

Meriç Algün Ringborg

A hook or a tail

17 January - 23 February 2013

For her first solo-exhibition at Frutta, Algün Ringborg explores the manners one can move across borders. One way is the manner in which Algün Ringborg herself moved from Istanbul to Stockholm, entailing bureaucratic stamps, application forms and interviews, which ultimately might result in a lawful and legal residence within the EU. The other manner, of course, is to move illegally.

On this occasion the border is more specifically the river Meriç, or Evros or Maritsa, originating from Bulgaria, it acts as the border between Turkey and Greece and is given different names respectively. The river, partly being the namesake of the artist, is today one of the most frequently used locations for illegally entering the European Union. And that the artist shares her name with this river is coincidental, but nevertheless intriguing, and the river being the river Meriç is central to this exhibition.

Algün Ringborg presents on this occasion previous work that deals with the notion of migrating legally. The work *Becoming European*, 2012 for instance, shows by way of repetitious stamping the days and ways the Swedish Migration office tracked her becoming a European citizen all whilst *The Concise Book of Visa Application Forms*, 2009 a book containing all the visa application forms to all the countries in the world, lays available for whomever to flip through, essentially granting whoever is in possession of it access to every nation anywhere.

For this exhibition, Algün Ringborg, and particularly in response to the river, has created new pieces that concern the mark known as cedilla, as in the c of Meriç. In the artist's new context of Sweden, the ç is frequently confused or altered in letters from authoritative agencies such as banks, Universities and even the Migration office. Ranging from simply omitting the letter and making the name Meri to more advanced Meri% to replacing the ç with the html code as in Meriç the loss of the cedilla serves as a continuous reminder of 'originally' coming from somewhere else and of not fitting within the system. Moreover, a new sound piece plays numerous individuals saying Meriç with varied pronunciation, which simultaneously and confusingly is either the artists' name or the name of the river, or both – blurring the boundaries of the two and making central the name no matter what or whom it is attached to. The ç comes to act as the symbol, both literally and metaphorically, of being transboundary.

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Algün Ringborg also looks at the river itself, and by its simple image or topographical outline suggests the notions of crossing it in either direction. Taking its reference from Felix Gonzalez-Torres' "Untitled" which is an endless reproduction of an image of water, Algün Ringborg shows an image of the Meriç river in a similar manner. In *Untitled (Evros, Maritsa, Meriç)*, 2013 she hints at the different localities that surround this water and therefore the different political systems they exist within. Furthering this idea, in the work *Blue River Red Border*, 2013 two lines mark the bird's eye view of the river and the border. It was decided at the treaty of Lausanne how the border and river would coalesce, but as it meanders, the piece shows where the river flows naturally and where the treaty of Lausanne once decided that the border would run. Simultaneously presenting their similarities and differences shows places where they act as a unity and places where they diverge, and the fiction of the border, its made-upness from a political treaty, and the consequential inside and outside that the river marks is made apparent.

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