

NEZAKET EKICI



Nezaket Ekici, *But all that glitters is not gold* (2014), Video Performance, HD MP4, 16:9, color, sound, 8'50"

Courtesy of the artist © Nezaket Ekici

Edition: 4/5 + 2AP

Price: € 16.000 Euro + VAT

Nezaket Ekici's performances transform the body into a living site of tension - between visibility and vulnerability, ritual and rebellion, freedom and confinement. Using endurance and repetition as both method and metaphor, she turns everyday gestures into acts of resistance and revelation. Her body becomes, as she describes it, a "seismograph of the present": a finely tuned instrument registering the tremors of social, political, and spiritual life.

In *But All That Glitters Is Not Gold*, Ekici places herself inside a golden cage, reaching again and again toward thirty golden keys suspended above her - each promising, yet withholding, escape. What begins as a delicate game soon becomes an ordeal of exhaustion and frustration. The lustrous setting - radiant, seductive, almost sacred - gradually reveals itself as a prison. Every failed reach, every heavy breath, every glittering key out of grasp exposes the cost of illusion: the price of comfort, conformity, and control.

Created during her residency at Villa Tarabya in Istanbul, this performance speaks powerfully to the contradictions of female agency and autonomy across both personal and political spheres. The golden cage, a timeless emblem of luxury and captivity, becomes here a metaphor for the systems that confine women under the guise of protection or prosperity - from patriarchal expectations to state power, from religious orthodoxy to the false freedoms of consumer culture.

Within the context of *Art from Elsewhere: DEEP THROAT*, Ekici's work reverberates with Malta's own realities: a nation whose golden façades conceal deep fractures in gender equality and justice. While the island glitters as a European haven of prosperity and faith, women continue to struggle for fundamental rights - from reproductive freedom to protection against gender-based violence. Malta's high rate of femicide, and the silence that often surrounds it, underscores the exhibition's central concern with the obscene performance of power and the moral blindness of visibility. Here, as in geopolitics, what glitters conceals as much as it reveals.

In the glow of Ekici's cage, we witness the spectacle of constraint dressed as aspiration - the seductive sheen of gold masking the brutal architecture of control. The performance becomes both confession and confrontation: a visual parable for a world where exposure masquerades as empowerment, and where women's bodies remain contested sites of discipline, desire, and defiance. Through exhaustion, persistence, and endurance, Ekici transforms the act of struggle itself into a radical gesture of freedom - a refusal to accept the glittering traps of power as inevitable.

ARTIST BIO: www.ekici-art.de

NEZAKET EKICI (born 1970 in Kırşehir, Turkey. Lives and works in Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany.)

Nezaket Ekici is one of the foremost performance artists of her generation, known for her physically demanding and conceptually rigorous works that explore the intersections of culture, gender, ritual, and social conditioning. Drawing upon her bicultural identity and training in both sculpture and performance, Ekici's practice examines the body as a site of memory, negotiation, and transformation—probing the boundaries between private and public space, ritual and rebellion, endurance and grace. Whether enduring the physical strain of repetition or staging gestures of symbolic liberation, Ekici uses her body as both medium and message—a seismograph of contemporary existence, attuned to the currents of migration, gender politics, and spiritual resilience.

Ekici emigrated to Germany with her family at the age of three. She studied Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich, and received a Master's degree in Art Education from Ludwig-

Maximilians University, Munich. She later studied under Marina Abramović at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig, where she earned her MFA and Meisterschülerin degree (2004) in Performance Art.

Over the past two decades, Ekici has presented more than 300 performances and installations across over 70 countries and 180 cities, including in major museums, biennales, and performance festivals worldwide. Her work has been shown at major institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; MAXXI Museum, Rome; ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe; Kunsthalle Bremen; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Haus der Kunst, Munich, amongst many other museums worldwide.

Her performances have been included in numerous international biennales, including the Venice Biennale (2011, 2015); Havana Biennale (2012); Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013); Istanbul Biennale (2017); Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2019); Bangkok Biennale (2020); amongst others.

Ekici has received numerous awards and fellowships recognizing her exceptional contribution to performance art. She was Artist-in-Residence at the Tarabya Cultural Academy in Istanbul (2013–14); a Rome Prize Fellow of the German Academy Villa Massimo (2016–17); and recipient of the Paula Modersohn-Becker Art Prize (2018). In 2020, she received the Cultural Exchange Fellowship of the State of Berlin – Visual Arts: ISCP, New York, and in 2012 and 2022 she participated in the Operndorf Afrika / Christoph Schlingensiefel Artist Residency Program in Burkina Faso. Most recently, in 2024, she was invited by the Foundation for Spirituality and the Arts (FSA) for a six-week residency in Charleston, South Carolina, USA.