

ARTFORUM

Istanbul

[İpek Duben](#)

SALT | GALATA

Bankalar Caddesi 11, Karaköy

April 28–June 28



View of “İpek Duben,” 2015

They is a violent word. Perhaps more innocuous sounding in other nations, it carries within itself a separation, a detachment particularly dangerous in the context of Turkey—a country whose national identity is rapidly deteriorating. Some citizens would even argue that individuals calling themselves Turkish rather than merely “from Turkey” are telegraphing specific encoded information not just about their nationalities but also their religions and sects. [İpek Duben](#)’s video interviews, majestically installed, form a chorus of voices often missing from public discourse, less mainstream and only heard when sought out—those of minorities, women, victims of domestic abuse, queer individuals. They’re all interviewed in the same style: against a black background, either seated or standing, and talking to an offscreen interlocutor.

While the narrative content—the anecdotes, the timelines, the interactions—is politically and socially (not to mention emotionally) charged, the evocative yet matter-of-fact manner in which it's conveyed is itself powerful, an acutely political artistic gesture. After all, Duben’s sustained dialogues with the interviewees become a form of keeping track, of writing, that is poignant in its simplicity yet confrontational in its timeliness and subject matter.

The dark gallery space in which the exhibition is ensconced is part of SALT Galata, a new extension of the former Ottoman Bank that now also hosts the archives of this imperial institution; the dialogues here tread on the history that once was, in order to construct the history that should be.

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