

Arcadia Missa

Melike Kara

My beloved wild valley

5th June - 31st July 2019

Private view: 5th June, 6-8pm

Arcadia Missa is excited to announce the first solo exhibition in the UK by artist Melike Kara, *My beloved wild valley*.

*I hear the tongues
Of a whole
generation
Made of wild flowers*

The paradox of identity is that it must be self-assertive, part of one's claim for subjecthood, while also evading becoming a singular identity, and instead demand that each identity contains multitudes.

Evasion is abundant in the figures of Kara's paintings. We read them as human, but obvious indications of identity are pretty much illegible. Their presence and their characters are created through the interaction they have with one another on the canvas, the placing of them among signifiers and areas of negative space: "*what we weigh*".

For the exhibition *My beloved wild valley* Kara's figures are encircled by signifiers of place. Is this a move towards connecting their identities to the heritage of the artist herself? As something outside of being read simplistically through the body?

These figures are read through their landscapes and histories. Background patterns reference tapestries of flowers. A sun sets behind the tangle of bodies in a hot place. These markers of geography and culture speak of history as a kind of identity, a matrix from which to map a sense of self, one made from ghosts.

I watched you, you did not notice me at all and felt like you were sitting in the corner upstairs, realising what it's like to be without a body.

That which is not said — "*Unspoken dreams*" — or made explicit becomes less confusing the longer we sit with each work. "*We weigh the beginning the end / The question*". Not only do the interactions between characters say it all, but the strict colour palette of each piece knowingly sets a tone. "*we weigh the spices the fruits the books / The fears the drinks*"

The central figure, the only recognisable one, of Kara's grandmother watches over the show: "*Speaks the silence / Holds you tight / Sings to you*". She looks out at us ("*Your snow in my eyes*") and provides a central current of protection. The act of representation has always been bound with ritual. The image of

Arudi - Misa :

the artist's grandmother acts as a vehicle to not only keep her memory, but also to keep her spirit close, with us for this show and with the artist always. The figures in the paintings are also bound together, the two couples and a dog in *The milk*; and a collective maybe bound in ceremony in *Like locked rooms*.

The photographic landscape over the windows, so clearly not London (where the gallery is located) skewers the gallery's architecture, "*Between that / My beloved wild valley*", allowing the figures to safely reside in their own place and to maintain their own presence — instilling an almost life-size interaction with the viewer, a consistent feature in the artist's practice. The photograph is from the region in Kurdistan where Kara's family is from, once again signalling identity through home, and all that can mean home, as opposed to the body, and transporting us there.

My beloved wild valley, your fearlessness reminds me of something I can not grasp . . .

- Rózsa Farkas & Melike Kara

Araceli Misa

Works

Gallery (from left to right):

The milk, 2019

Oil stick and acrylic on canvas
180 × 150 cm (70 ⁷/₈ × 59 inches)

What it feels like blue, 2019

Oil stick and acrylic on canvas
200 × 280 cm (78 ³/₄ × 110 ¹/₄ inches)

My beloved wild vally (dersim), 2019

Photograph on vinyl
Dimensions variable

Like locked room, 2019

Oil stick and acrylic on canvas
200 × 180 cm (78 ³/₄ × 70 ⁷/₈ inches)

Office (from left to right)

Oturma odası, 2019

Painted family clock
58 × 23 cm (22 ⁷/₈ × 9 inches)

My beloved wild valley, 2019

Acrylic on canvas
60 × 50 cm (23 ⁵/₈ × 19 ⁵/₈ inches)