

Güler Ates

Fragments

Curated by Marcelle Joseph

3rd February – 19th March 2017

Private View: Saturday, 3rd February 2018, 6.00 – 8.00pm

Drawing Schools
Eton College, Common Lane
Windsor, Berkshire SL4 6DU

Open by appointment

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Fragments is a solo exhibition of new photographic and video work made by London-based Turkish artist Güler Ates while an artist in residence at Eton College in 2015. Ates was the second female artist to be awarded the James McLaren residency at Eton College and follows in the footsteps of other luminaries such as Hughie O'Donoghue RA and Norman Ackroyd CBE RA. For this show, Ates, in her signature style, has swathed a 21st century woman in veils of brightly coloured silk sourced from Asian markets in Slough, a city neighbouring Eton, and documented her emotional passage through the hallowed and historic spaces of Eton College, including the Chapel, the Library and the Upper and Lower Schools. Weighted down by the over 500-year history of Eton College, Ates titles this show, the fifth solo exhibition with curator Marcelle Joseph, *Fragments*, alluding to how this new body of work only reflects a fragment of the annals of this illustrious boys' boarding school founded in 1440 by King Henry VI.

In line with Ates' prior time-based practice, her new work explores notions of female identity as seen through the lens of the artist's own experiences of cross-cultural displacement as well as accepted models of culture in the West. The juxtaposition of the old and the new as well as Middle Eastern exoticism and Victorian propriety are common themes in Ates' practice. For example, as a resident at Eton College, she was immediately drawn to the Victorian tapestry of *The Adoration of the Magi* by Edward Burne-Jones that adorns a wall of the Chapel, offering the artist, in her own words, "a window to start to feel a stronger connection with this architectural space". She was equally enamoured with the Chapel's wall paintings depicting a medieval story about a mythical empress on the south side and the miracles of the Virgin Mary on the north side. The female subjects of these stories form the backdrop of many of Ates' new works in the show, in turn highlighting the contemporary veiled female protagonist in the foreground and inviting the viewer to peer backward as well as forward and to question the role of the "veil" with all its contemporary Western readings. Finding resonance in the artist's own Eton odyssey in 2015 as well as her biography of diaspora and displacement in her home country as a result of her family's origins in eastern Turkey, Ates accentuates how Eastern and Western culture can peacefully coexist in these tranquil photographic explorations of the journey of a lone woman, draped in fabric with Eastern origins, through the all-male bastion of Eton College, one of the pinnacles of Western education.

Born in 1977 in Eastern Turkey, **Güler Ates** has been living and working in London for the past 19 years. She graduated in 2008 from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Printmaking. Currently, she is Digital Print Tutor at the Royal Academy Schools. Her work can be found in the print collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Royal Academy of Art and the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) in Rio de Janeiro. Ates' work has been exhibited at the Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy for the last several years as well as in solo exhibitions in 2017 at Museum Van Loon, The Netherlands; in 2016 at the Unseen Photo Festival, Amsterdam and Salvation Army International HQ, London; in 2015 in London at the House of St Barnabas as well as Art First and in Naples, Italy at Spazio Nea; in 2014 at Marcelle Joseph Projects, London, Warmond Castle, Amsterdam with Marian Cramer Projects, Instituto Inclusartiz in Rio de Janeiro, and Kubikgallery in Porto, Portugal; in 2013 at Marian Cramer Projects, Amsterdam, and Royal Academy of Arts's Café Gallery, London; in 2012 at the LOFT at the Lower Parel, Mumbai, Art First, London, and Marian Cramer Projects, Amsterdam; in 2011 at Great Fosters, Egham, UK; and in 2010 at Leighton House Museum, London and Gallery Point-1, Okinawa, Japan. Her work has been featured in numerous groups shows including *Unexpected: Continuing Narratives of Identity and Migration*, Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, London (2016); *Journey*, Jewish Museum, London (2015); *Some Schools are Cages and Some Schools are Wings*, Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro (2014); and *2Q13: Women Collectors, Women Artists*, Lloyds Club, London (2013); and 3rd International Canakkale Biennial, Turkey (2012). Ates has completed residencies at Eton College (2015) and in Rio de Janeiro (2013-2014), Istanbul (2014) and India (2012 and 2009).