

**That Gentle Hunting Lodge, Once Remembered for Its White Lilacs...**

To try to understand the memory of a place is perhaps akin to hearing the echo resounding within the rigid walls of the past, to sensing the stories buried beneath the soil. Yet memory is not merely an abstract act of recollection—it is also a tangible journey through time, rooted in the dialectic of remembering and forgetting. On this journey, every step leaves a trace, every trace becomes a memory, and every memory reverberates within a space. The echoes of a past layered in the soil suddenly emerge—on the cold surface of a piece of concrete, within the crack of a Ytong block, or along the deserted corridors of a ruined mansion... The voice of the past always roams the invisible ground of a place; it is never entirely timeless, placeless, or abandoned.

Berka Beste Kopuz's artistic practice dares to unearth stories hidden in the fragmented remains of memory while attuning herself to the inner rhythm of space. Her exhibition *The Soil Collects the Past* proposes a journey that delves below the surface—connecting to the roots of a forgotten structure left to rest on the dusty shelves of history. This connection is neither purely personal nor wholly collective; it is a threshold where past, place, and time converge. In this exhibition, Kopuz's personal investigation manifests as an attempt to make sense of where she lives and to unearth its layered past. Yet her broader practice, which has always encompassed urban and architectural history, becomes fully apparent in this research-driven show. Her unique drawings, subjective narratives, and material choices reflect the intricate and multilayered nature of memory—layers that mirror not only personal recollections but also collective remembrance.

The focal point of the exhibition is a derelict hunting lodge situated next to the artist's childhood home in Istanbul's Acıbadem neighborhood, pointing to a deeply rooted and layered past. The exhibition seeks to uncover and foreground the overlooked roots of this seemingly insignificant, forgotten space. Stirred by childhood curiosity and the revelation that the ruin once functioned as an Ottoman-era hunting lodge, Kopuz embarked on a passionate investigation. The lodge's lost history reveals the wounded roots we try to preserve and pass down within the urban memory of today. Once a notable structure in what was once a summer retreat neighborhood, the hunting lodge now resurfaces after many years in hiding.

Through a multidisciplinary lens, Kopuz's works uncover the forgotten, reintroducing this valuable historical site to the present. Built upon a special notebook the artist compiled over time, the entire exhibition emerges from the forgotten foundations of the ruined hunting lodge. Detailed research, personal notes, drawings, and a central notebook form the core of the show. Through two- and three-dimensional layered installations—some resembling reliefs made from concrete and Ytong—the once-forgotten lodge materializes through Kopuz's urban historical inquiry and personal effort. The building, once strong yet now decaying, finds permanence through its translation from drawing to structure, from fragility to lasting memory. The tension between concrete and masonry reflects the resistance against disappearance, forgetfulness, and erasure. This resistance, shaped by Kopuz's mind, oral history research, and practice, transcends into social existence. Delving into her family's photo albums and historical traces, Kopuz reconstructs memories of the structure, turning them into key elements of Istanbul's urban memory. This abandoned hunting lodge defies its unfortunate fate and reclaims its presence through a profound artistic investigation. No longer merely masonry, it becomes resilient

against oblivion, as Kopuz recalls what was once forgotten—inscribing it permanently in memory through a notebook, rigid concrete, and malleable Ytong.

There is a past wedged within the coldness of concrete—a past that calls for witness, demanding confrontation. Soil and concrete blend within the temporal tension sparked by memory. Memory exists not only in the mind of the individual but as an imprint embedded within the texture of space—becoming a social entity. The relationship between the forgotten and the space they inhabit finds a renewed narrative in Kopuz’s work. Ytong fragments are not merely building materials—they become vessels of memory. The images etched into them do not aim to rebuild the past but to reimagine its representation.

Kopuz’s exhibition emphasizes the role of space as a medium of memory, bringing together fragments of forgotten histories. It is not a reinterpretation of the past but a new field of dialogue with it. Each artwork is an echo of the moments in which what was buried beneath the soil rises to the surface. The works invite the viewer not only to navigate the physical boundaries of space but to engage in a temporal dialogue with the past. Each piece becomes a reflector of memory, tracing the footprints of what was once lost—perhaps even offering a new interpretation of forgotten histories. Rather than presenting a linear narrative of the past, Kopuz’s works question how the past continues to resonate in the present and how it addresses us today.

In Kopuz’s vision, the firm, angular form of concrete transforms into a reimagined spatial possibility. As concrete intertwines with the fragile memories of the past, it reveals the fluid and transformative nature of our relationship with history. Kopuz demonstrates that concrete is not only a construction material, but also a mnemonic entity—representing the temporal tension and the act of remembering embedded in space. While standing firm, it also reflects the fluid nature of memory through its very solidity.

*The Soil Collects the Past* deeply questions the relationship between time and place, remembering and forgetting. Kopuz listens to voices buried beneath the soil, attempting to capture the echoes of memories reverberating off concrete’s cold surface. This exhibition is not just a historical investigation or a reflection on a forgotten hunting lodge—it is a committed attempt to reconnect with the past. With each work, Kopuz invites the viewer to bear witness to the challenge of remembering and the inevitability of forgetting. The once-lilac-scented hunting lodge vanishes beneath the earth, yet affirms its presence through romantic imagery and enduring material forms. The suspended memories between space and time open the gates to the unknown stories of Acıbadem through the lens of this derelict lodge. In Kopuz’s hands, these stories find new form and meaning—perhaps becoming a clear step toward re-establishing the inseparable bond between past and future. It is in that very step that the long-forgotten hunting lodge lifts its gaze from the soil to the sky and declares its existence.

Ultimately, no matter what—**the soil collects the past.**

Melike Bayık