BOZLU ART PROJECT

Bozlu Art Project Mongeri Building

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CİHAT BURAK

FROM A FRIEND'S DRAWER

(Mengü Ertel Collection)

9 April-31 August 2019

Bozlu Art Project Mongeri Building

Bozlu Art Project shall have on display from April 9th to August 31st newly-uncovered drawings of Cihat Burak, one of the most unique and extraordinary figures in Turkish painting. Found in a drawer in the museum-like home of Mengü Ertel, known for his friendships with artists, as well as successful artworks in various fields ranging from graphic design to posters and theatre sets, these drawings also serve as a memorial for these two artists both of whom are no longer in this world, and as an embodiment of the genuine, unselfish and amicable relationships of the time. This exhibition by Esma Ertel and Oğuz Erten seeks to highlight the importance of interdisciplinary relations in painting, literature, music and cinema, and Oğuz Erten is writing the book to accompany the exhibit. The exhibition comprising near eighty artworks of Cihat Burak's also involves quotes from his short stories and sound installations prepared by Mengü Ertel's son and founder of BaBa ZuLa Murat Ertel and his wife Esma Ertel. A surprise mini-concert also awaits art lovers on the opening night.

Cihat Burak is a truly one of a kind artist masterfully blending together his skills as an architect, story-writer and painter, giving form with extraordinary observative and imaginative powers in his original drawings and stories to his boundless curiosity regarding history, literature, Ottoman and Istanbul culture – that is for the lands and world he inhabits and for each and everything unfolding around him. In his interview with himself as a monologue he defines his relationship with different disciplines in his own playful style as follows: "… architecture and painting could be considered relatives. I had friends in the painting department as well, and I loved architecture. Now I see architecture as my wife, painting my lover, and literature as my mistress – and, in fact, as a true Ottoman I have yet right to one more, and that may be music, but I've never been able to truly exercise that one. What I know about music

hasn't gone further than a certain familiarity, that's all!.."

Just like his close friend Cihat Burak, Mengü Ertel too is a multi-faceted character refusing to fit into all pre-cast moulds and boundaries, receiving wide-scale acknowledgement for his own unique style in a region home to master calligraphers known for having established their very own traditions, maintaining friendships with artists and writers from different disciplines, and leaving his personal mark on everything he produced from posters to his graphic design work and theatre sets.

The many-year-long friendship and sharing between the two artists comes to life in this exhibit titled "From a Friend's Drawer" composed of drawings from Mengü Ertel's collection. In speaking of his father, Murat Ertel describes the art environment and friendships of the period in the following words: "…He was someone who helped people. The list of those who passed through his atelier goes on and on. Mehmet Güleryüz, Yurdaer Altıntaş and the like worked there. For scripts he would go to poets such as Turgut Uyar and Edip Cansever. The final table of the evening would be set up in our house after the tavern. The best thing was that all of these figures would show me their unpublished work. Cihat Burak his drawings, Turgut Uyar and Edip Cansever their poems… Regular people were also part of this environment. There were bunkbeds in the workshop, where the poor would stay. This is the kinds of person he was…"

The drawings that have been brought back to life in this exhibit are but witnesses of that period. Burak's rich inner world, his dreams and memories, the sounds of galleons, cats' meows, chats around tavern tables, the laughter and whisperings of two friends all echo in viewers' ears in their presence.

Curated by Esma Ertel and Oğuz Erten, with sound installations by BaBa ZuLa founder Murat Ertel, **"From a Friend's Drawer"** which contains almost eighty drawings by Cihat Burak may be seen at **Bozlu Art Project's Mongeri Building** until **August 31st**.

Cihat Burak

Architect, painter and story-writer Cihat Burak was born in Istanbul in 1915. Completing his secondary education at Galatasaray High, the artist went on to study architecture at the Fine Arts Academy, from which he graduated in 1943. Working as an architect for a long while, Burak collaborated with figures such as Sedat Hakkı Eldem, Bonatz and Emin Onat. Serving as an architect at the Ministry of Public Works in 1951, the artist was then sent to France on a scholarship by the United Nations upon being shown as candidate by the ministry. He stayed here from 1953 to 1955. Revisiting France once again in 1961 with a scholarship from the French government, Burak leaves his job to focus on painting. He held his first personal exhibit in 1957 in the Beyoğlu City Gallery. In 1964, he both received an Honourable Mention at the Utrillo Awards and his painting titled "Imaginary Fleet/ Naval War" was awarded the Bronze Medal at the international exhibition at the Musée de l'art modern. Returning to his country in 1965, he continued his work as a painter and architect. He took part in a total of 78 exhibits up until his final exhibition at the Garanti Bank Beyoğlu Art Gallery in 1991. 23 of these were solo exhibits. He received the Sedat Simavi Foundation Visual Arts Award in 1982. His first short-story book "The Cardons" was published in 1982 as well. Later on "The Yakutis" came in first at the Yunus Nadi Awards in 1992. His book titled "Remain Black" ("Zenci Kalınız") was published in 2003 after his death. Cihat Burak passed away on March 3rd, 1994.

Mengü Ertel

Known for his work in various fields ranging from graphic design to posters and set design, Mengü Ertel was born in Istanbul in 1931. Completing his education at the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy, he began producing theatre posters after 1959 with Muhsin Ertuğrul's encouragement. From this point on, he prepared posters for the City Theatre, State Theatre and many private theatre companies. Having created more than a hundred and fifty original posters, his works took part in international exhibits and received various awards. Ertel also worked on book covers and logos. His very first exhibit of theatre posters took place in the Turkish-German Cultural Centre in 1969. After this he held solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally in important cities such as Warsaw, Brussels, Amsterdam and Bruno. His posters were incorporated by the Warsaw and Munich City Museums as well as the Wilanow Poster Museum. He received his first international award at the Cannes Film Festival Poster Competition. The very same year, he prepared the set and costume of Haldun Taner's

“Epic of Keşanlı Ali” for the Czechoslovakia State Theatre’s staging of the play in Bruno. He received the grand prize at the Paris International Film Posters exhibit in 1975. His works have been featured in magazines and almanacs such as Graphis (Switzerland), Novum (Germany), Graphic (Germany) and Modern Publicity (U.K.). He executed the ceramic qibla wall design of the mosque built in Islamabad by Vedat Dalokay, and oversaw the construction of this giant 25 x 60 m panel. The artist came in third at the international poster competition held for the Moscow Olympics in 1980, receiving a bronze medal. He prepared the poster for the 1st Istanbul Festival. İhap Hulusi, the sole selector of the 1st İhap Hulusi Award, handed the award to him. He served as founder and president of the Graphic Artists Association and general secretary and president of the Film Club (Sinematek) at various times. He worked as host in the series titled “Those who took the Republic under their Wings” (“Cumhuriyete Kanat Gerenler”) with more than 180 episodes broadcasted by the TRT from 1994 to 1998. Never wishing to hold a retrospective in his life, Ertel opened his final exhibit titled “Blow-ups” (“Büyültmeler”) at the Dolmabahçe Cultural Centre (Istanbul) in 1999. He passed away in 2000.

Curators

Esma Ertel & Oğuz Erten

Contributors:

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