

# Regional Imaginings

As part of the work on an exhibition entitled 'De-Regulation with the work of Kutluğ Ataman',<sup>1</sup> the artist Stephan Roemer and I spent time in Istanbul researching and identifying locations for a visual essay on the city.<sup>2</sup> As neither of us had much topographical knowledge of the place we decided to ask friends and acquaintances to take us on daily walks to their favourite areas. Each day the narrative repeated itself in almost identical form – our different guides, all highly critical and analytical, members in one capacity or another of the contemporary art world and with no apparent nostalgia for bygone days, would point out various buildings and sites and say: 'You see, here were the Armenians, the Jews, the Greeks, the Circassians, the Copts, the French, the Genoese ... – and now they're all gone and we are here alone.' For a teeming city of some 16 million inhabitants, with trade and migration flowing through it constantly, this was an odd sentiment indeed. To us visitors, the city felt as fully and energetically inhabited as a city could be. These references to a larger past self, an extended body of people, a cosmopolitanism of multiple inhabitants, a set of links to other places and territories, resonated with me for some time, and I wondered whether the questions 'what kind of past formation?' and 'what kind of extended topography?' were so imprinted in the minds of our guides that they overshadowed the city's present energetic realities.

Furthermore, the question arises of how this manifests itself within contemporary art and culture – not as backward-looking nostalgia but, rather, as a daily practice of thinking about oneself as differently located and differently linked to geographical and other formations. Our Istanbul guides seemed to me to be practising a form of 'regional imagining', a relationship to place and space that projects upon it a series of possible expansions not perhaps materially available but that have deep roots within what we perceive as the realm of the possible. It is a projection that has nothing to do with expansion but rather relates to the effort to think oneself into another relation to the world. And as such it works against the strictures and limits of nationalism – of that which binds us within a geographical terrain in the name of a shared identity, a shared topography, a shared history and a set of claims to separatism and particularism.

'Regional imaginings', then, would seem to be an alternative, *non-identitarian* practice, a practice that does not feel obliged to root one exclusively in either material histories or in purely fantastical projections, opting instead to piece together a location from fragments of what was and of what might be, simultaneously. This practice is an attempt both to activate and to actualize notions of

location away from being 'located' by an authority of knowledge or a political authority (being Turkish, being Middle Eastern, being of the Muslim world, for example) and towards a notion of '[self] regioning' – a notion I borrow from Heidegger (*Gelassenheit*) and which focuses not on trying to figure out what one's identity might be as a given, but on trying to produce a set of relationships in the world that might locate one.<sup>3</sup> This discussion exists in the tension between the nation state, aspirant communities and 'empire'. Each one of these emerges from a different set of desires: nation states from the desire to find a collective identity in a narrative of nation as differentiated from other entities understood as nations, divided by borders and legitimated by mutually recognized authorities, be these historical, military or bureaucratic; 'aspirant communities', on the other hand are those that feel neither recognized, externally defined nor visible – they emerge from a fracturing of the older models of nation state, the geographically named region or the ethnic community and they struggle to both define themselves and gain recognition through an alternative set of criteria, defined from within rather than from without. As for 'empire', Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri use the designation to denote 'the globalization of capitalist production and its world markets ... the capitalist project to bring together economic power and political power'<sup>4</sup> – a new set of relations in which economies trump other sets of connections and affiliations.

But do all these sufficiently explain the 'affective', the emotional intensification of signs through which so many of these 'regional imaginings' operate?

And so I come to the writing of this text with several questions in mind, questions to do with this cultural, topographical layering of numerous coexisting narratives and time-scales and of how these operate in relation to national cultural identification. Other questions about a new 'becoming' consider how new regional formations come about and how creative practices have a part in shaping them. Thus, for example, the contemporary art world in Turkey has set itself the task of becoming the hub of a Balkan, south-eastern Europe, Middle Eastern artistic sphere, as has been evidenced in several of the recent Istanbul Biennials and in the work of such arts organization in the city such as Platform Garanti. There have been several excellent studies about the role of historical repression and the repression of memory within public and private culture in Turkey – but the questions I am trying to explore here are different: they have to do not with the active forgetting of uncomfortable or guilty histories but with the ability to transcend restrictions by imagining oneself into a much

larger world, in which patterns repeat and refer to one another, both historically and spatially.

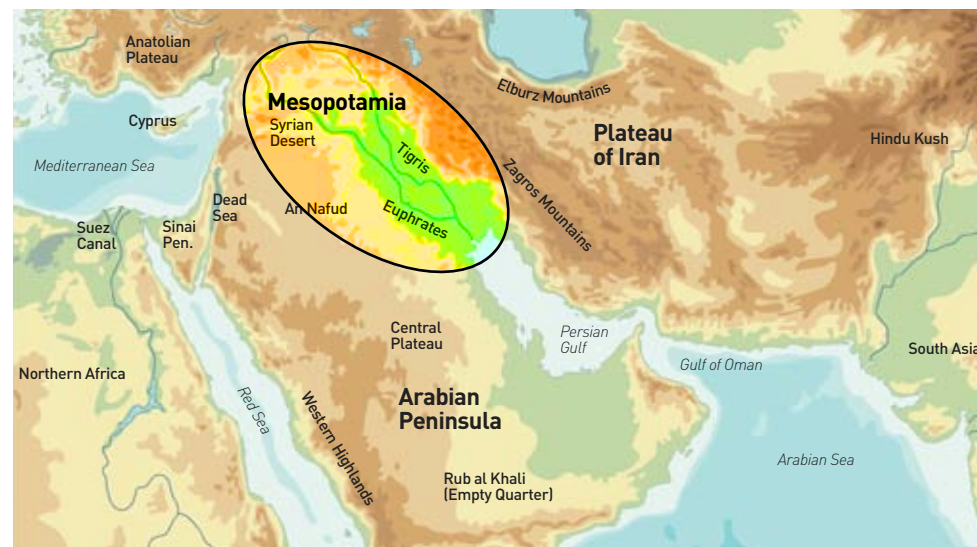
When Nermin Saybaşı recently sent me the photograph below, I began to understand that regional imaginings are equally historical imaginings, that dislocations and relocations take place in both time and in space.<sup>5</sup> Here was an image of a summer's day, a shaded river somewhere on the Aegean coast of Turkey, a group of headscarved girls sitting around a table immersed in the river's shallow waters and surrounded by plastic chairs, the country idyll presided over by a huge colourful image of Atatürk suspended between the trees over the water – a cultural or a political haunt that begs the question 'what kind of memory could this image hold for these contemporary girls and their summer picnic by the river?'

Or perhaps, more importantly, we should be asking what this 'standing guard' by Atatürk, which can be seen in so many shops, kiosks, public buildings, restaurants and so forth in present-day Turkey, actually stands for? What is being watched over and what is the conscious or unconscious fear that, if this vigilance is lessened, then a wholesale slide backwards might occur? Could it be modernity, secularity and some Western model of so-called 'progress' that is deemed to be so fragile that it must be constantly shored up? Is it a unity of disparate entities that has to be patched together under the sign of the nation and its founding father?

In the background to these cohesions of modernist Turkey, other, older layers also make claims: to Mesopotamia, to Byzantium, to the Ottoman Empire among others – what of these ghostly stratas that refuse the absolute 'newness' of the claims to Turkey as a nation state in the Western sense of that term? What if older claims still linger at the edges of the discourse disrupting the Republic's seeming ability to totally and effectively redefine everything from civil law to headgear, to script, to calendar, to faith? What if these claims were not in political opposition to the state, did not want to invent another new order or go back to a previous order, but instead were a gentle tug, a tarnish preventing the very possibility of wiping the slate clean? What if the sense of absence I recounted earlier, encountered on our daily walks in Istanbul, was not one of limitation but rather due to the lack of an expanded entity – the absence of a horizon and the ability to think beyond the boundary line that closes in on the limits of the self?

In the introduction to her excellent volume *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*, Esra Özyürek quotes a passage from Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book* on the drying up of the Bosphorus river:

Map of ancient mesopotamia



'On the last day, when the waters suddenly recede, among the American transatlantics gone to ground and the Ionic columns covered with seaweed, there will be Celtic and Ligurian skeletons openmouthed in supplications to gods whose identities are no longer known. Amid mussel-encrusted Byzantine treasures, forks and knives made of silver and tin and thousand year old barrels of wine ... I can imagine a civilization whose energy needs for their antiquated stoves and lights will be derived from a dilapidated Romanian tanker propelled into a mire pit.'

Located on top of these myriad layers, claims Özyürek, 'The multiple and personalized representations of the past with which they engage allow contemporary Turkish citizens to create alternative identities for themselves and their communities. As opposed to its futuristic and homogenizing character at the turn of the 20th century, Turkish nationalism today utilizes memories and generates diverse narratives for the nation as well as for minority groups.'<sup>6</sup>

### Empires

I should open by saying that I have for some time now been thinking and writing about what I call 'geography', by which I mean the attempt to rethink the relationships between subjects and places in a postcolonial, post-migratory, post-communist world. At the beginning of this project it seemed important to find another set of relationships and another signifying language to deal with the fact that citizenship was decreasingly the defining relationship of a located identity and of a state of identification,<sup>7</sup> and, by inference, that migration was not its opposite, was not the unstable, precarious and temporary state of a dis-identification, but, rather, a force for the destabilization of 'belonging' as the primary level of the organization of the relations between subjects and places.

Beyond the understanding that geography was a body of knowledge we had inherited from the Enlightenment and the West's classical colonial phase and that it could not stand up to contemporary pressures (here, for example, one might invoke the map of France, a stable pink coloured blob on the atlas of the world, whose uniform pinkness belies the immense social and cultural tensions of current life within the Republic whose many postcolonial inhabitants have mutually contested relations to both being French and being bound by French law), there were also issues of nationalism, of what is done and condoned by an assumption of

'belonging'. I come from Israel originally, though I have not lived there throughout my adult life, and so I have a kind of first-hand knowledge of what it is possible to do in the name of a mythical 'belonging'. In the case of Israel this has entailed, on the one hand, an emphasis on establishing a meaningful and historical relationship with what was claimed to be an abandoned landscape (though we know that this was not the case) and with an unused language; and, on the other, the deployment of modernist energies to transform these into a new national project and into new national subjects. Conversely, these have also led to a regional dis-identification, since a 'homeland' had to be carved out of the region and particularized to Jewish rather than to regional Middle Eastern histories, not to mention the displacement and inhuman marginalization, and finally military occupation, of these indigenous peoples who happened to be there when this great nationalist project began. The current political and human situation in the Eastern Mediterranean has reached a level of the unspeakable. To speak would be to take sides, to justify, explain, analyse, legitimate, to think of rights and wrongs in a situation in which all sides are risking abdicating their very roots in a series of independent and linked human rights charters. Nevertheless, one must find a way to speak, to enter the fray, to attempt to actually think about the situation rather than to pronounce on it – or else hang one's head with the rest of the mourners and denounce the unspeakable tragedy of it all. Such first-hand knowledge has thus made it possible to read modern Turkish history as a sort of corollary in this programme of modernization and homogenization, with insights that cut across both cultures despite the immense differences between them or the knowledge that the Ottoman Empire dominated the region of Palestine for some 400 years, thereby subsuming one history into another.

All of which leads me to try to investigate the complex layerings of civilizations and of historical periods in another vein – not one that wishes to separate them like archaeological strata, but one that wishes to see them as constantly alive and visible and informing current sensibilities and current consciousness and identifications. As Ash Gür says in her study of the Anatolian Civilization Museum in Ankara:

'Hence the Orientalist discourses asserting incommensurable difference between East and West, and the contemporary power relations based on these discourses in the 19th Century were translated into a difference between the early and the current inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Anatolia through the anthropological, archaeological and historical knowledge

production of the period. Thus the exceptional emphasis placed by the nationalist schools of archaeology in the newly emerging nation-states of the Middle East on the continuity between the current and earlier inhabitants of the national land should be understood against this political background.'<sup>8</sup>

Not being a 'proper' historian of either regions or of historical periods, I am very taken with Hardt and Negri's theorization of the history of 'empire' as opposed to that of historical layerings. I am taken with it because it writes the histories of tangible historical empires with their territories, trade routes and concrete markets through a contemporary understanding of the global markets of capital, paraphrased here as,

'From the beginning then, Empire sets in motion an ethico-political dynamic that lies at the heart of its juridical concept ... [involving] two fundamental tendencies: ... a right that is affirmed in the construction of a new order that envelopes the entire space that it considers civilization, a boundless universal space. Second ... a notion of right that encompasses all time within its ethical foundation. Empire exhausts historical time, suspends history, and summons the past and future within its own ethical order. In other words, Empire presents its order as permanent, eternal and necessary.'<sup>9</sup>

The 'regional imaginings' of this title might be such a place to speak from, grounded not in actual locations and material facts, but in located awarenesses that open up possibilities for thinking with, rather than about, the particular turmoil of places undergoing profound historical and geopolitical change. So my commitment to an active process of 'unbelonging' is one that stems from both my intellectual and my political histories: on the one hand, it is guided by Derrida's exhortation that 'boundaries whether narrow or expanded never do anything more than determine the limits of the possible' and, on the other, the understanding that 'belonging' is by necessity a performative stance that has to be daily rehearsed, can only be achieved through the 'unhoming' of others.

But my concerns have of late shifted, not because any of these issues have been resolved but because new ones have been added to them, new concerns about whether it is possible and about how one might locate or situate oneself, one's speaking position, in the ever increasing processes of globalization.

### Location?

Some time ago it would seem, we stopped worrying about whether work, or ideas, or images from 'over there' would signify properly 'over here' or vice versa. When, I wondered, did we begin to assume a fluidity of circulating meanings in which not only is the signifier detached from the signified, but in which the *enunciative* had also taken over from the *interpretative*? When had such a shift occurred between meaning anchored in contexts and representational strategies and the circular operations of singularities and cross-cultural translations?

Within the art world, at the level of both curatorial and artistic practice, there has been an obvious movement towards a certain global form of fluid circulation. But this circulation has not taken on a simple-minded formula that everything is in motion in relation to everything else. Instead, there has been an evident process that complicates all those old questions regarding local contexts, places and positions from which we speak, site-specific references.

At the same time that this seeming shift has been taking place in the precise articulation of *where* we speak from, we have also experienced numerous international exhibitions such as Documenta XI, the Istanbul Biennial (2003, 2005 and 2009) or Manifesta 5 (2004) and Gwangju 2008, to name only a prominent few, which have foregrounded an art practice that informs in a seemingly factual way but at a slight remove from *reportage* – what curator Okwui Enwezor and various critics have referred to as the documentary turn in art. We could say that this shift has moved away from supplying information about a *place* or a *site* and instead plays with our consciousness regarding the very nature of having a direct and uncomplicated relation to these. Here we can recognize an art practice that focuses our attention on something that we need to know but have no capability of seeing, or the proximity or access to observe, or the cunning or wit to discern. An art practice that obliquely and poetically pulls together conjunctions and patterns that form the interlinked webs of commerce, circulation, mobility and belonging. And yet for all of their supposedly informative capacities, these contemporary arts practices are not historically or materially specific as they were of old, for they do not rely on context for their embedded meaning. Instead, we have around us numerous works whose capacity for observation and for ferreting out all kinds of unexpected conjunctions of information is put towards the task of articulating newly imagined realities rather than towards describing the conditions of realities we have long been able to name and to label.



In several cases (such as Victor Misiano's 'Central Asian Pavillion' in Venice 2005) the conceptualization of regional alliances viewed through cultural practices has preceded the actual forging of other forms of more structured ones. In several other cases actual organizational structures have emerged, such as the Cairo, Athens and Beirut biennials which have formally linked themselves, while not sharing a recognized regional or historical framework. Equally, the UAE Sharja Biennale has emerged as a regional force that brings together not just artistic and cultural practitioners from around the expanded Middle East, but also reconnects younger generations of diasporic subjects who are linked to long-left 'homelands' through their professional artistic interests. The arts are enormously important in pursuing precisely the kind of 'self-regioning' that I began with, both in terms of coalitions such as the above and in terms of the invented practices and mock histories that link the residues of what was once there to contemporary imaginations.

In the process a concept of 'location' – of being able clearly to define named entities in relation to which we instantly know how to position ourselves – has been greatly eroded.

It is possible to juxtapose the grounded specificity of conventional geographical locations with the emergent logic of singularity. While the specific is true to a logic of its contexts, the singular is true to a logic of its own internal self organization. 'The singular and the specific,' says Peter Hallward in *Absolutely Postcolonial*,

'divide most obviously, most naively, in their tolerance of positioned interests and "worldliness" in the most general sense. According to the singular-immediate logic, in order to grasp the truth of the created world, you first have to step outside of it. ... The specific on the other hand implies a situation, a past, an intelligibility constrained by inherited conditions. Within the world, the specific relates subject to subject and subject to other; the singular dissolves both in one beyond-subject.'<sup>10</sup>

The philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy speaks very movingly of the 'theatre of bloody conflicts among identities'. Nancy claims that they also constitute a counter-logic to named location. They give dramatic effect to the somewhat blander discourses of globalization that have been trying to problematize the vision of a world fundamentally characterized by objects in motion:

'to say that globalization is somehow about things in motion somewhat understates the point. The various flows we see – of objects, persons, images, and discourses – are not coeval, convergent, isomorphic or spatially consistent. They have what I have elsewhere called relations of disjuncture. By this I mean that the paths or vectors taken by these kinds of things have different speeds, axes, points of origin and termination and varied relationships to institutional structures in different regions, nations, or societies.'<sup>11</sup>

And so, in the wake of this philosophical and anthropological thought, my question has become 'can we live out our location in split and "ripped-apart" identities, in different speeds and vectors? Can we avoid naming our identities through their current locations, through our "belonging" to a particular nation, country or ethnic grouping? Can we find other, more ephemeral and immaterial levels to our heritage which allow us to inhabit a much larger terrain?'

#### 'Mesopotamian Dramaturgies'

In 2009 the exhibition 'Mesopotamian Dramaturgies' brought together a new series of works by Kutluğ Ataman. These works reference the performative dimension of the shift to modernity in the transition from Ottoman to Republican Turkey, of the degree in which it has to be repeatedly performed in order to carry conviction or a sense of purpose. While struggles between the military and the civil, between the religious and the secular, the traditional and the modernist progressive have characterized the development of many countries in the expanded region, Turkey – which until quite recently had been at the heart of a mighty military and geopolitical power – is clearly enacting such tensions very differently. In part this difference has to do with the previously quoted possibilities for forging alternative identities out of a rich layering of available pasts.

The Mesopotamia referenced in the exhibition's title is the designation of an ancient geographical, agricultural and cultural entity that has often been called 'the cradle of civilization' in which, by 3000 BC, Mesopotamians had already invented the wheel, developed writing and created the world's first cities and monumental architecture.

So, first, the basic facts: ancient Mesopotamia encompassed the land between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, both of which have their headwaters in the mountains of Armenia in modern-day Turkey. Both rivers are fed by numerous tributaries, and the entire

river system drains a vast mountainous region. Overland routes in Mesopotamia usually followed the Euphrates because the banks of the Tigris are frequently steep and difficult. The climate of the region is semi-arid with a vast desert expanse in the north which gave way to a 6,000-square mile region of marshes, lagoons, mud flats, and reed banks in the south. In the extreme south the Euphrates and the Tigris unite and empty into the Persian Gulf.

Mesopotamia housed historically important cities such as Uruk, Nippur, Nineveh and Babylon, as well as major territorial states such as the city of Ma-asesblu, the Akkadian kingdom, the Third Dynasty of Ur and the Assyrian Empire. Some of the important historical Mesopotamian leaders were Ur-Nammu (king of Ur), Sargon (who established the Akkadian kingdom), Hammurabi (who established the Old Babylonian state) and Tiglath-Pileser I (who established the Assyrian Empire).

'Ancient Mesopotamia' begins in the late 6th millennium BC and ends with either the rise of the Achaemenid Persians in the 6th century BC or the Islamic conquest of Persian Mesopotamia in the 7th century AD.<sup>12</sup> Ancient Mesopotamia covered parts of present-day Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Palestine.

So here was one designation of the region, or of significant parts of it, and as we saw in Gür's previously quoted argument, one which had a resonant contemporary hold on a contemporary imagination, providing a level of republican prehistory.

Another set of maps superimposed on those of Mesopotamia, covering some of the same ground and extending eastwards are those of the Ottoman Empire at its height, in the 16th and 17th centuries. Stretching across Iraq to the Persian Gulf, from North Africa to the Arabian Sea, across the Aegean and the Black Seas, to the banks of the Caspian Sea and all the way to the Danube and the Dnieper rivers, the Ottoman Empire extended across much of the present-day Middle East, Central Europe, the Balkans, parts of Central Asia, Anatolia and circled almost the entire Mediterranean.

Within this empire a multiplicity of peoples cohabited, both at the centre and throughout the colonized territories. After its conquest

'Mehmed set about re-peopling Constantinople. People of all religions were attracted by the favourable taxation and the opportunities for a better life, promised by the revitalised metropolis. ... the Ottomans had no qualms about uprooting and resettling their subjects if it suited their economic or

political aims. ... Whole communities, Muslims, Jews, and Armenian, Greek and Latin Christians – were forcibly brought to the city over the succeeding years. Latin Christians were a discrete group, transported from the former colony of Caffa in the Crimea after it surrendered in 1475. ... Former Greek residents of Byzantine ... were offered houses and land to encourage them to return. ... The number of Muslims in the city increased by deporting Muslims from other parts of the state rather than by converting existing Christians or Jews...'<sup>13</sup>

And eventually in the colonized parts of the Ottoman Empire, a system was developed known as the *Millet*, which fostered a communitarian mode of multiple concurrent identities. As Salim Tamari has stated speaking of Jerusalem,

'[Rather than speak of ethnic communities] ... we should speak of communities belonging to religious or linguistic groups. The major change that effected co-existence between these groups after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was the emergent notion of nationality, which meant separating from the notion of multiethnic, multicomunal Ottoman citizenship.'



**Kutluğ Ataman**  
Column from the 'Mesopotamian Dramaturgies' series, 2009  
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Courtesy of the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London  
Produced by The Institute for the Readjustment of Clocks, Istanbul

The Ottoman Empire, as a monarchical structure, constituted its members as subjects, subjects refracted through the complex system of ethnic-specific schools and courts which gave them a certain communal autonomy. Colonial modernity, which replaced subjects with citizens, in which all faced a single, universal authority, brought to an end the multi-ethnic, multinational citizenship that characterized Ottoman rule – with its broader framework of identification.<sup>14</sup>

Three of the works in Ataman's 'Mesopotamian Dramaturgies' shown here reference aspects of these complex historical layerings, juxtaposed as tensions not just between modernity and tradition but also as markers of the long lines of existence that somehow circumvent these layerings and are embedded in other continuities.<sup>15</sup>

The overall name of the project is less of an exploration of ancient cultures than a reference to the long historical lines that cannot be shed just because of the rabid performance of a newly minted national identity and its demands.

*Column* pays homage to the faces of Anatolia, their long and enduring inhabitation of eastern Turkey with little political representation or cultural recognition. They are not constituted as citizens of the modern state of Turkey, but exist in a state of representing the old at the edge of the new, the undeveloped at the edge of the so-called 'developed', that which seemingly still needs to be rescued and brought up to scratch so as to prove the claims that the state makes for itself.

*Frame* presents the final stages of the Ottoman's legendary military might through the skewed lens of modernity – a general and his staff are awkwardly captured by the new technology of photography, not quite mastered and thereby cutting some of the staff members out of the frame – a modern technology taking a bite out of the privilege of an inherited authority resting on its laurels. Again, the clash of two claims for the same futuristic scenario of a disciplined modernity that end up clashing with one another.

*Journey to the Moon*, a two-channel film installation and the most elaborated narrative of the entire group of works, tells the story of an Anatolian village that has come into contact with an Istanbul politician in 1960. The politician fills their minds with images of modernity, with the promise of a future – jobs, incomes, but mostly new horizons and tells them that the world has changed, great leaps of progress have been made and the Russians have even sent a dog to

the moon. Smitten by these impressionistic perceptions of an outside world on the move, they too begin to dream of possible adventures, such as a journey to the moon. The narrative of the villagers' complex and emotional manoeuvrings, shot in black-and-white stills, is interspersed with interviews with actual experts on everything from village life in Turkey in mid-20th century to aeronautical engineering and space travel, to agriculture and nutrition – anything and everything that is touched on in the fictional fable of a mad moment in village life. This mixing of a fictional tale and its supposed shoring up and verification through the factual and scientific testimony of the experts destabilizes the truth claims of both parts of the work, bringing them into a heady relationship with one another.

Beyond the skewing of historical veracity, the work demonstrates the ability to live simultaneously in several epochs and to have aspirations that are located both in the past and in the future. The villagers seem to be pursuing an almost timeless existence: agrarian, unmodern, religious, tribal and family-dependent. The community is closed in on itself, its values seemingly unchanged over hundreds of years – they could have been part of ancient Mesopotamia as they could have been part of the rural Ottoman territories. Infected by the bug or fever of modernity, they catapult over their time zone and land up in the contemporary world of which they know nothing and which has a fairy-tale quality about it – a wondrous time in which seemingly unnatural and unimaginable things are possible, such as travel to the moon.

The work, not its subjects, have destabilized coherent notions of location in both time and place and have shown us paths of escape from the rigidity with which narratives of nation bind us to particular mythical locations. While the generals may be at the centre and the villagers may be at the rural margins, the histories that underlie them have again and again written the terrain through pluralism and odd conjunctions of peoples and cultures, mutualities of coexistence. The effort that has gone into producing the distinction and isolation that modern nationalism requires distinguishes between supposed facts and supposed myths, allocates the former to the modern subjects while the latter are positioned as historical relics floating at the edges of the grand narratives of the day, unable to be aligned with the forces of change and progress. What nationalism positions as backward can be rethought as older models of coexistent multiplicities. What is contained within contemporary border and boundaries can be remapped through the footprints that underpin them of older empires and of former allegiances, of a set of affinities rather than of vested interests. And it is an artistic practice that clearly names this activity, that suggests its myriad possibilities of ephemeral alignment, for what better than an artistic practice can establish that one can only dislocate one mythical location through another mythical location – that by unframing and reframing the historical location of subjects, one may be able to suggest other forms of territorial affinity rather than belonging.

**Kutluğ Ataman**  
*Frame* from the 'Mesopotamian Dramaturgies' series, 2009  
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 Courtesy of the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London  
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**Kutluğ Ataman**  
*Journey to the Moon* from the 'Mesopotamian Dramaturgies' series, 2009  
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