

Art in America

Exhibition Reviews: Banu Cennetoğlu,
SculptureCenter

March 2019

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levels, (2) her ranking on Artfacts.net, and (3) the British pound's value relative to the euro. Running alongside the pencil lines is a line of spray tan tracking the average of the three data points. If the rising and falling pencil lines suggest a vague complicity between self-monitoring and profit-oriented notions of achievement, the streak of orange-pink hints at the blandly monochrome picture that emerges when life is reduced to stats. It also conjures the flesh tones of an American president who has definitively left his greasy mark on the present era.

Commentators like to paint the Trump phenomenon as an aberration, but Spooner ties it directly to a prevailing cultural ethos in which efficiency, productivity, and personal achievement are vacuously lauded at the expense of social well-being. A sound piece, *He Wins Every Time, On Time, and Under Budget* (2018), features two overlapping audio tracks: one a recording of Ivanka Trump discussing her life as a businesswoman, and the other a recording of the labored breathing of a female dancer rehearsing while hampered by a cold. The dancer's pained exertions throw into relief the automaton-like fluency of Ivanka, who effortlessly regurgitates corporate-feminist platitudes ("performance and results are what's relevant"). In the context of the exhibition, Ivanka's performance seems to stand for a vision of existence—inherited, the title of the work implies, from Daddy—as sterile and toxic as the heavily chlorinated water in the self-circulating drinking fountain that Spooner has placed near the center of the main gallery. This sculptural work, *Murderous Public Drinking Fountain* (2018), metaphorizes, in turn, not only the machinelike tyranny of a totally self-managed and administered life but the poisoning of the commons engendered under deregulated corporate capitalism.

Scattered throughout the ground floor space are several plinths, some empty and others displaying curious arrangements: a pile of pears, photocopies of images of corporate office buildings, a cast-iron human ear atop a stack of papers printed with passages from a gestalt therapy book. In a gesture that seems aimed once again at exposing the ambiguities of the culture of health and hygiene, the plinths have been created from olive oil soap—an emblem of cleanliness that is also, according to the press release, "vulnerable to shrinkage, decay, and age spots."

The upstairs gallery features around two dozen small drawings of loosely sketched figures in poses culled from an exercise manual. The figures are mostly just an amalgam of limbs, their heads and torsos either furiously crossed out or left missing. Evoking body dysmorphia and a desire for anonymity, the images leave us dwelling on the feelings of inadequacy that fuel the self-improvement industry and impel us to sweat and self-monitor and self-shame and sweat, etc.

—David Markus

View of Cally Spooner's exhibition "SWEAT SHAME ETC," 2018–19, showing (on wall) *Self Tracking*, 2018, tanning mist and graphite, at the Swiss Institute.

BANU CENNETOĞLU

SculptureCenter

ON VIEW THROUGH MAR. 25

"There is no room for both the world and its double," Jean Baudrillard wrote in response to the explosion of digital documentation in the 1990s. Turkish artist Banu Cennetoğlu seems to test this assertion in her various projects. She often gathers large amounts of digital and analog data and explores how the resulting collections reflect or obscure personal and historical experiences. Her first solo exhibition in the United States features, for instance, an ongoing project in which she collects every newspaper in a country on a given day. To date, there have been six installments, comprising 142 elegant leather-bound volumes and representing countries in Europe and the Middle East. Leafing through the volumes, which sit on shelves in their

Banu Cennetoğlu: *1 January 1970–21 March 2018*, video, 128 hours, 22 minutes; at SculptureCenter.



EXHIBITION REVIEWS

ART IN AMERICA 101

Andrew Norman Wilson: *Map Making With Pinge*, 2019, ink on paper, 77½ by 59½ inches; at Document.

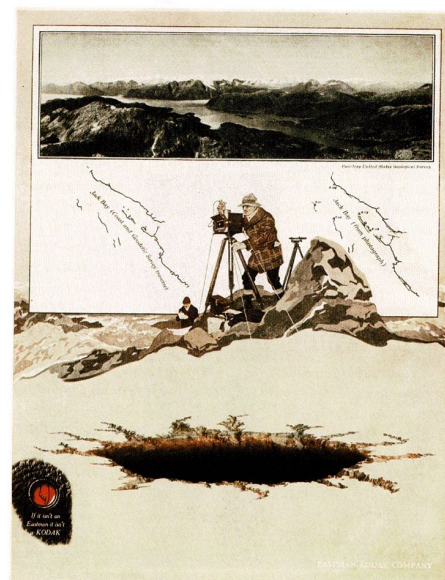
own reading room in the show, you get a sense of the way banal and monumental events take place side by side.

After a long stint working in New York as a fashion photographer and a two-year program in contemporary art at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, Cennetoglu moved back to Turkey in 2005. She founded BAS, an art space focused on artists' books, in Istanbul that year, and soon thereafter started her best-known project, *The List* (2006–). Since 1993, the Amsterdam-based, pro-migrant network UNITED for Intercultural Action has maintained a list of details concerning migrants who have died accidentally, killed themselves, or been killed as a result of European Union immigration policies. For her project—which she insists is not an artwork—Cennetoglu disseminates this list in various mediums. She has distributed it across Europe by way of billboards, stickers, and newspaper supplements; showed it in video form on a large screen on the roof of a hotel in Istanbul; and posted it along a street in Liverpool for the city's 2018 biennial, where it was repeatedly vandalized (the destruction, as the artist noted after deciding to leave the piece partially ripped, reflecting the violence that migrants face).

Cennetoglu's video *1 January 1970–21 March 2018* (2018)—which has twelve alternate titles—is the exhibition's central focus. More personal in nature than her other projects, the work is a chronological presentation of all the images and videos that were stored on her phones, hard drives, and cameras since 2006. The resulting video contains 46,685 files and runs a staggering 128 hours and twenty-two minutes. The images—of near-empty beaches, works in progress, magazine clippings, empty bureaucratic spaces, family events, and on and on—produce a silent rhythm, broken only by video clips with sound. That the video sometimes takes on the tedium of a vacation slideshow is perhaps by design. The viewers' seating comprises rows of low deck chairs, suggesting that you should absorb the video rather than watch it, the way you would take in a sunset. But glimpses of almost voyeuristic intimacy do flash across the screen. In one brief clip, a man and a young girl dance wildly to the song "Golden Brown" by the Stranglers in a dimly lit apartment. In another, a naked woman carries out a series of poses in front of a piece of plywood. The video also records a period of political unrest in and around Turkey. The Arab Spring, the Gezi Park protests, the European migrant crisis: all are captured in the film's digital stream, marking the passing of historical time.

Today, most people record, and partially live, their lives via digital images. But Cennetoglu tries to overcome the curation and performance that are central to social media, and instead provide an unmediated portrayal of the visual record of her life. As with her other work, she wagers that the video's accumulation can reflect a larger, overarching history. But her adherence to a chronological, unedited approach makes for a work that, with its nearly unwatchable length, asks a lot of the viewer. Moments of coherence emerge in the video, but drowning in our own image feeds, we may not have the patience to wait for them.

—Michael McCanne



CHICAGO

ANDREW NORMAN WILSON Document

Los Angeles-based Andrew Norman Wilson's exhibition at Document featured his video *Kodak* (2018)—which tells the story of a man with a curious relationship to Kodak and dramatizes the fractious genealogy that only tenuously binds analog photography to digital modes of expression—alongside related photographs and prints, including compositions collaging imagery drawn from Kodak's early twentieth-century advertisements. Watching the video, the viewer tries to suss out the relationship between the images projected on-screen—a mix of still family photos, CGI animation, and what appear to be commercials for Kodak products from the 1980s and '90s—and the soundtrack, which comprises largely a one-sided conversation a man has with a man whose recorded statements he listens to on a tape player.

Eventually, the viewer pieces together that the man addressing the recordings is Rich, a former Kodak employee who was demoted after being blinded in a workplace accident, and then lost his family to divorce. Rather than harbor bitterness toward the company that spurned him, Rich pathologically identifies with Kodak's long-dead founder, George Eastman, who turns out to be the speaker on the tape. In Rich's appeals to the recording, he addresses his unhearing conversation partner familiarly as "George." As Eastman muses on the nature of photography ("simply a reorganization of the chemicals that