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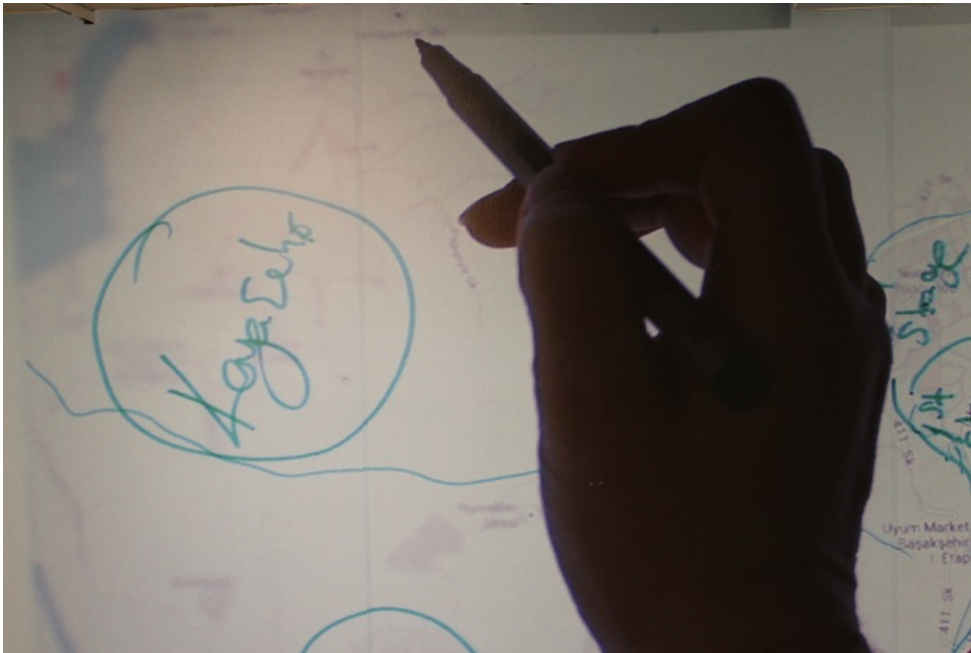
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## We don't want any trouble here.

Written by [Josefine Berkholz](#) on January 4, 2016. Posted in [Events](#), [Places](#), [Seen Beyond](#)

The exhibition "Başakşehir - an urban model" examines a city shut in comfort. And the socio-political dynamics it stands for.



If the frogs started to populate the lakes naturally, the voice behind the camera asks. The man in front of it is approximately in his forties, smiling contentedly, arms crossed in front of his chest. „No, of course not. The municipality. The municipality brought them there.“

The voice belongs to Sandra Schäfer, a german artist intently involved in her work with urban structures as well as the politics of space. The basis for her exhibition "Başakşehir - An urban model" was realized during a four weeks residence program in Istanbul, in which Schäfer did background research on the municipality of Başakşehir and interviewed numerous people about living and working in the area - or not doing so. Schäfer cooperated with the turkish journalist Ayşe Çavdar, who lived at the place for several years and wrote her PHD thesis about it, stressing the transformation of both urban landscapes and modern turkish society.

Başakşehir is a district on Istanbul's European side, about 30 kilometers from the city center. Established in the 1990s, the far out suburb recently gained new attraction with the planned construction of a third airport and a canal parallel to the Bosphorus. Both projects will be close to Başakşehir, which is more and more developing towards a new city center. The area is traditionally surrounded by locations of production and heavy industry. Yet while originally earmarked as a neighborhood for public housing projects, Başakşehir turned into a sort of gated paradise for the neoliberal, islamic-conservative middle class that is known as an important electoral support base for president Erdoğan.

In summer the municipality sanitizes the lake as a favour to the inhabitants.. „It's nice and peaceful. We are surrounded by nature here,“ the man on the screen says. The nature he's surrounded by consists in a lawn most obviously grown inside the laptop of a landscape architect and a number of trees stylishly arranged, nothing that would disturb one's view or look like it's growing might happen without supervision. Accordingly, "Mavera Başakşehir Project", a real estate firm based in the area, advertises their new housing concept of "smart houses" like this:

### It's no use moaning.



On saturday, 10th of January, Karşı Sanat invites together with Stéphane Bauer, leader of Kunstr [...]

### Traces of Memento



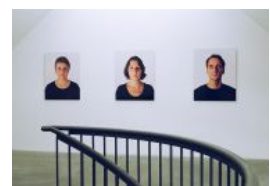
Artist in Residence from Germany in the Footsteps of a Forgotten Time in Istanbul Walking through t [...]

### Creativity for Survival



The recent history of Iraq is marked most outstandingly, by tragedy. War, invasion, occupation and i [...]

### Beret Hamann examining Daily Life and its People



Everyone is patterned by certain Life circumstances. History, politics,

*„From your tablet PC at home, you will be able to establish a connection with the municipality and pay your taxes. You can contact the hospital and make an appointment with your doctor. Or you can follow the grades of your child at school. You can even connect with the cameras inside the school and observe how your child is doing“* Mehmet

Deniz, Sales Manager of Mavera Başakşehir Project

environment, gender roles,  
r [...]

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In fact the description triggers the imagination of a science fiction movie based on a reality of something in between the ones of the Matrix and George Orwells 1984. The subjective view of the inhabitants of Başakşehir is totally different though. Generally, the term "peaceful" is probably the one most used by Çavdars interview partners.

"I can walk home from the tea house all by myself at night and don't need to be afraid." "There is no traffic, no criminals and no fools here", somebody else points out, and even though never directly outspoken, there is a very clear connotation to all the statements: And we don't want any of that here. We don't want any trouble.

The approach is characterizing some central parts of the İslamişç-konservative Bourgeoise that is benefitting from the government parties politics especially economically.

The divide between rich and poor in Turkey is alarming and directly translates itself into Istanbul's urban policies. The question who owns the city and the struggle for public space dominated the Gezi park protests in 2013, when one of the most influential protest movements in Turkey's younger history broke out around the decision to erase one of the last bits of the nature for a financially more lucrative option, a shopping mall.

Not everyone we get to see in the interviews lives in Başakşehir. Schäfer talked to people in the commuter's buses in Istanbul's outskirts, she went to the bus terminals at five in the morning and questioned people going to - and coming from work. Trash collectors in shift work, the latter. Curiously, it is never direct criticism of the gated community that is expressed here. The voices vary from a sort of distant admiration of a universe clearly not accessible to the interviewed to a relative indifference about the area. What is emphasized again and again is the sometimes extremely long and exhausting trips to work. But it appears mostly as an accepted reality, quite inevitably connected to this city and to the personal economic situation. An interesting contrast is set when Schäfer and Çavdar interview the gardeners in Başakşehir's Sular Vadisi park. Surrounded by a very designed setting of nature, they tell of their work routine that usually starts at five in the morning, how they clear the ground and take care of the lawn. "We plant these flowers in the mornings and watch the women pick them later. And then we plant new ones for them."



Sandra Schäfer arranged these multiperspectival interviews in three videos installed in the exhibition rooms. Along with her photographs, which also depict the ambiguity and contradictions of this "urban model", she gives a thought-provoking - and mayhaps scary perspective on this "urban model" - and the urban future it stands for.

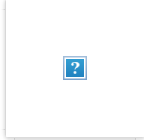
Do you ever go to the city center? To Istanbul's center?  
 No. It's so far. And we have everything we need here.  
 What they have is a main square biased by a shopping mall.  
 What they have is international brands and restaurants with organic halal food.  
 No traffic, no filth, no fools. Basaksehir - a blindfold paradise.  
 A Disneyland for the rich and the faithful.

Basaksehir - Bir Kent Modeli, until January 6th  
 Studio X Istanbul, Meclis-i Mebusan Caddesi 35A 34427; open Tuesday to Saturday

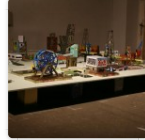
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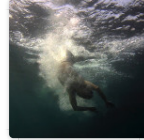
The Shape of  
 Truth Changes  
 and Shapes the  
 Truth



Yeşim Şahin, Inner  
 monologues



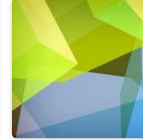
Antonio  
 Cosentino: Tin  
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Tayfun Serttaş at  
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Black February



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