

## Canan Tolon: Sidesteps

15 January – 16 March 2014

Preview: 14 January 2014, 6.30 – 9 p.m.

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is delighted to present a solo exhibition of works by Turkish-born artist Canan Tolon. This, her first major exhibition in a London institution, provides in-depth insight into her works from 1986 to the present day. It includes *Futur imparfait*, 1986–1999, a series of 33 ink-wash and crayon figurative drawings that were recently acquired by the British Museum. At Parasol unit they will be on show all together for the first time in the UK.

Apart from a short spell early in her artistic career when Tolon made works that were both personal and figurative, much of her creativity is process based and deals with space, time, gravity, and chance interactions between disparate materials. Her early interest in the marks left by the processes of growth and transformation over time led her, for example, to making works which in her own words are *landscapes stripped to their elemental state*. Her work on some of these early assemblages of man-made materials initiated some unusual techniques, such as applying coffee grounds or letting grass grow on a canvas, and processes with unpredictable outcomes; for instance, by allowing rust to occur naturally and mix with pigment in her paintings.

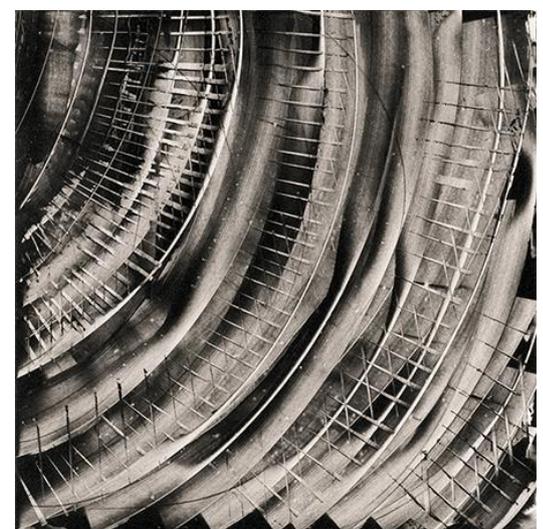
Space is the main subject of Canan Tolon's work, especially in the way it is visualised, politicised, imagined and remembered. Always astute and elaborate, her technique for creating space may at first sight seem random, but is clearly the result of painstaking investigation, premeditation and control. A number of Tolon's oil paintings are executed in black-and-white or mute colours with brighter touches. Whether large or small in scale, their form often suggests architectural imagery. Formally precise, rhythmic and structured, they are also simultaneously elusive, transient, accidental, and surprise viewers into reassessing what they see.

Tolon's paintings are also informed by her own photographic experience and skill, though she uses no collage or printing techniques in their making. Rather, she works hands-on with tools, such as straight edges and knives, to produce an effect of 'instant reality'. This is particularly true of her works on Mylar, which at first glance look like photographic prints of something familiar, yet on closer examination the 'photographic reality' falls away and their illusionistic nature is revealed. Tolon's aim is to make paintings that are apparently recognisable, yet elude description.

Born in Istanbul, Canan Tolon now lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area, California, USA and in Istanbul, Turkey.

This exhibition is curated by Ziba Ardalán, Founder/Director of Parasol unit.

*Canan Tolon: Sidesteps* is accompanied by a comprehensive book, including an artist interview by Ziba Ardalán and essays by Bill Berkson and John Yau, published by Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art. A related programme of educational events at the gallery will include lectures, poetry readings, animation and storytelling workshops.



## Parasol unit

foundation for contemporary art

### NOTE TO EDITORS

#### Artist Biography

Canan Tolon was born in Istanbul and grew up in various European countries. After earning her *baccalauréat* from the École Française d'Istanbul in Turkey, in 1975, she studied design in Edinburgh and London. In 1980, she received a BA from Middlesex Polytechnic / Architectural Association, London, and that same year moved to the Bay Area of San Francisco to study for a Masters in Architecture at the University of California at Berkeley. After graduating in 1983 she worked for about ten years in several architecture offices while continuing her work in the visual arts. Her paintings and installations have been exhibited internationally. She has works in a number of major public collections, including the British Museum, London; Istanbul Modern; IKSU (Istanbul Foundation for Culture and the Arts); the Nesrin Esirtgen Collection, Istanbul, Turkey; and the di Rosa Collection, Napa, USA.

Parasol unit is grateful for the generous support of Berna and Tolga Tuglular, Mehves-Dalinc Ariburnu, Caroline Landin, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and those who wish to remain anonymous.



### VISITOR INFORMATION

Founded in December 2004, Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is a registered educational charity and a non-profit institution that operates purely for the public benefit. Every year the foundation organises four challenging and thought-provoking exhibitions of works by international contemporary artists working in various media, arranges other artistic projects, and gives an Exposure award which offers the possibility of an exhibition to graduating student/s from an annually selected art school in the UK. The foundation also engages with the public and its neighbouring community through a full programme of educational events. In its genuine mission to serve the public, the foundation does not bear the founder's name and its exhibitions do not derive from any particular private collections. Admission to all exhibitions at Parasol unit is free of charge. Thanks to this innovative model between private funding and public support, one of London's most vibrant contemporary art spaces has come to exist and thrive.

#### Free Admission

**14 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW**

Opening hours:

Monday by prior arrangement.

Tuesday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Sunday, 12–5 p.m.

Directions: Tube to Old Street or Angel

Buses: 43, 205 or 214 via City Road.

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