

NEVIN ALADAĞ

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In *City Language I-III* (2009), a work in three parts, Nevin Aladağ creates an audio-visual portrait of Istanbul. *City Language I* features four traditional Turkish instruments brought to life by elements and living creatures in the city: a tambourine glides across the sea; a ney – a long flute – whistles in the wind of a moving car; a saz – a string instrument – is plucked by pecking pigeons; loose chimes roll along streets and down steps. The boundary between noise and music is fluid, and as the tapestry of sound thickens it weaves a poetic picture of this city where tradition blends with modernity.

City Language II is made up of eight pieces, one of which is on show here. It depicts the conservative Istanbul district of Fatih, filmed from a passing motor bike and reflected in its wing mirror. The direct impression is not very distinct as the bike is travelling too fast, whereas the mirrored image is clearly recognisable. Instead of the obligatory safety warning on wing mirrors in the United States and Canada (“Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear”), this mirror displays a line from Madonna’s song *American Life*: “I’m not Christian and I’m not a Jew.” It operates as a sub-title, permanently recontextualising what we see.

City Language III uses close-ups of clapping hands which belong to residents and tourists in Istanbul. Each of them established their own personal rhythm for the recording, but the compilation of diverse mini-performances results in a new, unique sound. The clapping seems to offer an alternative to language as a universal form of communication between people.

Nevin Aladağ was born in Van, Turkey, in 1972. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Among the venues to have exhibited her work are Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Wolfsburg Art Museum, the Konsthall in Malmö (Sweden) and the 11th Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates). Aladağ lives and works in Berlin.