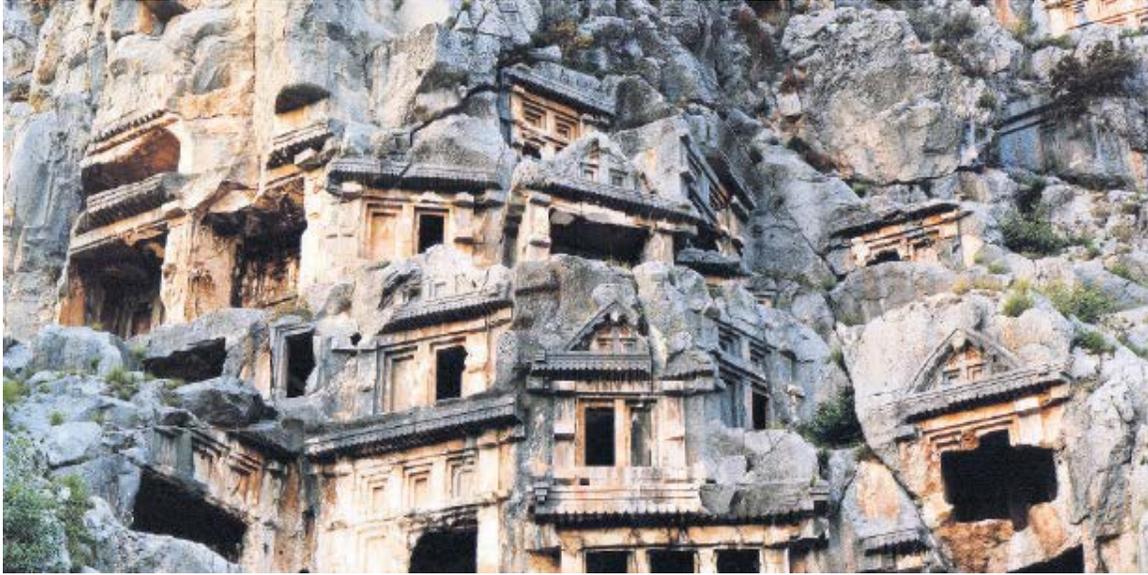


TODAYS ZAMAN

Borusan Contemporary delves into water as a shared resource



"Domingo Milella, Myra, Turkey"

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The second in a series of exhibitions titled "Common Ground: Earth, Water, Air – Selections From the Borusan Contemporary Art Collection," is currently on view at Borusan Contemporary office-museum in İstanbul's Sarıyer district.

The works are installed in the public spaces and offices of Borusan Holding at Perili Köşk, which is a historical monument in the Rumeli Hisarı neighbourhood of İstanbul.

"In this series I am bringing together artworks from the collection that are selected on the basis of a shared concern of the concepts of three 'common grounds' including earth, water and air ... [in accordance with] the unique and site-specific paradigm of Borusan Contemporary," says Nazlı Gürlek, guest curator of the collection at Borusan Contemporary, in an interview with Sunday's Zaman.

“The Borusan collection started to be acquired around the 1990s and initially most of the purchases were paintings. Then it changed over in time and in recent years they have mostly been interested in new media works, such as computer-based artwork, that require some sort of engineering. There are much less paintings than there were before and there are also a significant number of photographs,” she says while elaborating on the structure of the collection based on the medium of the artworks.

“When I first started to do research in the collection there were things that immediately caught my eye. When we approach it thematically, there were some very obvious choices. That's why I decided to put on a series of exhibitions from a thematic perspective. As far as I see, there are works about soil, not so much about agriculture but rather construction, on the built environment. Also there are many series of photographs looking at various parts of the earth from a birds-eye perspective. Other than the earth, there were many works related to water, and also to air. This is why the name of the exhibition series is ‘Common Ground: Earth, Water, Air’,” Gürlek further notes.

“Common Ground: Water” proposes to engage with various representations of water and a series of worldly matters related to water, as a way to engage with contemporary art and the world. “The universally shared resources of earth, water and air are issues whose management bears importance to our life on Earth with respect to concerns such as equality and sustainability. I tried to create a bridge between one of Turkey's largest industrial corporations -- Borusan Holding's industrial activities and its collecting activities in the contemporary art field. This specific exhibition can push us to reflect on an industrial corporation's mission to increase our life qualities while preserving natural resources and building a sustainable future,” she also says, noting that the holding produced water pipes at the beginning of its activities.

“On the other hand, my profession is art, so what I say and invite people to think about is and will be in the field of art. So, ‘Common Ground: Water’ offers a large selection of artworks that refer to water in terms of either form or content, intending to provoke an esthetic reflection on these issues. The works include photographs, videos, neon and prints that relate to a wide range of natural contexts; from Kutluğ Ataman's noble representations of beautiful and romantic landscapes to Doming Milella's monuments from the past; from Edward Burtynsky and Chen Jiagang's industrial sites; to Serkan Taycan's different aspects of nature's emotional impact on the landscape; from Michael Kenna's calm and idyllic settings to David Drebin's stormy seascapes,” Gürlek explains.

There are different threads of thought inside the exhibition that arise from specific artworks' togetherness. “For instance, Marina Zurkow's ‘Elixir’ depicts an

apocalyptic sea landscape where a cut-crystal bottle moves toward the horizon like a buoy in motion in the ocean, reminiscent of a beacon bearing poisons, messages, genies. This imaginary landscape setting before our eyes a new horizon is followed by a large photographic triptych by Olaf Otto Becker, which was taken in Greenland where he pursued his ongoing interest in water in relationship with current ecological issues. This photograph documents a piece of land that holds a particular significance today as its ice is melting and the landscape is transformed daily due to climate change. These two unsettling yet astonishingly beautiful seascapes are brought together with 'Butterfly Valley,' a photograph by Massimo Vitali taking us back to our daily reality: reaching out to the mountains surrounding the valley as a romantic vision of the sublime power of nature, and in the foreground the daily tour boats rest, a reminder that the escape to nature is temporary," the curator says, adding that she believes that when seeing these three pieces in a row, it is inevitable for the viewer to start thinking about the Earth's ecological future in a certain way.

Apart from "Common Ground: Water," another exhibition titled "Overture: New Acquisitions from the Borusan Contemporary Art Collection" is also on view in the special exhibition galleries. Curated by Borusan Contemporary's Artistic Director Kathleen Forde, this show features works from artists including Jim Campbell, Ali Kazma, Serkan Özkaya, Jennifer Steinkamp, Universal Everything and Marina Zurkow. Both shows will be on view until March 22 at the Borusan Contemporary. For more information, visit www.borusancontemporary.com.