

DEPARTING SKIES & FALLEN

Sculpture and Light Installation
2013 - 2023
Serdar Arat

Web page: www.serdararat.com
Email: oserdararat@gmail.com

Installation images:
<https://www.serdararat.com/artwork/sculpture/view/5478946/1/5478947>



Studio Installation

OVERVIEW:

A sculpture and light installation consisting of two components, roughly “ground” and “sky”, mirroring each other’s horizontal direction, surrounded by darkness.

Fallen: 2013-2023. Bronze, copper, ceramic, wood, metal, mixed media, acrylic, plexi. 30-38 ft. long, 33 in. wide, 15-21 in. high from the ground.

Departing Skies: 2020-2023. Fiberglass, glassine, wire mesh, acrylic, LED lights. 30-38 ft. long, 35 in. wide, 15 in. deep, 8-10 ft. high from the ground.

The “ground”, titled *Fallen*, is conceived as a mythological landscape, though, without a familiar or suggested story. Its shape is narrow, long and flowing, its surface is layered with sheets of copper crumpled, oxidized and painted. Scattered across this surface, are approximately 150 sculptural forms and fragments resembling sirens, megaphones, vents, wings, bones, and structural remnants among others. Many have fused with each other forming bonds between organic and mechanical, rusty and gleaming, metal and ceramic, and all are seemingly fallen and abandoned.

The “sky”, titled *Departing Skies*, is a cloud like form, also narrow, long, and flowing, and slightly higher at both ends to form a gentle curve in space. Surrounded in darkness, it emanates ambient light from within, and also lights the landscape below. Its skin is frayed, lacerated, and torn, its form is vacuous as if it has emptied its contents onto the landscape below.

This is a “living” artwork that will keep changing. First, its size, shape, and placement will change with each installation, responding to the specifics of each site and curatorial collaboration. Its 30-38 ft. length may unfold as a straight line (images 4-6), an open U or V shape (images 5-7), or other configurations. *Fallen* will also change over time as new forms and fragments are added and others removed or installed differently.

STATEMENT:

The initial impact of the installation may be one of an aftermath of cataclysmic events. A vision of metaphorical flight and fall, prophecies and warnings, strange fusions and accumulated layers - one that may reflect the contemporary state of mind as concrete crises loom over humanity. The more lasting impact for me is one of hope.

While the use of actual light may be a source of optimism in and of itself, for me, hope is buried at a deeper level in this work. We may consider that every moment is an aftermath, and all civilizations become layers of remnants. However, coming of age in Istanbul, this sensibility is etched into my consciousness in a very real and deeply personal way. In this region, different faiths, cultures, and civilizations have been engaged in devastating conflicts and bloodshed for millennia and have covered each other in literal layers. But, they have also created inseparable fusions and new hybrids between themselves. The continuity of this cycle over such a long history and the evidence of its visible traces, creates a sense of timelessness and renewal against all odds.

This is a strange sense of hope, one that has to be excavated, and one that acknowledges continuous loss and even devastation, as well as rebirth. It may be granted largely by this geography of timelessness, but I have to recover it each time through the process of art.

BRONZE CAST EDITIONS:

10 of the ceramic pieces from the installation are cast in bronze in editions of 5 each. The cast bronze pieces are included in the installation often alongside their ceramic originals (images 1-2), but they may also be exhibited individually, separate from the installation (image 3). Some of the bronze pieces which have detachable components may be exhibited in different configurations (image 3).



1. *Detail, Fallen Angel III*
ceramic, wing attached



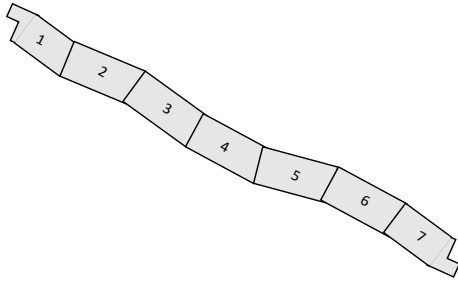
2. *Detail, Fallen Angel III*
bronze, edition-5, rusty patina, wing attached



3. *Fallen Angel III*, bronze, edition-5, EFA-20/20 Gallery, NYC, 2019
Left: dark brown patina, with detached wing - Right: rusty patina, with attached wing

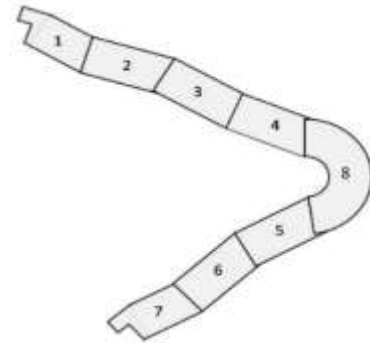
INSTALLATION:

Fallen breaks into smaller units manageable for one person to install-deinstall, pack-unpack, and is stored in custom boxes. Variations other than the two below are also possible, as triangular panels may be added and supporting bases may be moved as necessary.



4. *Fallen Version 1 - Linear*

Ideal min. approx. space: 60 ft. x 30 ft. (20 m x 10 m)



5. *Fallen Version 2 - V Shape*

Ideal min. approx. space: 40 ft. x 40 ft. (15 m x 15 m)



6. *Fallen Version 1 - Linear*

Scale Model, 36 in. long, 2019



7. *Fallen Version 2 - V Shape*

Studio Installation, 2023

Departing Skies is installed above *Fallen* in an approximately parallel configuration. It separates into 8 lightweight sections stored in custom boxes. Each section is intact with its lighting and ready for one person to install-deinstall, pack-unpack. Invisible thread is used to suspend each section from hooks attached to the ceiling. A 1600 W average extension cord extending from the outlet to the ceiling and down to the piece supplies the necessary power of 850 W. The portable, adjustable and folding stand (image 8) helps prop-up sections during installation.



8. Portable, Adjustable, Folding Stand



9. Clear acrylic legs

LIGHTING:

Electrical light emanates through the translucent skin of *Departing Skies* in three different ways. First, continuous led-strip lights create ambient light. Second, 30 led-puck lights create bright patches of light through the thinner membranes. Third, 18 LED- floodlights provide direct lighting to the landscape below. No additional lighting is needed and the installation needs to be surrounded by darkness.

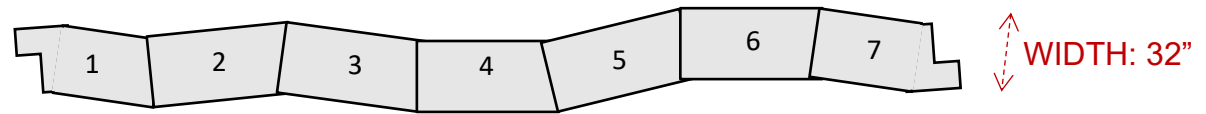


Detail, Studio Installation, 2023



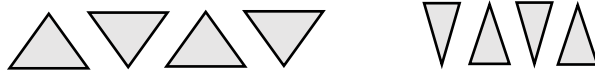
Detail, Studio Installation, 2023

FALLEN TOP VIEW



LENGTH: 30' - 38'

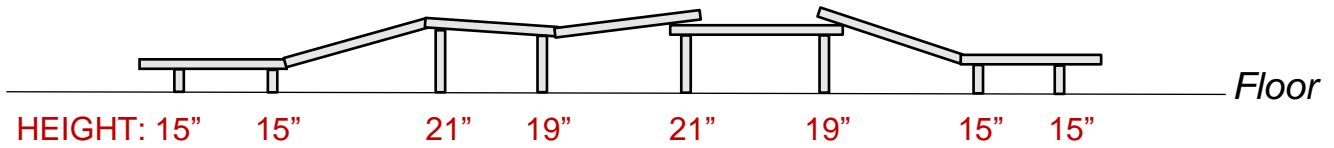
LENGTH WITH THE 8 TRIANGULAR PANELS ADDED: 33'



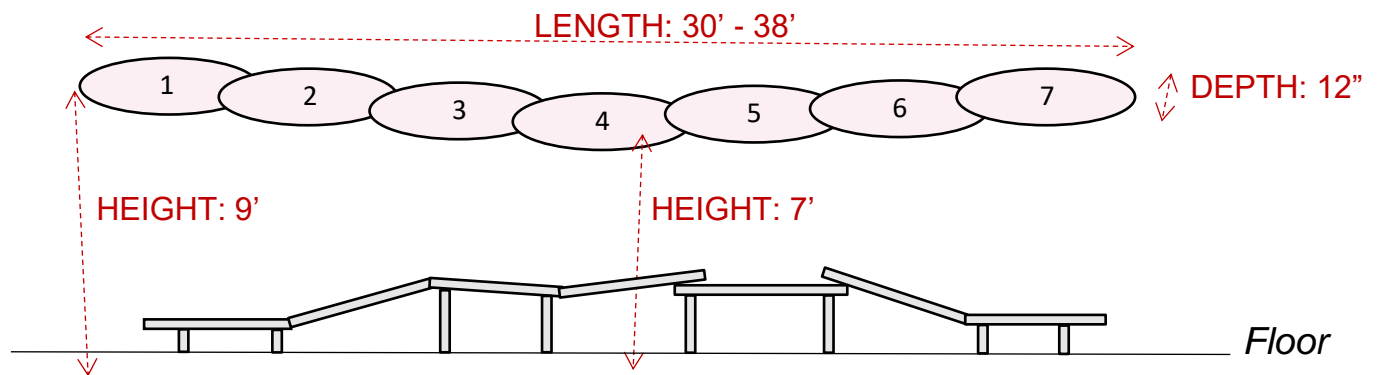
LENGTH WITH THE CURVED PANEL ADDED: 38'



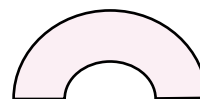
FALLEN SIDE VIEW



DEPARTING SKIES SIDE VIEW



LENGTH WITH THE CURVED SECTION ADDED: 38'



COLLABORATIONS

CURATORIAL COLLABORATION:

Each exhibition of this piece will invite a collaboration with the curator to determine the exact shape, size, and placement, as well as the individual pieces and fragments to be included, among other decisions. The first installation - the piece has not yet been exhibited in full - and the curatorial collaboration will also be the core of the documentary film, and reflect the piece and the process mainly from the curator's perspective with the curator's own comments, provided the curator is willing to be a part of the film.

DOCUMENTARY FILM - in progress:

The installation is being filmed as an approximately 20 min. short documentary. Film maker, writer, Prof. Ken Calhoun has been shooting footage of the piece's development and the partial exhibitions of *Fallen* - the ground component. The film's completion awaits the first exhibition of the full piece.



Ken Calhoun filming *Fallen* at the 20/20 Gallery, EFA, NY, November 2019

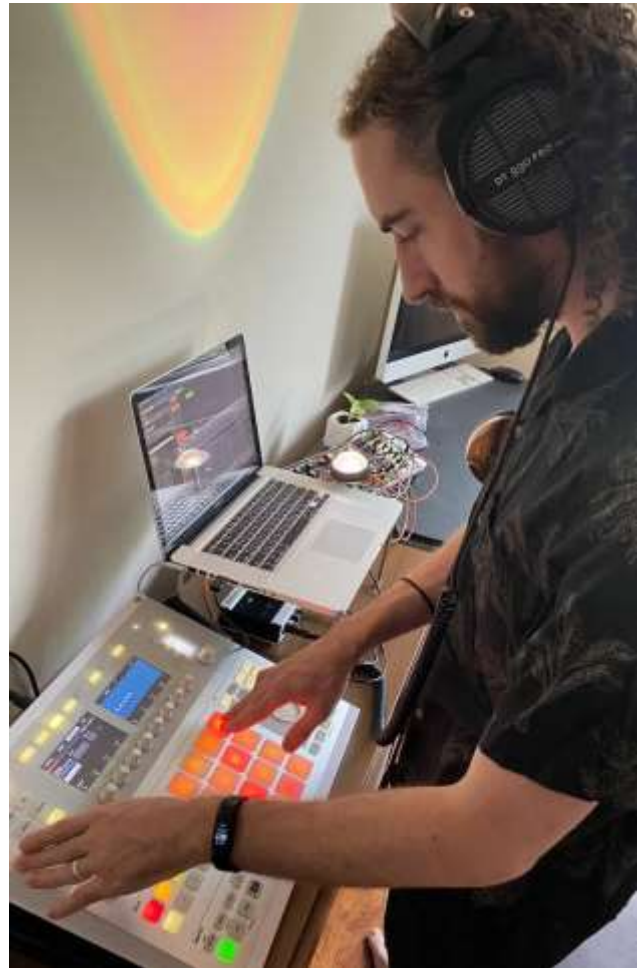
SOUND COMPONENT:

Each exhibition of this work invites a sound component, that would be an integral but not an essential part of the installation.

Musician and sound artist Travis Basso has been developing several versions of the first sound piece for the installation which are ready to be integrated during the exhibition.

The sound component is open to different versions by the same artist, as well as to different artists at different times during the exhibition.

The sound component can also be continuous at all times during the exhibition, or at specific intervals and/or select times.



Travis Basso in his studio, Tuckahoe, NY, July 2023

TIMED-LIGHTING:

Another collaboration involves developing an electronic timed dimmer which will operate automatically. All lighting generates from the *Departing Skies* - the sky component - and is designed in two separate electric lines. One line produces ambient light, and the other line directly spotlights sections of the *Fallen* - the ground component. The timed dimmer will reduce the ambient light to near darkness, while leaving the spotlights fully on, then bring it back up to full ambient light, and the cycle will continue. These light transitions will take place very slowly, being noticeable only over an approximately 10 minute interval, and help create dramatically different experiences of the installation. The light transitions can operate continuously during the exhibition, or can be at specific intervals and/or select times.

PARTIAL EXHIBITIONS OF *FALLEN*



EXHIBITION: NOVEMBER 2019

EFA - 20/20 GALLERY, ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

323 W. 39TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY



EXHIBITION: NOVEMBER 2019

EFA - 20/20 GALLERY, ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

323 W. 39TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

FALLEN: SERDAR ARAT



Fallen - installation detail, 2013 - 2019, cast bronze, ceramic, mixed media on copper

EXHIBITION CURATED BY JASON STEWART

20/20 GALLERY
ELIZABETH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
323 West 39th Street, NY, NY 10018, FLOOR-5

EXHIBITION DATES: November 5 - 16, 2019
RECEPTION: Thursday, November 7, 6:00-8:00 PM
GALLERY TALK: Saturday, November 16, 2:00 PM

GALLERY HOURS: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM, 7 days a week
& by appointment: (914) 263 0128

efa The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts

DIAMENSIONAL PRESENCE

SERDAR ARAT



Serdar Arat's Artist Talk is Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 5pm in rm631

Serdar Arat currently lives and works in New York where he is a Professor of Art at Concordia College. His work presents diverse cultural connotations, the obscurity and the illuminance appear almost as universal metaphors and the viewer is challenged to establish one's own connections.

Born in Turkey, living and working in New York since 1980, Arat has been exploring—in his words, “distilling”—both the political upheavals and the highly personal narratives of this time. Of his work, Arat states, “The consequences of political and personal experiences are inseparable, and the life of mind merges with that of the spirit.”

On view November 15, 2018 - February 7, 2019 in The Clara M. Eagle Gallery



The Clara M. Eagle Gallery





EXHIBITION: NOVEMBER 2018-FEBRUARY 2019

CLARA M. EAGLE GALLERY

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY, KT



EXHIBITION: MARCH-APRIL 2018
OSILAS GALLERY
CONCORDIA COLLEGE-NEW YORK



EXHIBITION: MARCH-APRIL 2018
OSILAS GALLERY
CONCORDIA COLLEGE-NEW YORK

ARTES MAGAZINE

A Fine Arts Magazine: Passionate for Fine Art, Architecture & Design

Concordia College's OSilas Gallery with Serdar Arat: 'Departing Skies' (1987-2017)

[D. Dominick Lombardi](#)

I believe the first time I had the opportunity to write about the work of Serdar Arat was in 1999. I was with The New York Times a little over a year back then when and I discovered this little gem of an exhibition program in the lower level of the Concordia College's library. At that time, I wrote his painting was "somewhere between peaceful and puzzling." I saw his work as representations of "tomorrows vistas", and in fact, one of the works in that exhibition, his hauntingly beautiful *The Island* (1998), which is an homage to *Isle of the Dead* (1880) by Arnold Böcklin, has another, even more recent and beautiful version in *Shadow of the Island* (2011) in this wonderful exhibition titled *Departing Skies: Serdar Arat 1987-2017*.

Today, the second floor of Concordia College's Library features the OSilas Gallery, a vast improvement from the early days of their exhibition program, which is where you will find their current aforementioned exhibition. The literal and figurative centerpiece of *Departing Skies* is *Fallen* (2013-17), *below*, a powerful mixed media sculptural work that spans 26 feet of floor space. It tells many tales of lost ancient civilizations, the very history that resides in our collective unconscious as much as it marks our DNA, which can breed visual and intellectual elements that occasionally emerge in the hearts and minds of our most creative and probing thinkers.

This feeling of looking back may stem from the artist's personal history as he was born and educated in one of our planet's most ancient lands, Turkey. His contrasting history half's of his life can also be seen as complementary as his experiences here in the U.S. have crystallized and opened him up to some pretty powerful revelations. This mental back and forth between the ancients and current day has spawned in Arat a future vision, perhaps thousands of years in the future, as one might look back at sights of risen seas, fresh wastelands and broken skies. Luckily, the optimism in Serdar's choice of vibrant colors and gentle, sweeping lines softens the blow allowing us to enter into the conversation begun in his studio.

Aside from a handful of works on paper, all of the paintings here are dimensional—reliefs of a sort—achieved with thick paint, sculptural elements and shaped, sometimes convex canvases. For instance, in *For Piranesi* (2013), we see a multitude of overtly dimensional space created in a number of ways including bits of wood and thickly applied heavy-body acrylic paint. In doing this, Arat pulls the thoughts of the viewer into the composition as we examine the projecting forms and receding colors. As with all of Arat's work, they reveal something of a dreamscape, a world where buoyancy is the norm and the sensation of touch is seen and not felt.

Like *For Piranesi*, Arat creates *Where I lose Landscapes* (2017), a whirlwind of tunnels, trestles, a spiral stair and something between piano keys and rail road ties that he masterfully controls the dynamics of the space, the wisps of movement, the implied equilibrium and the flight of the form that would make any Futurist envious.



Serdar Arat, *Fallen* (2013-17), cast bronze, ceramic, oxidized copper, mixed media, 32 x 312".

Heroe's Return (2017), one of the many works here that incorporates a soffit vent in the composition, could be viewed as either a fortified dwelling or even a highly stylized personal mask as I once again think of the remnants of a future dystopia. In its design, the sweeping spatial relationships that speak of Cubism or Futurism suggest abrupt movement and multi-dimensional space and time.

To my mind, *Rift* (2013) is a classic Arat. Its contrasting, M. C. Escher-like narrative, stucco texture and challenging palette creates a lasting visceral effect that is thoroughly engaging and equally perplexing. On the other hand, Arat has the ability to be rather straightforward by bringing incredible power and emotion with color and what looks like the sonic waves of a nuclear explosion in *Departing Skies* (2004) (see [image, above](#)). Here, we see a shift, a shedding of one reality to the next as time is recorded like the fallen segment of a growing shell and one world is destroyed and another begins.

The large, mixed media work on paper *How Exotic is the Echo of a Distant Scream* (2005) fills one wall of the gallery. The haunting hollows accompanied by a tank-like cannon; the warm colors and the segmented space all create an odd rhythm that suggests calamity, while the repeated semi-circular shapes throughout suggest relative hope in numbers. Common pain or loss often breeds unity and incites change. Perhaps in all his works the artist is saying that history does not have to repeat and we all just might find common ground.

(EXCERPT)

GÜNCEL

01.06.2020 • SAYI 4



Departing Skies-atölyede geçici yerleştime; yer: Fallen-kısmi yerleştirme; duvar: Reflections Mayıs 2020

Bu Hafta:
S E R D A R A R A T
Yaşama Çıkamayan İşlerle

...en güzel Max Ernst resmi, sahte bile olsa...

D. Filipacchi, 2012

Manhattan'ın yarım saat dışındaki ev ve atelyede karantina günlerimiz sürüyor. Her şey gibi, bu bahar verecek olduğum konuşmalar da iptal edilince, 6 Mayıs Çarşamba akşamı ilk konuşmayı zoom üzerinden yaptık. Konu: *Sanat ve Sahtecilik*. Paylaşmak istediğim, sahteciliğin malum yanlarının ötesinde, benim de daha önce kafa yormadığım, araştırma yaparken ilgimi çeken bir nokta; karantina günlerimize de beklemeğim şekilde bağlanan bir nokta.

2006 yılında koleksiyoner Daniel Filipacchi \$ 7 milyon'a satın aldığı *La Foret-2* isimli resmin Max Ernst değil bir Beltracchi sahtesi olduğunu öğreniyor, fakat mahkemeye gitmesine rağmen, resmi geri vermeyi reddediyor; 2012'de verdiği söyleşide de, sahte olmasına rağmen gördüğü en güzel Max Ernst resmi olduğunu tekrarlıyor. Filipacchi'nin ayrılamadığı, rededemediği bu resim için övgüler yağdıran başkaları da var, ama hepsi resmin sahte olduğu ortaya çıkmadan önce: Max Ernst'in eşi Dorothea Tanning, Max Ernst uzmanı ve aile dostu Albert Weiss gibi. Beni, sonra da konuşmadakileri şaşırtan, 92 yaşında değerli ve bilgili bir Sürrealizm koleksiyoncusu olan Filipacchi'nin, sahte olduğunu bildiği bu resmi Max Ernst düzeyinde değerlendirmeye devam etmesi; tabii, sanat tarihine katkı olarak değil, sadece kişisel yargısı olarak.

Böyle bir deneyim benim için mümkün olabilir mi? Sizin için mümkün olabilir mi? Gerçek-Sahte ikileminin ötesinde başka bir alan mı var? Zoom-konuşmasında en çok ilgi, soru, ve düşünce yaratan nokta da bu oldu. Benim için bir açıklama, anlama, yıllardır tekrar ettiğim şu düşünceden geldi: Bir sanat "nesnesi" ancak onu izleyeni-yaşayanı olduğu zaman "sanata" dönüşür. Yani, "sanat" her bir kişinin kendi bilincinde yeniden-yarattığı bir deneyimdir. Hatta, her görüşde veya hatırlayışda bile biraz farklı olarak yeniden-yarattığımız bir deneyim. Bunu sık sık tekrarladıysam da, can-ı gönülden kabullenebilmem zor ve ileri yaşda oldu. Ama, oldu.

Filipacchi'ye gelince... Eğer her sanat eseri farklı bilinçlerde farklı olarak yeniden-yaratılıyorsa, onların "sanat" olması ancak böylelikle gerçekleşiyorsa, o zaman sahte *La Foret-2* de Filipacchi'nin bilincinde yeniden-yaratılıyor; Max Ernst'in gerçek işlerinin yanısıra; onların uzantısı, çağrışımı olarak. Sanatı izlemek ve onunla yaşamak da yaratıcı bir deneyim.

Sahte mi - gerçek mi sorusu muhakkak ve kesin olarak cevaplandırıldıktan sonra - *ve ancak ondan sonra* - bilincin böyle bir alan yaratmasını da anlayabiliyorum.

Bana gelince... Atelyede, yeni biten, ama henüz görülmeyen, kimbilir ne kadar zaman görülmeyecek, bu yüzden de "nesne" olarak kalmaya devam eden işlerin arasında yaşamak çok ağır bir duygu. "Yaptığımız işin tamamlanması için izleyicinin bilincine ihtiyacımız var" demek başka, bu eksikliği gün be gün yaşamak başkaymış meğer. Karantinanın getirdiği bu zorluk benim için ruh bulandırıcı şu sıralarda. Merak ediyorum sanatçı arkadaşları. Bakalım karantina günleri daha neler getirecek...

(EXCERPT)

artam

GLOBAL ART & DESIGN

60. Sayı

Doğru Yer, Doğru Zaman

NEW YORK'LU TÜRK SANATÇI SERDAR ARAT'IN '80'LERDE
ABD'YE GÖÇ EDERKEN AKLINDA TEK BİR ŞEY VARDI: SANAT.
BUGÜN AYNI SADELİKLE ÜRETMEYE DEVAM ETMESİ
BELKİ DE BAŞARISININ EN BÜYÜK SIRRI.

RÖPORTAJ CANSU VAROL

G ünümüz sanatı öyle bir noktada ki günden güne sınırları genişliyor, dalları akışkan birer form alarak birbirine karışıyor. Bununla beraber izlenme, algılanma süreçleri de değişime uğruyor. Sanatçı Serdar Arat, resimden grafik tasarım ve heykele uzanan eserleriyle bu değişimin Türkiye'den dünyaya mal olmuş bir temsili.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi'nde de lisans eğitiminizin üzerine, resme doğru keskin bir dönüş yapmışsınız. Kararlarınız nasıl şekillendi o yıllarda?

Boğaziçi'nde İdari Bilimler "okudum" demeye dilim varmıyor, bir şekilde mezun oldum diyelim. Ama aslında ilk sanat eğitimimi orada aldım demem daha doğru olur. Müzik Kulübü, Türk Müziği Korusu ve B.Ü. Oyuncuları ortamlarında yaratıcılığın nasıl bir süreç olduğunu, özveri gerektirdiğini, düşünce ve duyguyu birleştirdiğini öğrendim. 1970'lerde bu gruplarda aktif olan arkadaşların sahip olduğu sanat anlayışını, siyasal bilinci ve dünya görüşünü hâlâ takdir ediyorum. Kısacası, çok şanslıyım. Resimle tamamen kendi başıma uğraşıyordum. Müzik ve tiyatro grup halinde yaratıcılık gerektiriyor ama resim kişisel, yalnız başına yapılan ve bana uygun gelendi.



(EXCERPT)