the performances in communal areas, I aimed to challenge the public's preconceived notions about autism, forcing an interaction between the "autistic self" and society. The goal was to confront societal biases and foster a dialogue about inclusion, acceptance, and understanding of neurodiversity.