

“TLL TRAVEL”: APPROPRIATING THE SIGNS OF DIFFERENT
STANDARDIZATION PROCESSES OF THE URBAN

by

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“TLL TRAVEL”: APPROPRIATING THE SIGNS OF DIFFERENT
STANDARDIZATION PROCESSES OF THE URBAN

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ABSTRACT

“I’LL TRAVEL”: APPROPRIATING THE SIGNS OF DIFFERENT STANDARDIZATION PROCESSES OF THE URBAN

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This thesis provides a theoretical reading and the processes of my works that have been produced throughout the period of the masters program. The thesis starts with how tourism transforms travel into a uniform commodity and then continues by discussing similar positions that can be encountered in urban space. How travel is shaped according to these positions is regarded in relation to concepts like automobility, the dissemination of the advertisement images, the development of gated communities and mass production. Being produced with images and materials that are collected during travels around different perimeters in the city, the works challenge the concepts mentioned above.

ÖZET

“SEYAHAT EDECEĞİM”: KENTE DAİR TEK TİPLEŞME SÜREÇLERİNİN
GÖSTERGELERİNİ TEMELLÜK EDERKEN

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Anahtar Kelimeler: seyahat, turizm, tek tipleşme, kent, tekrar

Bu tez yüksek lisans programı boyunca üzerinde çalıştığım işlerin süreçlerini ve bunların teorik okumalarını içermektedir. Turizmin seyahati tek tip bir ürün haline dönüştürmesi üzerinden başlayan tartışma, kentsel uzamda karşılaşılabilecek benzer durumlar üzerine odaklanmakta. Bunların seyahat olgusunu nasıl şekillendirdiğine, otomobilite, reklam imajlarının yayılımı, dışa kapalı sitelerin oluşumu ve seri üretim gibi kavramlar üzerinden bakılmakta. Şehrin çeşitli katmanlarında gerçekleştirilen seyahatler sırasında toplanmış görüntü ve malzemelerden oluşan işlerde ise yukarıda bahsi geçen kavramlar sorgulanıyor.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism — human circulation packaged for consumption, a by-product of
the circulation of commodities [...]
Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*¹

The origin of the word ‘travel’ comes from the Anglo-French word ‘travailler’ – meaning to torment, labor, journey – which has its root at the Latin word ‘trepalium’, a three legged apparatus used for torture.² Before the 19th century – the industrial revolution – travel was troublesome, dangerous, costly and “was available for a relatively limited elite and was a marker of social status.”³ With the emergence of steam power, masses traveled to the countryside, neighboring cities, overseas and etc. Tourism, the industry of travel, is built upon this *advancement*. Air travel provided a further progress for the industry, enabling it to spread all over the world. The global chains of hotels and an entirety of other services ensured a standard for accommodation and a safe sojourn, ensuring the continuity of the subject's everyday activities and comfort. Such characteristics of the tourism industry might only be providing a physical break from the particular environment back in home. The standardization that this industry introduces stretches the boundaries of the urban life, transmuting remote locations and cultures into extensions of the city, unifying them and creating a vast plane of homogeneity.

¹ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 94.

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/travail>

³ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 16.

The works that are discussed throughout the thesis were produced with images and materials that were collected during several travels around the city, looking at different processes of standardization, such as the one mentioned above. The first chapter is about the work *I'll Travel*, a typographic work consisting of the words “I'll” (without the apostrophe) and “travel”. The word “I'll” repeats in the work and the word “travel” is seen at the bottom right. The aim with this work is to form a symbolic list of acts and attractions – or distractions – that holds an individual in the sphere of consumption.

In the following chapter the concept of automobility is introduced. How its discriminatory nature organizes the circulation in a city and its effects on travel are discussed around a work, *Step Pre-mature Ejaculation and Increase Male Sex Drive*. Some portion of the work's material is taken from an online traffic application, which provides information on traffic density in certain parts of the city. All the images of the work was collected from the Internet, which might be considered as a virtual travel.

The first part of the second chapter focuses on travel on a another scale. The discussion is based on a photographic series titled *All that is Solid Dissolves into Air*. The series consist of photographs that were taken during a walk around the neighborhood. The route of this particular walk was determined by following a number of advertisement billboards, which appear in the form of networks in the city. I discuss that such a network might lead to a standardized cityscape. The second part of this chapter turns to the concept of automobility looking at one of the photographs in the series mentioned above. This time the discussion concentrates on the relation between an individual and a car and how this alliance acts on the experience of travel.

The third chapter centers upon the gated residential areas, another standardization process, which is also discriminatory. The heritage of this process is traced back to Coney Island, where the roots of the entertainment industry can be grounded. The relation between such urban establishment and the organization of car travel is discussed. The chapter is based on a video work titled *A Reconstructed Panorama*, which is produced by using the images of several residential building blocks. The images were gathered on a motorized vehicle during a travel through an arterial road.

In the final chapter a further process of standardization is discussed over mass-produced goods. The focus is on a particular brand's furniture, which are amongst the basic elements that organizes the space at home. After discussing the brand's production and distribution technique, which enables it to circulate its products all over the world, the chapter concentrates on this process' waste. This waste is EPS (extended polystyrene) and it is one of the materials used in the work that the chapter is based on. The other materials used in this work include different kinds of wastes collected during travels outside the city. Then the process of this work and the relation of it with the other works are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

TRAVEL #0: OCCUPIED WITH CONSUMPTION

The works that this thesis intends to support started with the work *I'll Travel* (Fig. 1). Printed on a 70x100 cm plain white paper the work conveys a text, black in color. In this text the word “I'll” (without the apostrophe) – which can also be read as “ill” – repeats until the word “travel” appears at the end, on the bottom right-hand corner. However as all four sides of the text is cropped so is this last word. The purpose of the cropping is to obscure the length of the phrase, hinting at that this phrase may be longer, or even infinite. The work may be containing a fraction of this phrase.

The work tries to suggest that the crucial thing that prevents an individual going on a travel is consumption. However, the notion of consumption in this work does not intend to cover consuming goods and services, but also intend to include consumption of places – that are traveled to. According to this the word “Ill” intends to work on two levels. First of these refers to all the acts of consumption that prevent someone leaving the city and all the *necessary* things that have to be bought in order to live in a city. The first “Ill” may be for “I'll buy a house.” The following one may as well be “I'll buy a car.” It does not necessarily have to be with the word “buy”; it may also be “see”, “visit”, “attend”, “graduate”, “promote” or anything. And it can go on in an endless variation. At a second level “Ill” refers to the things that can be consumed at the travelled place. These things may include souvenirs and some goods that are unique to that distant place, but also the sites that carry touristic value, thus an economic one. Therefore, “Ill” may also be for “I'll see the Tower of Pisa, I'll make a boat trip at the River Seine, I'll take a picture with the wax model of my favorite actor at the Madam Tussauds, I'll shop at Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, I'll take a boat to Coney

Island, I'll go to the Niagara Falls and join the Maid of the Mists tour, after seeing Taj Mahal I'll wash at the waters of Ganges, I'll climb to Machu Picchu, I'll prey in front of Cristo Redentor, I'll breathe the air where our martyrs shed their blood" and etc. The countless touristic attractions make this list a boundless one. Furthermore, a place necessarily does not have to be a site of attraction in the first place. "Empty' sites become sights through the attachment of markers"⁴ says Culler and he continues with a case of Bonnie and Clyde:

An unremarkable piece of ground becomes a tourist attraction when equipped with a plaque reading 'Site of the Bonnie and Clyde shootout', and as more markers are added informative historical displays, a little museum, a Bonnie and Clyde amusement park with shooting galleries the markers themselves quite explicitly become the attraction, the sight itself. These markers would then have further markers attached to them: postcards depicting the Bonnie and Clyde Museum, pennants depicting Bonnie-and-Clyde-Land and its more famous attractions. (Jonathan D. Culler, *Framing the Sign* [Oxford: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988] 156-7)

This, I argue, might link the travelled place with a city over consumption. Tourism, a form of consumerism which invaded the space of travel, transforms the travelled place into a list of attractions; an extension of the city, which is a major center of consumption.

As Guy Debord stated that "life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles"⁵ and as the essence of the spectacle remains the same wherever one travels, starting with the modernity travel became an entertainment that solely appeals to the eye but not an experience lived through the mind or soul or the heart. Along with the reasons mentioned above, the cropped 'travel' also refers to this inadequacy of travel becoming a way of entertainment and strives to proclaim that its reality is devoid of the very personal experience. Another aspect of the work is the ambiguous visual difference between the letters 'T' and 'l', which with its dazzling effect intends to disturb the eye. In order to emphasize this, the typeface "Rockwell" is specifically chosen, as the letters 'T' and 'l' are almost identical in this particular typeface set. The word 'travel' being cropped is meant to amplify this disturbance.

⁴ Culler, *Framing the Sign*, 165.

⁵ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 7.

Just as in *I'll Travel*, repetition is a recurring element in the rest of the works. While in one work repetition became visible through optic instruments, in another it is produced with the aid of the digital tools and in others it is brought about by means of collecting objects. Yet, they are all produced and accumulated through travel, an act physically based on the repetitive movement of the feet or the thrust of an engine. The materials used in all the works are images or objects that were accumulated – sometimes dissected – during various travels in and out of the city. They were executed in different areas of several cities, whether be it the home, the neighborhood, the city or the countryside. However, the works are not directly related to tourism but they are rooted in the practice of travel, which its essence stays rather the same whether one is at home or abroad. John Urry, the writer of the *Tourist Gaze*, states that this “gaze is increasingly bound up with and is partly indistinguishable from all sorts of other social and cultural practices. [...] people are much of the time 'tourists' whether they like it or not.”⁶ In order to investigate the possibilities of stimulating a way of seeing that is outside a generalized – tourist – gaze, the graduation exhibition, which includes the works discussed in this thesis, is assembled with the images and objects that are pieces of different standardization processes which operate in the city.

⁶ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 82.

CHAPTER 2

TRAVEL #1: AROUND THE CITY THROUGH A WEB APPLICATION

[...] with real-time technologies, real presence bites the dust.

Virilio, *Art of the Motor*⁷

The video piece *Stop Pre-mature Ejaculation and Increase Male Sex Drive* is the first work produced for the thesis study. It is executed from home, sitting in front of a computer, with the material that were collected through the Internet. It is a three channel split screen video piece, assembled from three different footage (Fig. 2). The footage on the upper left-hand was collected from the online application of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's website.⁸ This application provides live image streaming of the traffic at critical roadways. The images captured are published as video or series of three photographic images. The one on the upper right-hand was taken from a footage of the Plymouth factory back in 1959.⁹ This particular footage was found on YouTube after searching the words 'assembly line'. Shot with a high-speed camera (250,000 frames per second) the one at the bottom shows a microscopic footage of several kinds of fungi squirting their spores in order to reach the feeding zone of the herbivores in order to reproduce.¹⁰ Accelerating up to 180,000 g these spores have the highest acceleration in nature that is ever measured.¹¹ This is again found on YouTube after searching with the word 'acceleration'. Also the title of the piece comes from a video

⁷ Virilio, *The Art of the Motor*, 57.

⁸ <http://tkm.ibb.gov.tr/yolDurumu/YogunlukHaritasi.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCWVmoKiQBw&feature=related>

¹⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4n0b5rMqE0>

that is available on the same website, which was reached after searching with the word 'ejaculation'.¹² *Stop Pre-mature Ejaculation and Increase Male Sex Drive*'s theoretical background is based on automobility, which is intensively examined as a system by the sociologist John Urry. He lists “the six components”¹³ of the system of automobility:

[...] as it is the “quintessential *manufactured object* by the leading industrial sectors [...] within the 20th century capitalism [...]; the major item of *individual consumption* after housing [...]; an extraordinarily powerful *complex* constituted through technical and social interlinkages with other industries [...]; the predominant global form of 'quasi-private' *mobility* that subordinates other mobilities of walking, cycling, travelling by rail and so on [...]; the dominant *culture* that sustains major discourses of what constitutes the good life [...]; the single most important cause of *environmental resource-use*.” (John Urry, “The ‘System’ of Automobility.” In *Automobilities*, edited by Mike Featherstone, Nigel Thrift and John Urry, 25-40. [London: Sage Publications, 2005] 25-26)

Discussion on automobility also feeds into the other works that are discussed below.



Figure 2 “Stop Pre-mature Ejaculation and Increase Male Sex Drive”, screenshot

¹¹ <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14747?DCMP=youtube>

¹² http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uW_QtG9FRyk

¹³ Urry, *The ‘System’ of Automobility*, 25.

“The motor has become ubiquitous in late modern societies”¹⁴ begins Tim Dant to his article, *The Driver-car*, which “explore the 'assemblage' of the driver-car as a form of social being that produces a range of social actions that are associated with the car [...]”¹⁵ Beyond the social actions Peter Freund and George Martin (Blackrose, 1993) discusses that automobility is the main tool for capitalist expansion. “And in some ways the 'social organization of the experience of modernity' is as important an achievement of Western capitalism as is the social organization of the production of manufactured goods.”¹⁶

Mobility is a marker of social and economic status creating different relations between various groups of users of the city. Besides cars “interrupt the taskscape of others (pedestrians, children going to school [...])”¹⁷ it formed its own power relations in the realm of traffic. Without a hesitation to harass the other drivers, the driver with a more powerful car, which a higher level of income can afford, tend to claim the right to the road. “The technological lock-in” write Stephen Graham and David Murakami Wood, “threatens to divide contemporary societies into high-speed, high-mobility and connected and low-speed, low-mobility and disconnected, classes.”¹⁸ This intensifies the inequality in the city, which itself is constructed according to the demands of the automobility and which already failed to provide a righteous basis for residence issues. Apart from the things mentioned above, in its stationary state the entity of a car continues to reproduce class differences as the automobile industry manufactures cars that are affordable by different levels of income.

Apart from a social organization automobility shapes the urban fabric in an ongoing manner. Urry writes in *the System of Automobility* “once economies and societies were 'locked' into [...] the steel-and-petroleum car, then huge increasing returns resulted for those producing and selling the car and its associated infrastructure,

¹⁴ Dant, *The Driver-car*, 61.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Lash, *Economies of Signs and Space*, 253.

¹⁷ Urry, *The 'System' of Automobility*, 29.

¹⁸ Graham, *Permeable Boundaries in the Software-sorted Society*, 178.

products and services.”¹⁹ The city is under constant reconstruction according to the needs of car-travel. Periodically new motorways are built or the old ones are extended with new lanes. This leads to an increase in the the existing segmentation of the urban space and the density of the car flow. It also corresponds to a rise of speed limits solidifying the 'time-space compression' which Freund and Martin mention referring to Karl Marx. They continue as “[s]uch compression is fed by new transport and communication technologies that reduce the constraints of time and space on production and consumption.”²⁰ More and more cars are equipped with these “new transport and communication technologies,” enabling driving to become faster and be more integrated to the city; “other skills will follow as cars and cities increasingly drive drivers.”²¹ Through a car's computer, GPS and internet connection a driver might easily get information on the condition of the road, coordinates of the current location, map of the area and even program the computer to lead the car to the destination. This kind of technological improvement does not only equip cars but also the cities. “[...] 'intelligent vehicles' drive on 'intelligent streets' loaded up with software that surveys and manages traffic [...].”²² Numerous surveillance cameras and sensors that are implemented around arterial roads constantly process the flow of the cars and transform it into data, transmitting this to control centers for more processing. Then this data is used for fining the illegitimate actions of the drivers and enhancing the system of automobility with the help of the statistical feedback. The data collected through surveillance, which “is a technocratic form of territoriality and the (attempted) control of mobilities and flows,”²³ is then disseminated to computers and mobile devices via the Internet for public use.

Such hi-tech gears lessen the possibilities of getting lost in the city and increase the level of pre-planing of travel. This makes the network of roads more definite and enclosed. A greater unity is maintained between the individual and the organization that the automobility imposes. While these technologies provide a more optimized system

¹⁹ Urry, *The System of Automobility*, 27.

²⁰ Freund, *The Ecology of the Automobile*, 172.

²¹ Thrift, *Driving in the City*, 56.

²² Thrift, *Driving in the City*, 50.

²³ Graham, *Permeable Boundaries in the Software-sorted Society*, 181.

for automobility, they extend the domain of the automobile to the body and home, with the aid of mobile device and the Internet. Today home is connected more seamlessly with the sites of production and consumption.

Stop Pre-mature Ejaculation and Increase Male Sex Drive is an effort to comment on the ever-expanding structure of automobility. The footage of the Plymouth factory appears first in the video, then the images from the highway cameras are seen and finally the fungi video appears. This suggests an order: the production process followed by the consumption (and then they mutually exist throughout the video). The image of co-existence stands on the image of the organism that can travel fastest in nature. The fungi footage tries to suggest a visionary target for the development of production-consumption pair. In the piece the images captured from the online traffic application and fungi footage are edited in a way to form a gradually developing movement. The upper left-hand section starts with the image of an empty road, then the lights of the motionless cars are seen and then the movement and the density of the cars become more visible, which increase with each cut. The cuts are simultaneous in the sections of traffic cameras and the fungi, hinting at a mutual arousal between the two. This tension adds up to the sexual reference between these two, which the former one bearing an indistinct resemblance to the female reproduction organ and the latter the male reproduction organ. Another element that adds to this is the structure of the footage that is taken from the website of the municipality. The data that the cameras capture are transmitted in sequences of three images, which repeats over and over until the next sequence is captured and sent; a technical solution to reduce the load of information. This forms a back and forth effect, which can be associated with sexual thrust. As “car materializes personality and takes part in the ego-formation of the owner or driver as competent, powerful, able and sexually desirable”,²⁴ the automobile already bears sexual references. One more element that is related to the piece's aspect of sexuality is the beginning title of the video: “Stop pre-mature ejaculation and Increase male sex drive”. This intends to give the piece a tone of propaganda film, which tries to demand the citizens to make more use of the highways and automobiles. The title aims to appropriate the terminology and the language of the advertisements and propaganda,

²⁴ Sheller, *Automotive Emotions*, 225.

which becomes more evident with the ending title “Increase now”.

The only unedited footage of the piece is the factory images. This decision is made to comment on the uninterrupted nature of production. Although, these images belong to a Plymouth factory there is no direct reference that it is an automobile production site. One reason to use this particular piece of footage is to try to state that the products of a factory might vary but in the end it is the same social conditions that are reproduced. Another reason is that it is rather an anonymous segment shot at a factory. Again this intends to refer to the ever continuity of production, as if it is randomly cut from an introductory film that might be about any factory.

The soundtrack of the piece is mainly comprised of the soundtrack of the factory footage, which is a parasitic sound. Apart from this a beeping sound is heard with each cut in order to increase the simultaneity of the fungi footage and the footage from the highway cameras. This adds an aural beat to the visual beat, and emphasizes the rhythmic structure of the video.

The major starting point for *Stop Pre-mature Ejaculation and Increase Male Sex Drive* was to use the footage provided by the web application of the municipality. The material is collected through a travel around Istanbul, or a version of it that is heavily altered by the municipality. On a selective basis the application generates a dynamic representation of the city with 175 cameras that are installed at the “critical spots” around the city.²⁵ These spots are the main arterial roads and other roads with high volume of traffic (Fig. 3). However, they are also economically pivotal areas around the city, which is the fundamental reason behind their criticality. By making these critical spots *visible* one more time the application creates another fragment on the city. This might also be seen as a demographic map showing that the greater portion of the travel in the city is being jammed into definite boundaries.

The next chapter focuses on a work that is done at another peripheral level. This time I leave the house and make a travel on foot around the district, which the travel's route is determined by following another network: the advertisement billboards.

²⁵ <http://tkm.ibb.gov.tr/its/itsKamera.aspx>



Figure 3 The view of the online Traffic and Road Condition application of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality - <http://tkm.ibb.gov.tr/yolDurumu/Kameralar.aspx>

CHAPTER 3

TRAVEL #2: AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD FOLLOWING THE BILLBOARDS

1. All that is Solid Dissolves into Air

The free space of commodities is constantly being altered and redesigned in order to become ever more identical to itself, to get close as possible to motionless monotony.

Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*²⁶

All that is Solid Dissolves into Air is a photographic series consisting of extreme close-up shots of the advertisements prints that are placed in the back-lit billboards that stand separately in the streets and at the bus shelters. The title of the series refers and appropriates Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' well-known words.²⁷ The photographs blow the halftone dots up of the advertisement prints. The photographs in the series were taken at a single night during the course of a walk around the district where I live. To determine the route I followed the advertisement billboards and bus shelters. The route forms a circle beginning and ending at my apartment.

This specific design of structures at bus stops – which are placed all around the city without any public consent – consists of a sheltering structure and a space for

²⁶ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 94.

²⁷ “All that is solid melts into air ...” Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, 223.

advertisements at one or each side of the shelter, rendering this basic space into a multifunctional advertisement billboard. On a macro level, the enveloping characteristic of these shelters can be traced through the huge network around any district or any neighborhood. On a micro level the above mentioned characteristic becomes even more intense. These bus shelters virtually wraps up a passenger and makes him or her a part of the billboard. The billboards at the bus shelters and the separately standing ones are installed by the company called Clear Channel, which holds a considerable portion of the outdoor advertising market in the world, with “close to one million displays in 45 countries across 5 continents” as stated on their website²⁸. Its product range is not only limited to bus shelters, but from diverse sizes of billboards and public transport vehicle dressings to city furniture, kiosks, toilets and etc. Anyone that travels in the city or out of the city, whether by car, bus, subway, train, ferry and plane or on foot, is subjected to this network of images. Each time a passenger takes a public transport he or she is welcomed and bid farewell with one of these billboards. It is quite possible to be confronted with the same image of advertisement at the spot that is left behind and the one that is to be arrived at. “By dispersing well-known brands around urban space, advertising can make even unknown cities seem strangely familiar,”²⁹ writes Anne Cronin. The number of billboards is greater than the variety of particular advertisement images that are installed for their eligible period. Therefore, a multiplicity is formed of these images. With their arresting designs advertisements attracts the attention and isolates the eye from the urban space, creating a veil through a succession of repeating images – this is heightened at nighttime with the back-lit set-up; like a frozen television screen. This bears the possibility of diminishing the sense of travel and direction, transforming the city into an index of a certain number of images and setting a standard visual representation for different locations.

The series *All That is Solid Dissolves into Air* has begun at a metro-bus station across the construction of the residence tower of Trump Towers – an executive office tower yet to be built – by “The Trump Organization [that] is the world’s only global

²⁸ <http://www.clearchannel.com/Corporate/PressRelease.aspxPressReleaseID=1564&p=hidden>

²⁹ Cronin, *Advertising and the Metabolism of the City*, 10.

luxury real estate super-brand”³⁰. There was a huge billboard covering all the floor slabs that are going to be the shopping center. This depicted mirrored images of the architectural textures of New York in one half – a geometric composition with reference to skyscrapers – and on the other half Istanbul – with a digitally manipulated image of a mosque's interior. Istanbul is among the seventeen cities in seven countries that are in the real estate portfolio of The Trump Organization.³¹ This may be interpreted as a manifestation of the billboard network discussed above but at a global scale. This generalized representation placed on the ongoing construction, a temporary massive advertisement billboard, faces the long bus station that many billboards stand. In one of these billboards there was the advertisement of a banking company where a famous father and daughter actor couple acting as a cell phone salesman and customer respectively. (The father, as an actor, was also one of the former directors of a socialist theater house in Ankara back in the 1960’s.) All this setting appeared in *harmony* except the look on the father’s face. Overwhelmed with this blank expression on the actor’s face, the halftone dots of the print became visible. This reminded me the fact that each of the images that those countless billboards hold are only composed of dots of different colors and sizes. Although, the arrangement of the halftone dots differ, the essence stays the same.

Making the production technique visible in the photographs, the series are the dissections of the advertisements, attempting to state that all of those images are essentially the same. It involves a reduction of the whole image into a colorful design with a proper composition of dots. The source and the medium of the photographs are also blurred. Furthermore, it is hard to understand whether these images are photographs or works of graphic design. The photographs may also be resembling the traffic sign language having a possibility of becoming deceptive instructions.

For the graduation exhibition fifteen of the photographs in the series are installed on a wall of the gallery space with the intention to form a phrasal structure. (Fig. 4) They are placed starting with simplest one in terms of their visual elements. For

³⁰ http://www.trump.com/Real_Estate_Portfolio/Real_Estate_Portfolio/Real_Estate_Portfolio.asp

³¹ http://www.trump.com/Real_Estate_Portfolio/Real_Estate_Portfolio/Real_Estate_Portfolio.asp

instance, the first one bears two rectangular areas of different tones of color blue, but a following one bears inclined lines and different colors. The size of the prints are 10x15 cm each, which is one of the most common print sizes that the touristic photographs are presented. The purpose of this travel was to go and see the billboards and capture these *haunting* images. On that relation between photography and the tourist Urry writes: “tourism becomes in effect a search for the photogenic; travel is a strategy for the accumulation of photographs.”³²



Figure 4 "All that is Solid Dissolves into Air", exhibition view

2. First Contact

First Contact (Fig. 5) is one of the photographs in the series *All that is Solid Dissolves into Air*. It is the only figurative among the other photographs in the series. While the remaining photographs in the series are composed of abstract forms, an exterior door handle of a car is depicted in *First Contact*.

³² Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 139.

The door handle of a car is the part of a car which usually a driver or a passenger initially touches. Pulling the handle of a car initiates the integration between the bodies of the car and its users. This might also be considered as the subject's shift to a different sociological and psychological realm – a dominion of power. The mass production of car have been shaping the society since the early 20th century, in the sense of human psychology and discrimination, architecture and real estate speculation, dwindling natural resources and other environmental aspects, the growth of various multi-national corporations and conflicts between the countries. “Automobility” as Urry puts “can be

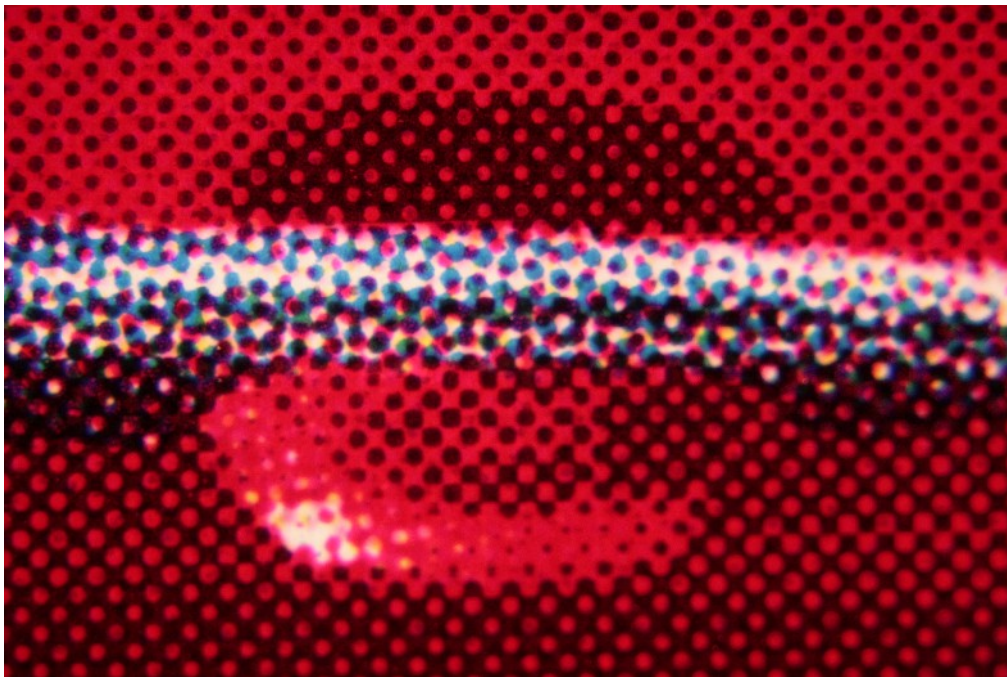


Figure 5 "First Contact"

conceptualized as a self-organizing autopoietic, non-linear system that spreads world-wide, and includes cars, car-drivers, roads, petroleum supplies and many novel objects, technologies and signs.”³³ Probably being the most visible machine of the urban “car has become a common feature of everyday life itself [...], almost a background to the background.”³⁴

Writing on the assemblage of human and car Tim Dant states that “[t]he embodied

³³ Urry, *The 'System' of Automobility*, 27.

³⁴ Thrift, *Driving in the City*, 46.

orientation to being in a fast-moving object in a restricted space with other fast-moving objects is a cultural phenomenon that has become characteristic of late modern societies.”³⁵ With a car's key getting inside the ignition switch, the subject surrenders to this “fast-moving object”. As “the car provides an extension of the human body, surrounding the fragile, soft and vulnerable human skin with a new steel skin,”³⁶ this superior human reinforces “different regimes of trust”³⁷, which the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other drivers is dependent on. Being another manifestation of the uneven distribution of capital, automobility shapes the organization and the expansion of cities: “split[ting] homes and business districts, undermining local retail outlets to which one might have walked or cycled, eroding town-centers, non-car pathways and public spaces.”³⁸

When the construction of the first motorway, BAB 555, was completed in Germany in 1932³⁹, it became an introductory model for other countries and the speed of motorized travel elevated considerably all over the world⁴⁰. The motorway allowed masses to reach the peripheries of the cities *easily*. New territories became habitable and gated residential areas and shopping islands as their satellites had started to appear. Now on Sundays it is likely to see long lines of cars queued in front of shopping malls. Despite all the discriminating and destructive characteristics, high rates of taxing on cars and gasoline, automobility prevails as a major growing urban crisis, – which also the highway construction policies encourage. The car remains as “the major item of *individual consumption* after housing which provides status to its owner/user through its sign values (such as speed, security, safety, sexual desire, career success, freedom, family, masculinity); through being easily anthropomorphized by given names, having rebellious features, seen to age and so on[.]”⁴¹

³⁵ Dant, *The Driver Car*, 74.

³⁶ Urry, *The ‘System’ of Automobility*, 31.

³⁷ Mike Featherstone, Introduction to *Automobilities*, 12.

³⁸ Urry, *The ‘System’ of Automobility*, 28.

³⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundesautobahn_555

⁴⁰ Freund, *The Ecology of the Automobile*, 83.

⁴¹ Urry, *The ‘System’ of Automobility*, 26.

From an advertising billboard *First Contact* dissects the agent of an intense moment of unity that happens between the two sides, the car and the owner, of the intimate relation mentioned at the above quote. It attempts to comment on the enigmatic and sparkling excitement that is aroused with the first touch on this roaring machine. However, being an extreme close-up photograph *First Contact* exaggerates the particular print technique's characteristic of being comprehensible when looked at a certain distance. The required viewing distance is increased; getting closer would only make it muddier and harder to comprehend.

Being the only work with a provocative color among the other works in the graduation exhibition, *First Contact* also is the one with the largest dimensions, 2.5x3 m. It was printed on a blue back paper, which is used for outdoor advertisement prints that are applied with glue and water to the huge billboards. The work was applied on one of the walls in the gallery space by using the same technique. First through a macro lens and then by printing in large scales the work intends to exaggerate and blow up a miniscule of the original image for twice. Furthermore, aiming to refer to religious idols in sites of worship there is an intension of assigning an iconic tone to the work over its large size. This refers to the immense billboards – some literally called totems – that are placed near the highways for the fast drivers to grasp the mediated messages – which maybe the signs that are indicating the shifts in worshipping practices. In reference to this the works is installed in a section which is rather secluded from the other works in the exhibition. (Fig. 6) The photographs of the series *All that is Solid Dissolves into Air* were placed on the outside of the wall that can be seen on the right in Figure 6. They aimed at leading the viewer to this area of seclusion, which had a different atmosphere than the rest of the exhibition. From this section other works in the exhibition were almost out of sight. Because of its color the lights that were reflecting from it caused the space to be filled with a reddish light. This might also be heightening the effect of difference in atmosphere. My intension was to create a space where the viewer was left alone with this image of consumption, which was hard to grasp what was depicted with it, almost like in a confessional.



Figure 6 "First Contact", exhibition view



Figure 7 "First Contact", exhibition view

CHAPTER 4

TRAVEL #3: THROUGH AN ARTERIAL ROAD

In the video piece *a Reconstructed Panorama* a horizontal horizontal fragment of a footage showing two building blocks is repeated for thirteen times one on top of each other. The footage was shot during a bus travel from home to university campus. The digitally acquired fragment is as if taking a slice, at the size of one floor, from the



Figure 8 “A Reconstructed Panorama”, original image

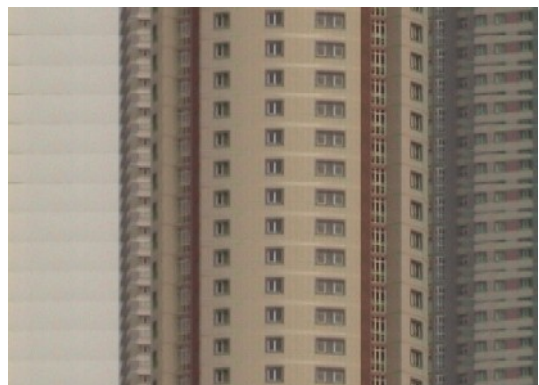


Figure 9 “A Reconstructed Panorama”, reconstructed image

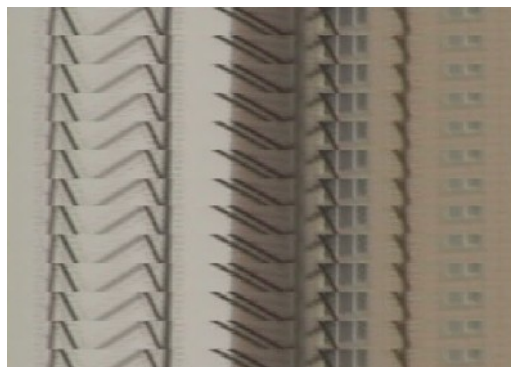


Figure 10 “A Reconstructed Panorama”, distorted view

original image of the building and reconstructing the building by juxtaposing them vertically arriving at a new image considerably similar to the original. As only one fragment of the original image is repeated the remaining of the footage is distorted too, blurring the view and transforming it into stripes of geometric forms with sharp edges and crossing lines. (Figures 8, 9 and 10)

The building blocks seen in the video belong to two huge housing estates: Ağaoğlu My World Ataşehir (Ağaoğlu Co.) – the owner of which is the 6th richest person in the country⁴² – and Uphill Court Ataşehir (Varyap Co.). The former of these gated residential areas occupies an area of 186,000 m² holding 3,636 flats⁴³ while this proportion is 100,000 m² to 1742 flats for the latter one.⁴⁴ All equipped with camera controlled security systems, alarms and protected by private security companies, they are positioned at a district, Ataşehir, where almost all dwelling is formed of such residential areas and shopping malls as their satellites. “Both the practice and products of urban development in the 1980s were transformed in ways that have reshaped the physical fabric of cities and the urban experience”⁴⁵ describes Susan Christopherson for America. With its first settlement in 1990 and its more than 360,000 inhabitants Ataşehir is a model in Turkey for above statement.⁴⁶ As of now the ongoing and finished constructions are executed by more than twenty private construction companies and Housing Development Administration of Turkey.⁴⁷

The roots of this architectural mode can be traced back to Coney Island, the cradle and once the heart of entertainment during the 19th and at the turn of the 20th century.⁴⁸ It is “the testing ground of 'the technology of the fantastic for the rest of New York.”⁴⁹ In *Delirious New York* Rem Koolhaas calculates that “[t]he Globe Tower can

⁴² <http://www.cnnturk.com/2010/ekonomi/genel/02/26/forbes.en> [see works cited]

⁴³ <http://www.myworld.com.tr/tr/proje.asp>

⁴⁴ <http://www.varyap.com/tr/48/gayrimenkul/konut/uphill-court-atasehir-11.htm>

⁴⁵ Christopherson, *The Fortress City*, 411.

⁴⁶ <http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:csnoR-hoD4EJ> [see works cited]

⁴⁷ <http://www.istanbulkonutprojeleri.net/atasehir.html>

⁴⁸ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 29-80.

⁴⁹ Foster, *Rem Koolhaas*, 147.

reproduce that part of the world it occupies 5,000 times.”⁵⁰ Hal Foster speaks of Koolhaas, who “celebrates Manhattan for its 'culture of congestion’”⁵¹, as “his heart belongs to the Manhattan grid . . . [which] was all about real-estate speculation.”⁵² Foster continues as “[f]or the grid allowed different forms and functions to be juxtaposed at the level of the block 'maximum unit of urbanistic ego', while the skyscraper (the grid writ small) did the same at the level of the floor.”⁵³ The contemporary aesthetic of residential areas is determined by this 'urbanistic ego' and by fundamental motives such as profit maximization. But “the experience of the contemporary city, [...] cannot be reduced, however, to an impoverished aesthetic or to be oppression of economic forces.”⁵⁴ Christopherson discusses 'this sophisticated consumption environment' in a broader sense and raise questions of, surveillance at an expanded geographic scale and crime, 'control and regulation of human behavior', standardized consumption culture and the segregation of the local – the ethnic – from the 'urban', disappearance of the street⁵⁵ and “managing 'public space' for private ends.”⁵⁶ Also quoting Koolhaas, Foster describes this environment as “the oxymoronic city that so many of us love today – 'ordered and fluid , a metropolis of rigid chaos.’”⁵⁷

By appropriating the construction principle of 'generic urbanism'⁵⁸ the piece *a Reconstructed Panorama* aims at blurring the scene that the residential blocks form. The buildings that are seen at the beginning are vertically going out of the frame – rising up to the sky to an unknown level – as a result of the digital duplication. As the horizontal movement starts in the video the image of buildings horizontally expand to the frame, leaving behind a trace of flowing intricate geometric patterns. (Fig. 11) This

⁵⁰ Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 75.

⁵¹ Foster, *Rem Koolhaas*, 146.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 147.

⁵³ Foster, *Rem Koolhaas*, 147.

⁵⁴ Christopherson, *The Fortress City*, 410.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 409-427.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 418.

⁵⁷ Foster, *Rem Koolhaas*, 147.

⁵⁸ Christopherson, *The Fortress City*, 410.

building is shot from a particular bus, which is the most frequent one that I use to go from home to the campus. The buildings that are seen in the video are the ones that are located near a large interchange that the bus takes for the Istanbul Motorway. They are like colossal monuments welcoming and bidding farewell for the ones who drives through this route. Further to the duplicatory process explained above the complexity of those patterns is heightened by the mechanical movement of the bus in which the camera is attached to it via a tripod. While capturing these massive static units of the urban, the bus' reactions to the inclining and declining curvilinear organization of the interchange is recorded. This intends to add and amplify the aspect of mobility and means of it. The word 'panorama' in the title and the decision to shoot from the bus to take advantage of its panoramic view are used to refer to the panorama parks – which were one of the predecessors of cinema that emerged with the modernity – and for to hint at the spectacularization of the city.



Figure 11 A portion of Ataşehir on Google Maps

<http://maps.google.com/ie=UTF8&ll=40.994994,29.112654&spn=0.040942,0.111666&t=h&z=14>

CHAPTER 5

TRAVEL #4: THROUGH DIFFERENT PERIMETERS AROUND THE CITY

It is possible when a person honestly doesn't know which of these papers is important and which is not, why one principle of selection is better than another, and what distinguishes a pile of necessary papers from a pile of garbage.⁵⁹

Kabakov, *Ten Characters*

The work called, *From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands* brings together four different groups of objects within the body of an installation. These objects are gathered from different places, some of which are unknown. The first of these objects, object group #1, (Fig. 12) consists of EPS (expanded polystyrene) pieces that are gathered from packages of IKEA. Although, some of them are the ones that were collected from the purchases of acquaintances, most of them were obtained through Izmir IKEA. The object group #2 (Fig. 13) is comprised of dried seaweed balls, which were found washed upon the shore and collected from a coast on the Aegean Sea. The object group #3 (Fig. 14) and #4 (Fig. 15) includes two different kinds of plastic objects that are used for construction purposes. They were found around the ruins of a building at the side of the motorway during a trip from Izmir to Istanbul. What these objects have in common is that they all are the refusals of different processes. Such things are generally classified as garbage.

⁵⁹ Kabakov, *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away*, 33.



Figure 12 Object Group #1



Figure 13 Object Group #2



Figure 14 Object Group #3



Figure 15 Object Group #4

The origin of the work lies in one specific question: How does one decide to get rid of a certain object or a good? Is it when its content comes to an end, it is outmoded or it has fulfilled its function? Andy Warhol writes in *the Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* “Everything in your closet should have an expiration date on it the way milk and bread and magazines and newspaper do, and once something passes its expiration date you should throw it out.”⁶⁰ On the other hand Andrea Zittel states that there are “two authors of every object – one is the designer, the other is the owner (or user).”⁶¹ So, according to this position the user decides the expiration date not the object or the designer – producer – of it. But when does something really expire? Is there anything that does not expire? “. . . simple common sense tells us that, with the exception of important papers, memorable postcards and

⁶⁰ Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, 31.

⁶¹ Weil, *Home is Where the Art is / Andrea Zittel Responds*, 119.

other letters which are dear to the heart, the rest is of no value and is simply rubbish”⁶² writes Ilya Kabakov.

Through cultural and spatial codes the physical and psychological order at home is subjected to this common sense that Kabakov mentions. Some particular objects, furniture, tools and machines belong to certain rooms in a house. Although, a house becomes messy from time to time, the general structure of it does not undergo a major change. These codes and the mode of order can be observed in the catalog of IKEA, where the EPS pieces belonged in the first place. Foster starts the chapter *Design and Crime*, in the book *Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)*, with a discussion on Art Nouveau. He writes that “this pan-European movement pledged to a *Gesamtkunstwerk* or 'total work' of arts and crafts, in which everything from architecture to ashtrays was subject to a florid kind of decoration . . . ”⁶³ Visually resembling the design language of Bauhaus rather than Art Nouveau, what IKEA offers is an example of the above quote, but only for the interior. Ingvar Kamprad, the founder of IKEA, describes the product range of the company in his *A Furniture Dealer's Testament*: “The objective must be to encompass the total home environment, i.e. to offer furnishings and fittings for every part of the home whether indoors or outdoors. The range may also include tools, utensils and ornaments for the home as well as more or less advanced components for do-it-yourself furnishing and interior decoration.”⁶⁴ The *2011 IKEA* catalog does not only include “furnishings and fittings” but also a way of living among those products: a 'life style'. A repeated statement in the catalog might be a clear manifestation of this: “Bring this style home today.”⁶⁵ Foster quotes a question from Bruce Mau's *Life Style* and answers: “How does an entity declare itself within an environment?’ You guessed it: design.”⁶⁶ Expressions such as “For the night clubber in you”⁶⁷, “For the party planner in

⁶² Kabakov, *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away*, 31.

⁶³ Foster, *Design and Crime*, 66.

⁶⁴ Edvardsson and Enquist, *Values-based Service for Sustainable Business: Lessons from IKEA*, 116.

⁶⁵ *2011 IKEA*, 141.

⁶⁶ Foster, *Design and Crime*, 71.

⁶⁷ *2011 IKEA*, 48.

you”⁶⁸ or “For the collector in you”⁶⁹ supports Foster's answer. He calls such archetypical roles that are set through design objects, 'mini-me's. “Desire is not only registered in products today, it is specified there: a self-interpellation of 'hey, that's me' greets the consumer in catalogs and on-line.”⁷⁰ Towards the end of the IKEA catalog there is a photograph of a couple relaxing in a living room environment, with books placed on the shelves, TV set and all. At the bottom of the image writes: “Welcome home to your IKEA store! Let your senses while you explore all the different rooms and homes, getting inspiration, tips and ideas in a real-life setting.”⁷¹ This constitutes to a commodification process of the subject. The visitor becomes a prop, a furniture, in this *real-life setting*, a complementary element designed through design itself, a part of the content of the package. The subject buys itself – or its new self – and brings home with the package. The cycle of order is sustained from store to home.

Besides furniture parts a package of IKEA furniture that is brought to home often consists of corrugated cardboard as the outer-shell, one or more plastic bags for some small pieces and some cushioning material, which may be cardboard or paper but mostly expanded polystyrene (EPS) pieces. EPS “is a lightweight, rigid, plastic foam insulation material produced from solid beads of polystyrene”⁷², which was discovered by Eduard Simon, a German apothecary, in 1839, from storax, the resinous exudate of the Turkish sweetgum tree (*Liquidambar orientalis*)⁷³. It is used in various fields, such as production of bicycle helmets⁷⁴ or in explosives⁷⁵. The ones that are found in the furniture packages are in the form of rectangular prisms. They fill the space in the packages that is left over the furniture parts. The outer package and the plastic bags bear a certain typographical and compositional design elements, such as the name, code,

⁶⁸ 2011 *IKEA*, 104.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁷⁰ Foster, *Design and Crime*, 69.

⁷¹ 2011 *IKEA*, 359.

⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polystyrene#Expanded_polystyrene

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ <http://www.eumeps.org/>

⁷⁵ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/munitions/napalm.htm>

dimensions of the product and etc. Unlike these the EPS pieces are totally white. The total volume that they occupy is equal to the residual space of the furniture parts. Once the package is opened the unity of corrugated cardboard and plastic bags are worn but the EPS pieces remain the same.

In a house the only space that is independent of the context of the cultural and spatial codes mentioned above is the garbage can. There is chaos inside the garbage can. It holds the material that is coming from all around the house. The content of it corresponds to the decision process of what is garbage and what is not. (The garbage pit can be seen as the manifestation of this at an urban scale.) There are few situations that the chaotic structure of the garbage can may diminish. One may be classification of garbage for the sake of recycling. This is rather unintentional as the evolution of the whole industry obliged the society to be environmentally conscious. Another one may be the particular case of the EPS pieces. The products of IKEA are designed to occupy a space as little as possible (flat-packing) for cost minimization – which helps the company to attain a global market easier than its competitors. This puts an emphasis on the modularity of the design, inclining a higher degree of order. (This is also a component of the overall display and sales strategy.) Therefore the cushioning material get its share of this orderliness. This material, EPS pieces, only functions at an interval starting with the packaging of the furniture and ending with the opening of that package at the purchaser's house. When it reached the end of its life span and find its place in the garbage can, the chaos is deprived of this small space and the code that dictates the order at home is extended with this design and production process.

The work *From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands* extended the expiration date of those clean, white geometric forms and gathered them before entering the void of the garbage can. The initial idea was to exhibit these pieces on tables. (Fig. 16) There would be an accompanying text, which would present a layout sketch of the table having information on the dimensions of the packages and the dimensions of EPS pieces coming out of those specific packages, as wells as the particular furniture's name, code and dimensions. The title was “a Group of Specimen Taken from Several Furniture Packages” and the idea behind it was to present a projection of a future garbage can. My aim was to create a laboratory environment. However, as it was a setting this attempt

limited the intentions of the work. The reason to take the pieces down on the floor was because of the formal and conceptual possibilities that the work would develop. Moreover, another conceptual approach was that the EPS pieces, which represent the once negative space of the furniture at their disassembled state – their embryonic state – would remain on the floor, as they do after the assembling the furniture at home. Meanwhile a first sketch with EPS pieces emerged in relation with the object group #2 and some discarded plastic bottles, which were also collected from different shores (Fig. 17). Later these plastic bottles were eliminated as they were familiar object, but on the



Figure 16 Sketch for "a Group of Specimen Taken from Several Packages of Furniture"



Figure 17 Initial sketch on the floor

contrary the EPS pieces and the seaweed balls bore a certain ambiguity, thus communicating with each other on a visual basis. With the emergence of object group #3 and #4, a common visual and conceptual language among the objects became visible as they were all wastes of certain processes and collected during various travels. They were taken out of their regular progressions, which had reached a stagnant stage before I collected them.

After gathering all these groups of objects (Figures 12, 13, 14 & 15) different strategies were tried for installation sketches. While some of these sketches only incorporated formal approaches, some were executed with vague narrative implications. But to hint at the over abundance of the mass-produced goods the dominant material in all the sketches was the EPS pieces. Below there are the details of this process under six versions that were realized so far.

1. First Situation

Entering through the door, seen at the upper left-hand of the photo, the viewer immediately stepped – was even obliged to do so – in this first version of the installation, which was based on the idea of creating areas or paths of different characteristics (Figures 18 & 19). The main path worked like a corridor leading to other sections. On the left of this path there was an area which did not have any entrance. It was all surrounded by the object group #1. While on the right side there was one apparent turn becoming a dead-end. This one had the same width with the main pathway. Just ahead of this section there was another one, not a dead-end this time, but a narrower one having almost the width of a foot, which required a certain level of acrobatics to pass through it. Furthermore, the pieces of object group #3 that were lined up at one side of this path might have urged the viewer to pay more attention to



Figure 18 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", first situation

his/her moves. While this path was harder to go through, with its open end it indicated an exit out of this system of areas. However, this open end also lead to an enclosed space defined by one side of the former path and the ongoing part of the main corridor.

When this version is finished an undesired outcome had emerged. All these arrangements to form a variety of areas had surpassed the characteristics of the materials used in the work. They started to work as some kind of brick that was used to construct certain spaces. Their function became almost the same. The composition caused the objects to become over defined. With the later version, attempts to overcome this situation were tried out.



Figure 19 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", first situation

2. Second Situation

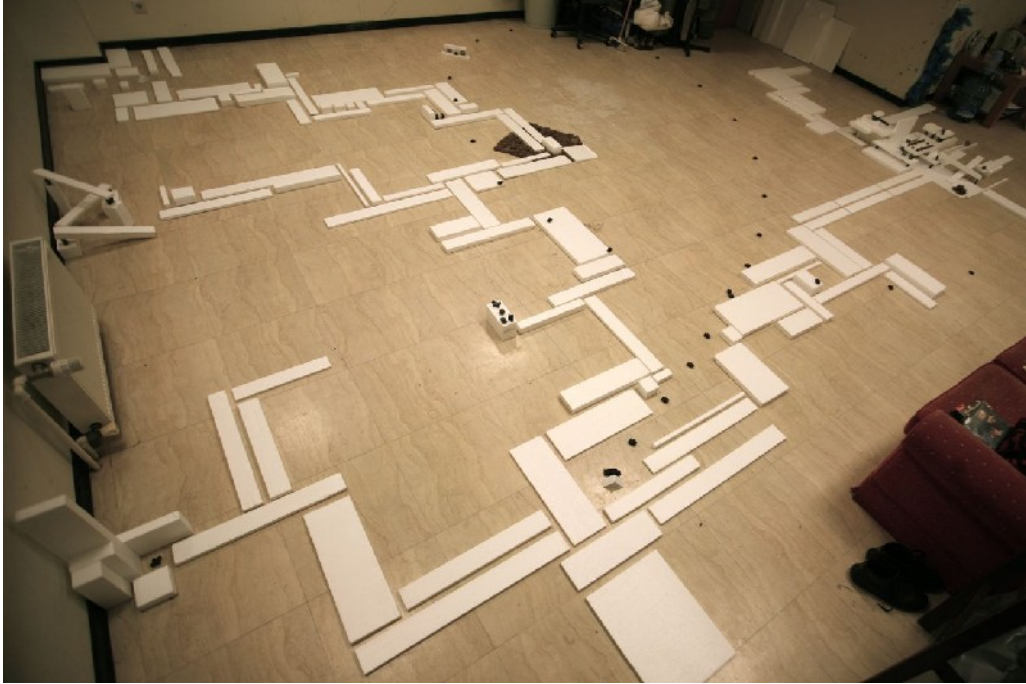


Figure 20 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", second situation

The strategy used in this situation was to start from a corner, which might be considered as an elementary system that initiates a definition of space. The object group #1 began to spread from the corner that is seen at the upper left corner of Figure 20. The pieces advanced on the empty floor of the studio, branching out to different directions at certain points. Some of these went on to explore the space, getting farther from the original starting point, and some headed towards a wall. In the case of confrontation with a wall the movement tended to become vertical as there was no ground left for horizontal expansion. This was an intention to refer to the end of a nomadic progression and the emergence of vertical advancement of the settlers. Each elevation had a different style (Figures 21 & 22). Also in this version, the pieces of object group #1 were conjoined in a more harmonious way than they did in the former version as there

was not an effort to fit several rows of them into predetermined dimensions.

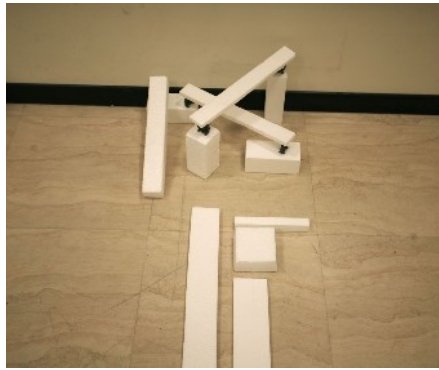


Figure 21 Second situation, detail

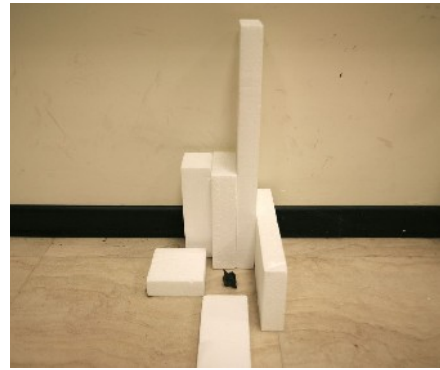


Figure 22 Second situation, detail

The elements other than the object group #1 became more visible with this version when compared to their use in the first situation. Some of them were organized in relation with the object group #1 and some independently. However, the ones that were used in the structure that is seen in Figure 23 failed to attain an identity of their own and start to function as construction materials only. In this structure, which was rather like a model, the pieces of object group #3 were used to create different levels, as if they were like bays. They turned into slave units, which might also be meaningful, but its – lack – of formal attributes overcrowded the general structure leading to overstatement. The harmony, which might be observed in Figures 21 and 22, disappeared with this particular construction.

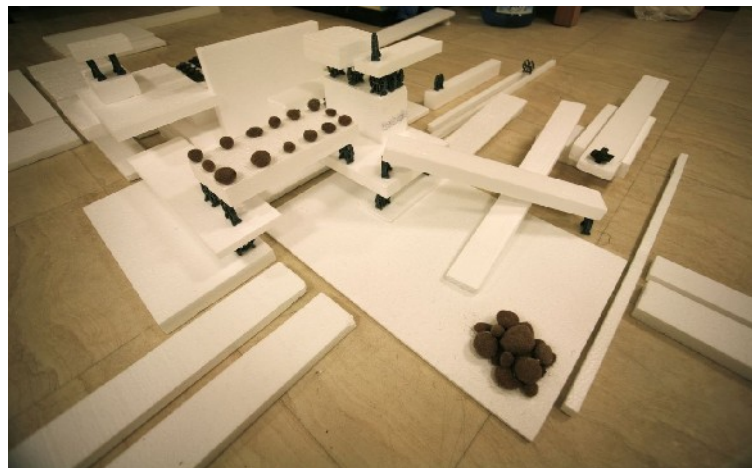


Figure 23 Second situation, detail

The object group #2, which are the only natural components in the work, seen in Figure 23 also intensified the construction's resemblance with a model. The ones on the left were like the potted plants that are placed at the top of the big residential buildings or business centers and the ones on the right stood for the recreational areas that are compacted in housing estates. These failed to improve the overall work, but almost became ornaments of this particular structure. Another one where this group of objects were used can be seen in Figure 24. Here the object group #1 penetrated a group of these objects and carried on with its expansion. This group of object group #2 tended to take a similar shape to the pieces in object group #1.

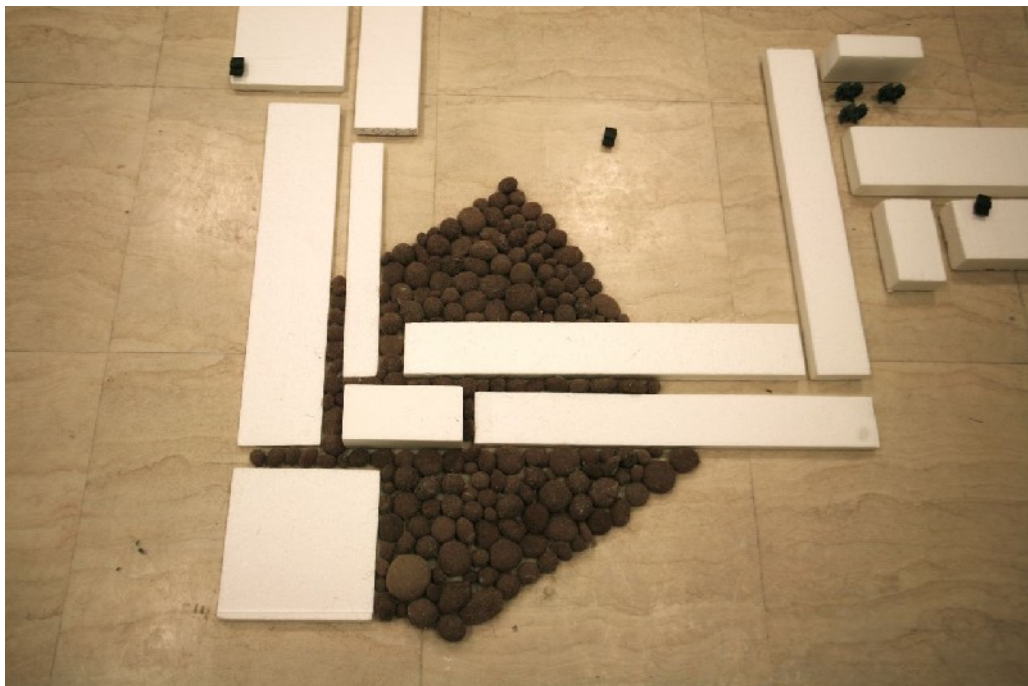


Figure 24 Second situation, detail

3. Third Situation

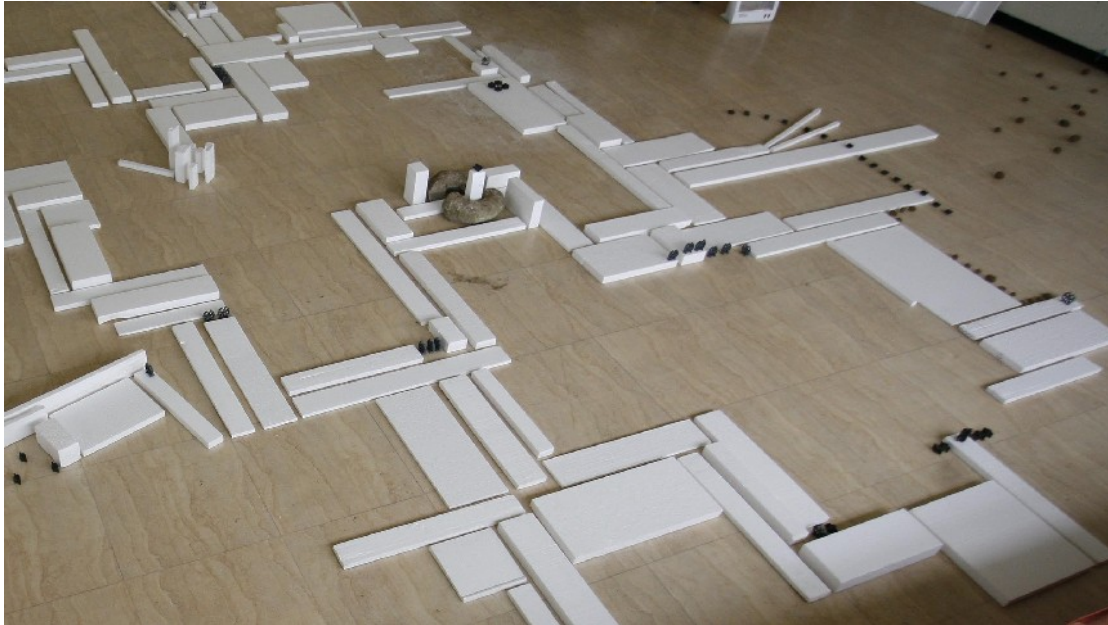


Figure 25 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", third situation

In this third situation rather than starting from a corner the installation originated from a central point, expanding to the peripheries (Fig. 25). The main scheme for growth remained the same with the second situation. A horizontal movement was present, and a vertical one was applied when the object group #1 were confronted by a wall. Other than the object group #2, another natural material, a piece of rock that was trimmed to take the form of a ring, is brought into work. This was also found – broken in to two – with the object groups #3 and #4, around the ruins of the same building. The reason to use this rather massive material was to suggest a creation myth, as such monumental structures, whether constructed or natural, are the signs of sites of prayer or places with religious significance – such as Ka'aba, Mount Moriah and etc. One piece of each of the groups #3 and #4 were placed inside the stone, hinting at two different belief systems – or ways of expansion (Fig. 26). One was based on the ground and the totem-like one was related with the skies. As the object group #1 covered the floor these

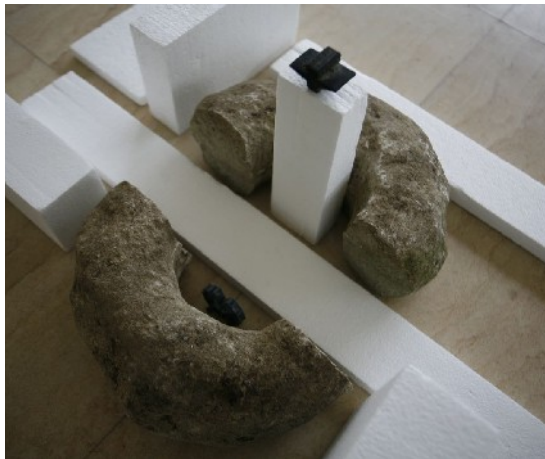


Figure 26 Third situation, detail

objects were seen in different organizations, trying to comment on how such myths have been differently interpreted and effected the shaping of societies and settlements.

There are four spots where the object group #1 was used vertically to depict a city. Again the pieces tended to mimic an architectural model, which became more evident in this version.

However, this caused the work to

become rather illustrative at such points mentioned above. This might have caused an immediate association with the residential housing estate areas. Alternative organizations were applied while placing the object groups #2, #3 and #4 among the object group #1. One of these organizations brought together objects from each group. (Fig. 27) Several pieces of object group #2 were placed in a messy way among the pieces of the object group # 1. The reason behind this was to suggest a ruined and abandoned state, as if this site faced a natural catastrophe in its history. (In another spot it can be seen that the forces of nature are kept under control – fig. 28) This was the only spot where objects of groups #3 and #4 stood close to each other. However, the worn out condition of the model intended to indicate the failure of a coexistence.



Figure 27 Third situation, detail



Figure 28 Third situation, detail

In the model that is seen in Figure 29 a single piece of object group #1 was juxtaposed with several pieces of object group #4, which were arranged in a very orderly manner. On the contrary the neighboring model (Fig. 30) included several pieces of object group #1 and one unit from the object group #3. However, this single unit was a distorted – an interpreted – one. Unlike its original placement inside the circular stone it was elevated from the ground. These two models tried to hint at how an original concept might change during the course of time, thus history is fiction.

The rest of this version expanded to the remaining space of the studio, reaching out to the freely floating pieces of object group #2. (Fig. 31) This bore the impression of an open, still-advancing system, trying to impose its formal foundation to the objects that comes across its way. (Fig. 32) The organization was based on compositional concerns, trying to break the perpendicular structure of the first situation.

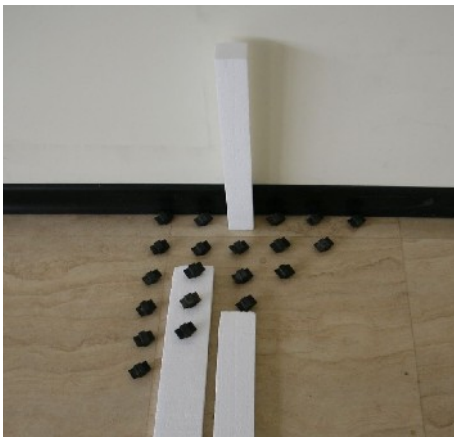


Figure 29 Third situation, detail



Figure 30 Third situation, detail

Unintentionally the third version has become a combination of two different strategies. It evolved from a rather illustrative and narrativized form to a more abstract and open-ended structure. These aspects are explored in the further versions, trying to take away the illustrative aspects and adjusting the narrative tone to move towards a rather conceptual approach.

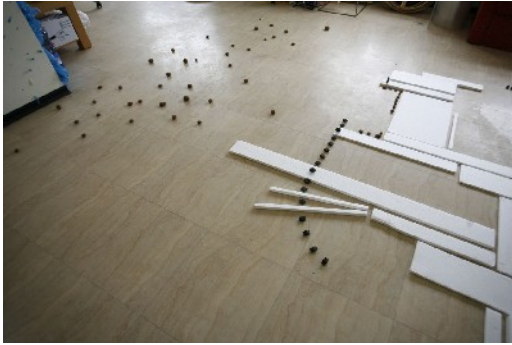


Figure 31 Third situation, detail

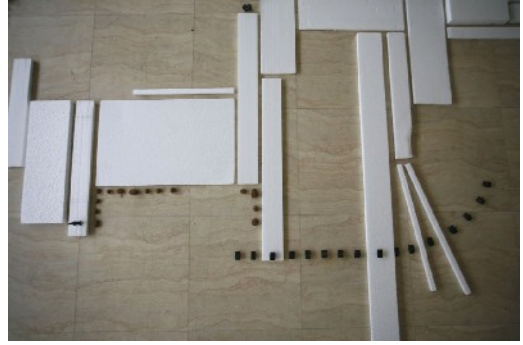


Figure 32 Third situation, detail

4. Fourth Situation



Figure 33 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", fourth situation

Although the fourth configuration was shaped by a chance operation, it was probably the most narrative bound one. It was executed by randomly throwing all the

pieces of object group #2 on the floor of the studio. The idea was based on the random distribution of the natural resources. Once these resources were discovered the societal groupings started to form around them. In this case two different parties simultaneously started to appear around the zones which are richest in resources (marked with the dashed white line in Figure 33). The object group #3 appeared on the left-hand side of the configuration and group #4 on the right-hand side, trying to hint at two rival/enemy sides. The first structures that were set up might be thought as processing centers for the resources, the basic foundation of their civilizations (Figures 34 & 35). The expansion of the object group #1 began from these spots, following the routes where the pieces of object group #2 was available.



Figure 34 Fourth situation, detail



Figure 35 Fourth situation, detail

The second distinct structure, which both sides possessed, was a vertically developed one (Figures 36 & 37). These structures had artillery-like extensions and they were formed with an intention to relate to the representation of the supreme power of military state. Also the objects from group #3 and #4 were placed in opposing positions due to the imaginary rivalry (Fig. 38).

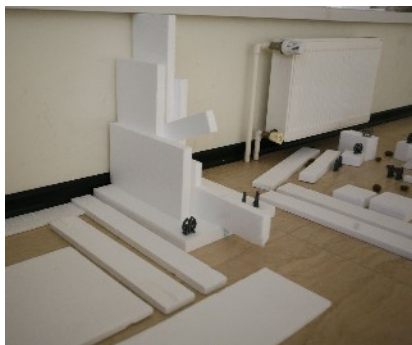


Figure 36 Fourth sit., detail



Figure 37 Fourth situation, detail



Figure 38 Fourth situation, detail

However conflicting these sides might be, there was one common denominator that they have, which was the imaginary exploitation of the natural resources. I would like to think that the object group #2 also stood for the labor force as well as the resources in this situation. Such placements in Figures 39 and 40 were done considering this thought. Another common point was the object group #1. They were the main element of the capital, spreading all over the floor.

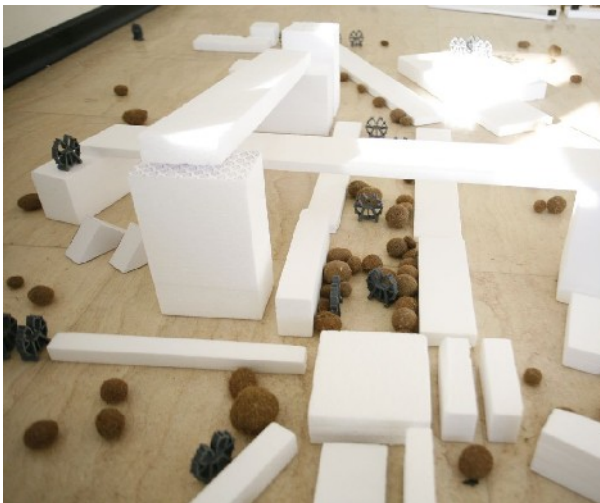


Figure 39 Fourth situation, detail



Figure 40 Fourth situation, detail

There was one section, seen in the figure above, which floated separately from the overall organization (Fig. 41). This was only composed of the object group #1 and one big piece from object group #2 positioned at the center. There was no clashing sides and

a unity became visible, both materially and formally. All the complexity of production and struggle were deprived off of this area, only pure capital was visible. For the sake of prosperity, commerce brought unity, but a discriminatory one. Objects of the groups #3 and #4 were also excluded as they were actually a part of labor. With the piece of the object group #2 at the center, the prevailing sterile and rigid establishment exploited the natural resources – or the essential labor force – once again, but this time it happened over its image. It can be thought as the ostensible respect or gratitude shown to the very foundation of its existence.

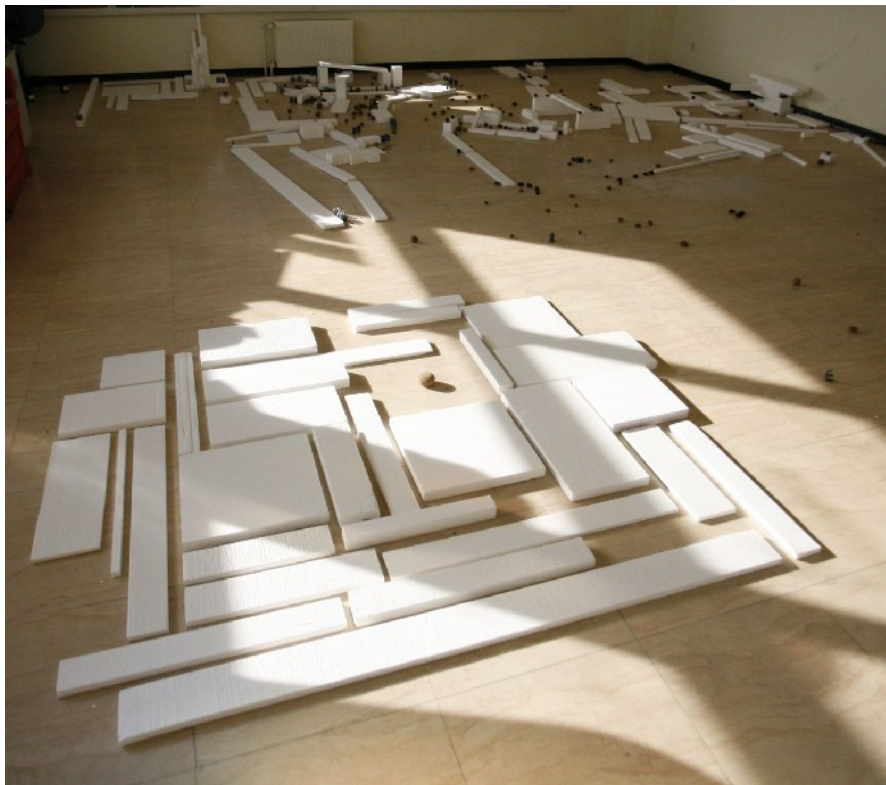


Figure 41 Fourth situation, detail

5. Fifth Situation

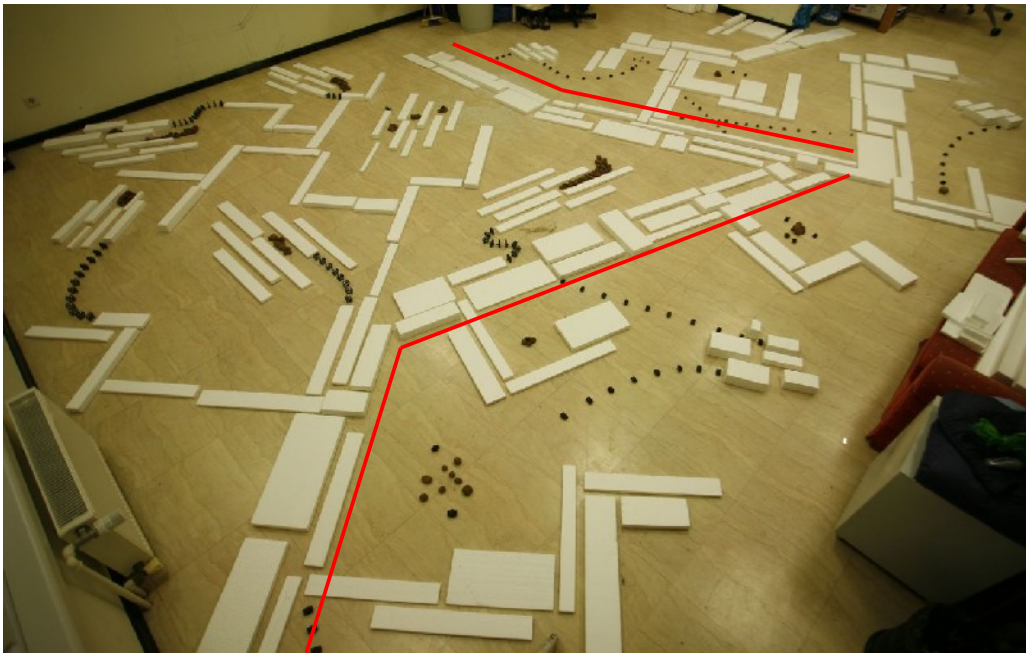


Figure 42 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", fifth situation

Similar to the previous one there were two areas in this situation that were separated with the object group #1. The pieces of the group #1 were ordered to form a rampart. (marked with the red line in Fig. 42) This was an intention to create an inner and an outer region. I began by grouping longer EPS pieces on the empty floor and then formed the rampart. After this I made similar groups at the right side of the rampart, but this time with shorter and thicker pieces of object group #1. This situation might be a fraction of a spot where two peripheral areas were juxtaposed, a sample from a border zone. Each area had its own characteristics. The objects of the groups #3 and #4 had no contact – communication – between each other as they were placed in different regions. All the objects of group #3 were arranged in curvilinear rows, which the ends of these rows connected the border structure or its extensions with the isles of object group #1

(Figures 43 & 44), which floated between the wall and the border.

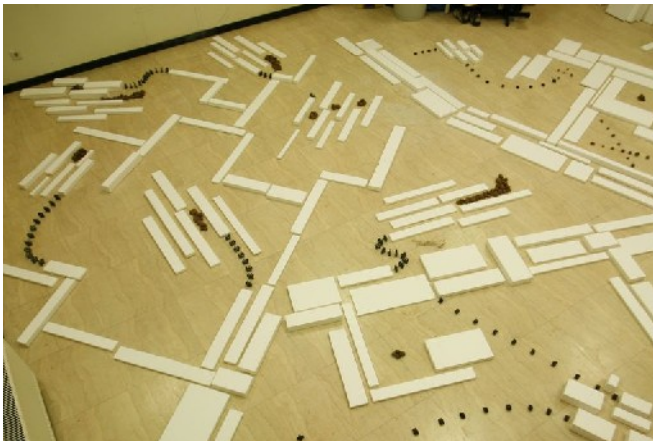


Figure 43 Fifth situation



Figure 44 Fifth situation, detail

Having different formations the object group #4 was placed at the outer zone. They were ordered in straight rows, where they moved towards the inner region. (Fig. 45) They made curves when they had advanced towards the spaces where several pieces of object group #2 were placed. (Figures 46 & 47)

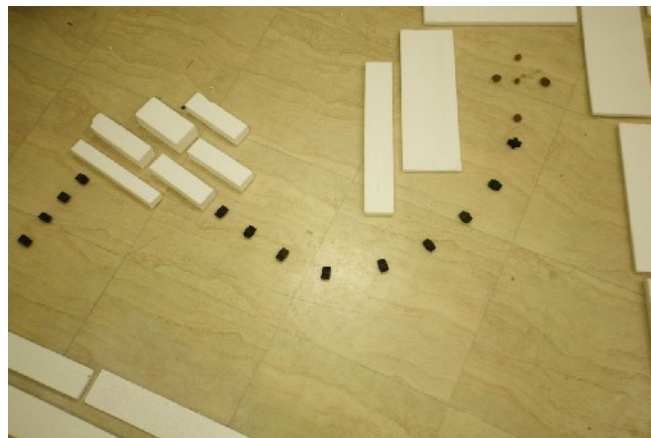


Figure 45 Fifth situation, detail

The common object that can be seen in both areas was the object group #2, but their formal representations bore differences. On the inner zone each isle of object group #1 possessed its own pile of object group #2, which might be considered as a rather private facility (Fig. 46). However, on the outer zone pieces of object group #2

were placed in the empty spaces that is formed by the rampart structure's outer extensions, hinting at a public use. (Figures 42 & 47)

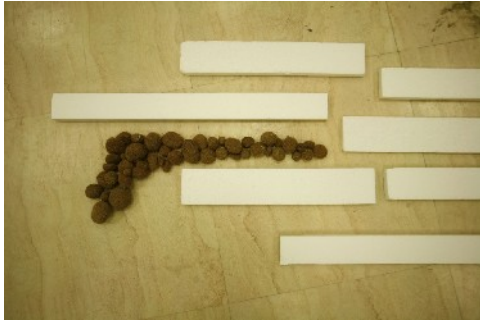


Figure 46 Fifth situation, detail

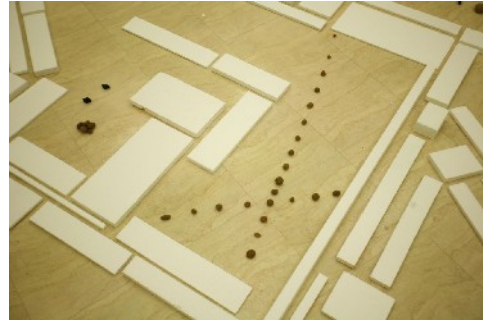


Figure 47 Fifth situation, detail

Although, this fifth situation carried some narrative implications and as such narrative possibilities began to be exhausted, the objects started to become more autonomous and the formal characteristics in the arrangements tended to come forward.

6. Sixth Situation

The sixth situation carried no narrative elements, thus it became more open to play and experimenting (Fig. 48). I concentrated more on creating different spaces, initially arranging the object group #1. The setup started from four different points – corners – of the space converging towards to center, some blocking each other's way and forming a unity and others penetrating through. The object groups #2, #3 and #4 were placed into these spaces, again having architectural associations. (Figures 49 & 50)

The sixth version became more challenging as there were no specific frames for arranging the material. However, one thing emerged working on this version, which was the cumulative experience of the whole process. Despite the lack of any narrative elements, it is possible to notice resemblances with the former versions, but in more subtle ways.

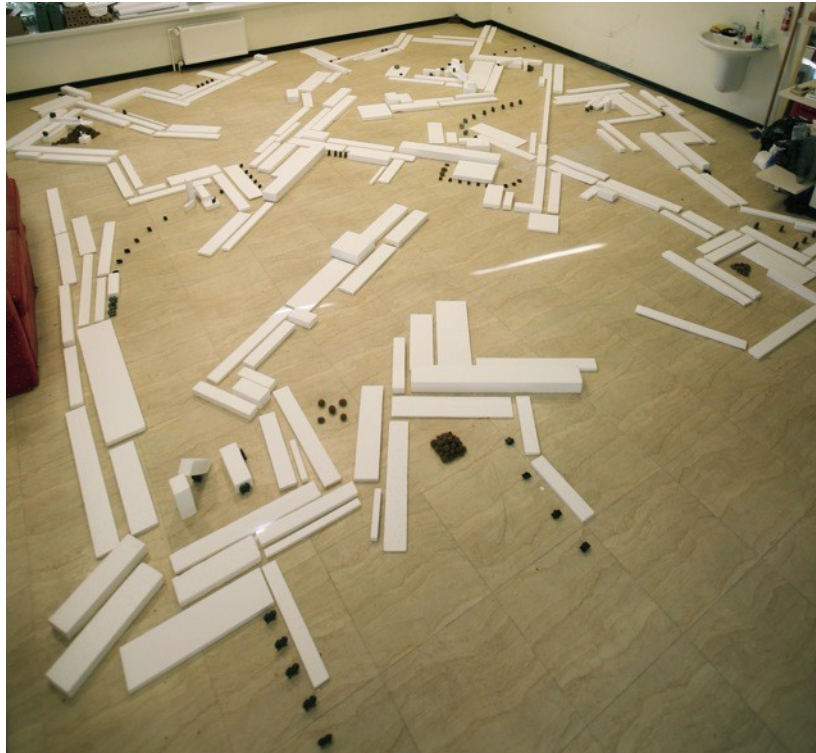


Figure 48 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", sixth situation

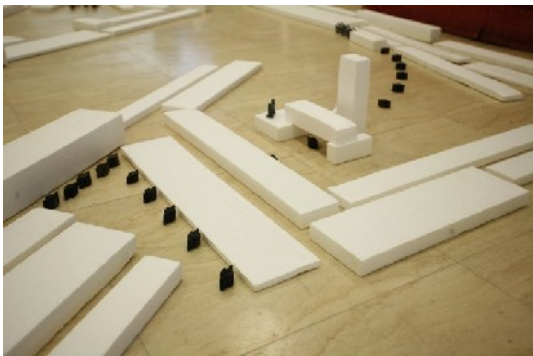


Figure 49 Sixth situation, detail

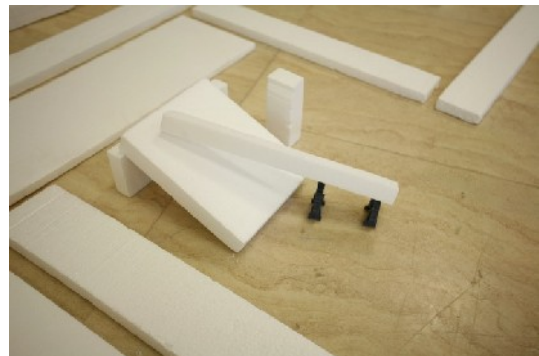


Figure 50 Sixth situation, detail



Figure 51 Sixth situation, detail

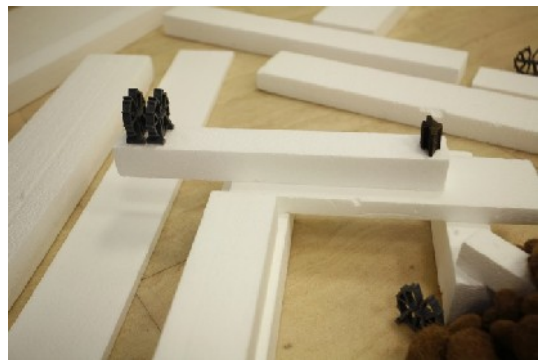


Figure 52 Sixth situation, detail

7. Exhibition Situation

The seventh situation was executed in the exhibition space. The gallery space was completely a new setting. The dimensions, the flooring material and lighting of the space were different. The architectural structure of the space was also different. There was a column in the middle of the space and the two walls of the gallery space were made of glass that is applied with aluminum joints. (Fig. 53) However, the strongest



Figure 53 Exhibition in the gallery space

difference was that the space was totally isolated of the things that were in the studio, such as a sink, couch, table, tools and etc. Among those objects, which were everyday objects always available in the studio space, the work was carried a rather sharp significance. It tended to come forward between those objects that are not parts of a gallery space. The characteristics of the space weakened the effect of the work. The installation space was always a challenge for the work. The site specificity aspect of the work needs to be worked on. This, I think, was the most important gain of installing the work in the gallery space. This on-going process, which became a part of the work's structure, will carry on to evolve as more versions will be tried in the gallery space and also probably later on with other installations in alternative spaces.

The exhibition situation had characteristics that can be seen in the previous ones. It did not dictate any path to follow but introduced some suggestions. For instance there was one path that lead the viewer around the column. (Figures 54 & 55) The reason for this was to pull the column into the work. There were different areas to stand in or walk around. Again vertical movement used when confronted with a wall. (Fig. 56) Apart from the space that is left for *First Contact* the work occupied the whole space. Once again the order was sustained by the EPS pieces covering the ground of another space.



Figure 54 "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands", exhibition situation



Figure 55 Exhibition situation



Figure 56 Exhibition situation, detail



Figure 57 Exhibition situation

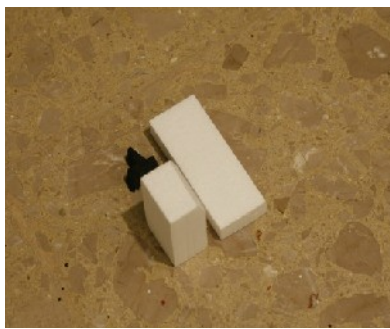


Figure 58 Exhibition situation, detail



Figure 59 Exhibition situation, detail

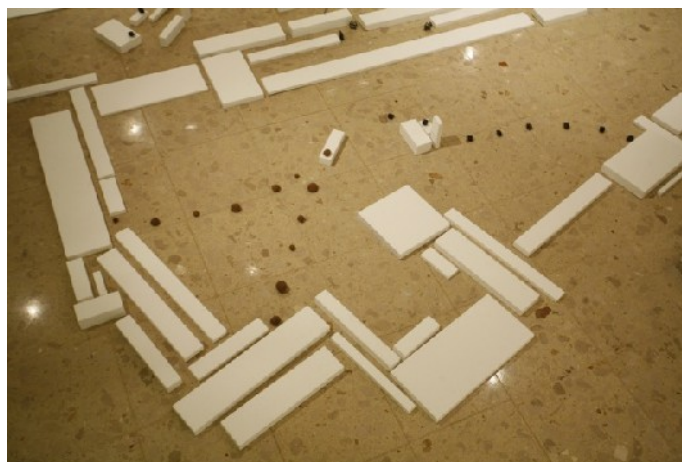


Figure 60 Exhibition situation, detail

Throughout the whole process every strategy fed into each other and the cumulation of these began to indicate a direction how the installation would progress. The work is about its process as well as finished outcomes. The process that the work has gone through was also exhibited on one of the walls in the gallery space. While working on the work in the studio I have done some collages as sketches. For the exhibition I prepared six collages for six situations. (Fig. 61) For those collages I photographed the EPS pieces, printed them and copied them with a photocopy machine. After cutting the pieces from photocopied prints I created the collages.



Figure 61 Exhibition view of the six collages showing the process of "From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands"

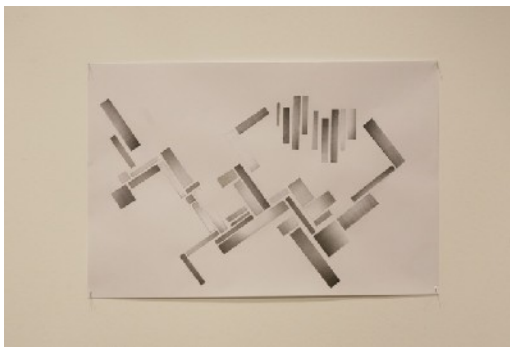


Figure 62 Collage for the fourth situation



Figure 63 Collage for the second situation

From Several Furniture Packages and Distant Lands combines material that people chose to get rid of or the sea rejected in the case of object group #2. Some of these materials can also be seen as souvenirs that were collected during several trips. However, no one capitalized on them as they did not have any economic return. If they were not collected, probably the seaweed balls would decay and resume its natural cycle and the plastic pieces would ultimately end up in a recycling facility or a garbage yard. The work inserts an extra phase to their regular processes and their expected lifespan is extended. They are now in a waiting position, in purgatory. The work also intends to represent the experience and observations that were acquired through the travels that lead to the development of the exhibition. In a way I tried to reconstruct the travels I had done over these groups of objects. Furthermore, the work's ephemeral structure tries to challenge the concretized forms of the urban space and dwelling. Apart from these the work became a playground for me. I also hope that the work may hint at possibilities of different and independent forms of play, which according to Huizinga “the first main characteristic of play: that it is free, is in fact freedom.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 8.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary urban space is a stage for political and social struggle against various inequalities. With the works I have produced, I tried to focus on certain issues that may be mundane to the users of the city, such as the automobile oriented structure of the city, advertisement billboards and the idea of mass production of goods. These are things that have been established throughout the history of the city without any public consent. My main concern by focusing on such issues was to question these systems of everyday and by doing so, trying to nourish an awareness of such systems that a majority of people participate everyday.

Throughout the thesis I tried to explain how everything I have been working on processed. *I'll Travel*, which functioned as a departure point for the rest of the works, is meant to communicate a basic statement: I uttered “i'll travel” as being a dweller of a metropolitan city. This manifested in the form of a text, the primary systematic tool that the infant human is taught. Throughout the search for expressing my ideas I have reached to the act of collecting, which the society performs regularly over consumption of goods that are produced in an endless variety. Therefore, the process of the thesis was also a search for finding a way of expression. At times those ways were too abstract. This is one of the future challenges that I would be working on.

During the course of this search for finding ways of expression I tried to put forward the issues that perturbed me most in my everyday life. These were problems mainly centered around consumption and the control of public circulation. As I produced works focusing on such issues I realized that every individual of the society – at least the ones that are living in a city – are subjected to those problems despite their beliefs, nationalities, sex and etc. The issues that I tried to discuss were imposed upon everyone, which I see as *little* bits that might lead to a struggle for unity. The thesis provided me a basis that I would build on both formally, conceptually and ideologically.

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