For Immediate Release

18th Street Arts Center

1653 18th Street.

Santa Monica, CA 90404

Contact: Amber Jones

310-453-3711 Ext 108

ajones@18thstreet.org

***Los Angeles-Istanbul Connection***

**May 7-30, 2011**

**Opening reception: Saturday, May 7, 6-9pm**

Artists: Insel Inal, Saliha Kasap, Elif Oner, Ozan Oganer, Alper Sen

Carol Es, Gul & Arzu, Marcie Kaufman, Blair Townsend

Curated by: Arzu Arda Kosar & Saliha Kasap

http://losangelesistanbul.weebly.com

Santa Monica, Ca-Beginning May 7 through May 30, 2011, five Turkish artists and five Los Angeles artists join forces to present a dynamic intercultural collaborative project, entitled, *Los Angeles-Istanbul Connection* in 18th Street’s Project Room. This exhibition features provocative paintings, sculptures, photography, video and installations by artists: Carol Es, Gul Cagin, Insel Inal, Saliha Kasap, Marcie Kaufman, Arzu Arda Kosar, Elif Oner, Ozan Oganer, Alper Sen and Blair Townsend. The opening reception takes place on May 7, 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

This exhibition is a curatorial collaboration between Saliha Kasap in Istanbul, Turkey, Arzu Arda Kosar, a resident artist at the 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica, Ca, and part of the Los Angeles based duo “Gul & Arzu.”

Inspired by the myriad of similarities between Istanbul and Los Angeles art worlds, both of which boast increasingly vibrant art scenes that may lack an art market akin to Europe or New York, but counterbalance this conception with the experimental and exciting works burgeoning out of these two cities; Kasap and Kosar have curated a show that brings together contemporary artists from Istanbul, Turkey and Los Angeles.

*Los Angeles-Istanbul Connection* features selected works by five contemporary Turkish artists currently emerging in the ever more compelling contemporary art scene in Istanbul juxtaposed with five L.A. artists whose works are in a similar vein. This show identifies the similarities and connections between the work of 10 contemporary artists that originate from two cities whose cultural and political paradigms are extremely disparate**.** As Turkish artist Sen’s video documentary on discarded material is in dialogue with L.A. artist Townsend’s rug made of superfluous plastic toys. In the same sense, Turkish artist Oganer’s lace sculpture corresponds with L.A. artist Es’ work that incorporates elements of sewing. Turkish artist and curator Kasap’s insect-like cityscape photo collages relate to Marcie Kaufman’s disorienting industrial images, while Turkish artist Oner’s video that suggests a mythical sense of timelessness and spacelessness correspond with images of land art by Andrew Rogers presented in the main gallery. Turkish artist Inal’s photo documentation of “street kids” that takes art into public realm and incorporates interdisciplinary elements corresponds with LA based Gul & Arzu’s socially work.

This exhibition has been made possible with a grant from the Turkish Cultural Foundation, and the support of Turkish Culture and Tourism Office in Los Angeles and Turkish Airlines. For more info on the exhibition please visit <http://losangelesistanbul.weebly.com/>

**About the *Los Angeles-Istanbul Connection* Artists:**

**Carol Es** is a self-taught artist whose work bears dark, yet childlike humor that interweaves throughout her paintings, drawings, installations, and books making these narratives dearly accessible. She is a two-time recipient of the ARC Grant from the Durfee Foundation and was recently awarded the prestigious Pollock-Krasner Fellowship. Her works are featured in numerous private and public collections, including the Getty Museum, Brooklyn Museum, UCLA Special Collections, the Jaffe Collection, and Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. <http://www.esart.com/>

**Gul Cagin** is a Los Angeles-based installation, mixed media and performance artist whose work examines representation in relation to “sameness” and “difference” and tries to explore exclusionary effects of representation in relation to bodies and places. Cagin received her BFA from University of Southern California and MFA from Claremont Graduate University. Her works have exhibited in venues such as Istanbul Sanat Limani, Museum of New Mexico, Highways Performance Space (LA), Raid Projects (LA), Centre Civic-Barcelona, Occidental College (LA), San Diego Art Institute, Crazy Space (Santa Monica), LACMA, The Armory Center for The Arts (Pasadena) and private residencies.  [www.transistanbul.org](http://www.transistanbul.org)

**Insel Inal** was born in 1969, Canberra, Australia, lives in İstanbul and works as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Kocaeli University where he heads the Ceramics Department. İnal organized the  “Performance Days” among other interdisciplinary panels and events and chaired the “Association of Interdisciplinary Young Artists”.  He founded the Karamus Art Gallery and organized exhibitions and activities, which questioned the relations between the arts and other disciplines. İnal’s ceramic work is featured on many architectural structures and collections. His performances, videos, installations, sculptures and other work have been exhibited internationally. <http://inselinal.blogspot.com/>

**Saliha Kasap** holds a degree in Arts Administration from Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul and has completed graduate work in Photography at Mimar Sinan University.  Her photo collages that resemble insects derive from her observations on Istanbul cityscape and the omnipresent construction sites, giant cranes and incomplete skyscrapers that dominate the skyline. <http://salihakasap.weebly.com/>

**Marcie Kaufman** earned her MFA in Painting and Photography at Claremont Graduate University and BA in Art History at USC.  Her work responds to the landscape and creates connections with the human body.  Her mixed-media artwork was recently featured in New American Paintings, a highly competitive juried exhibition-in-print, and has been included in numerous exhibitions in Los Angeles including Couturier Gallery, Gallery 825, American Jewish University, and Zimmer Children's Museum.

**Arzu Arda Kosar** graduated from the University of Southern California with an MFA and earned a BFA in Studio Arts and Art History from the University of Pittsburgh.  Her work that focuses on topics related to inter-group relationships and balkanization has been featured numerous exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York and Istanbul. She has published on architecture and sociology at Doxa magazine. As part of the Gul & Arzu collective, Kosar conducted a two-year social engagement project for the Istanbul 2010 Cultural Capital events. In 1999-2000 she organized the International Survey of Alternative Artscene: a series of art exhibitions, workshops and lectures in New Zealand, Thailand, Turkey, New York and California in the USA.  Currently, she is a resident artist at the 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica, CA. <http://www.arzuardakosar.org>

**Ozan Oganer** received his BFA in Sculpture from Dokuz Eylul Universitesi Fine Art Department in Izmir, Turkey. His sculptures explore topics as wide as Aztec & Mayan culture and personal memories.  Following a six month residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris at the invitation of SIMIT' and under the sponsorship of Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV), Oganer was featured in a two person show entitled “Secret Garden” with Bahar Oganer at AlanIstanbul Tunel in Istanbul and is having his second solo show at Ilayda Art Gallery in Istanbul in May 2011. His work collected by private and public institutions such as Istanbul Modern Museum of Art.  <http://ozanoganer.weebly.com>

**Elif Oner** Elif Oner was born in 1980 in Istanbul. She studied painting and multimedia arts Marmara University in Istanbul, where she's currently an MFA candidate for 2011. Her work has been shown at Mars Gallery, Siemens Art, Borusan Music House, Manzara Perspektif Art Gallery, Harfiyat, Moda Project Room in Istanbul and in exhibitions and video festivals in France, Germany, Bulgaria and South Korea.  She is currently an artist in residence at the Borusan Arts Center in Istanbul, Turkey.

**Alper Sen** was born in 1977 in Ankara. He graduated from Political Science Dept. of METU and studied in Radio, TV and Cinema Dept. graduate program of Ankara University.  Since 2000, he joined different video collectives as a director or artist in Turkey and Europe like VideA, Cinema for Peace, Film Collective, Kozavisual, NisaMasa, Karahaber. In 2007, he completed his video-documentary "Scavengers from Hakkari to Ankara", which screened in various film festivals and video exhibitions in Turkey and abroad. In 2009, he directed two documentaries on football in Germany and France for NTVSPOR. In 2010 he worked as an editor of Antonio Muntadas' video "On Translation: Açık Radyo". Currently he is working as coordinator of "artıkişler" a visual art platform established by independent visual artists. <http://artikisler.wordpress.com/>

**Blair Townsend** has a BA in Economics from Princeton, BFA in Fine Arts from CalArts and a graduate degree in design from Otis College of Art and Design.  She creates custom interiors and makes custom design furniture that reflects on the memories, thoughts and possessions of the individual that inspired them. The rug she created by flattening a heap of plastic toys that has been accumulated over the years under a 9-ton steamroller was inspired by her son and his discarded toys. <http://blairtownsendstudio.com>

For images or more information on the artists in *Los Angeles-Istanbul Connection*, please visit <http://losangelesistanbul.weebly.com/> or contact losangelesistanbul@gmail.com.