



Open Source Gallery, Inc - 501(c)(3) Organization
306 17th street, Brooklyn, NY 11215, contact@opensourcegallery.org 646 279 3969 opensourcegallery.org
Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Saturday: 2pm - 7pm

SAVAS BOYRAZ: BACK DROP

October 3 – November 1, 2015

Opening Reception: October 3, 7-9 pm

Savas Boyraz presents *Back Drop*, a video installation for Open Source Gallery.

In *Back Drop*, Kurdish artist Savas Boyraz explores the stories of individual Kurdish guerilla fighters using portraiture. Having seen people in his life join the fight, Boyraz views his work as a sort of “image-based activism” that he uses to explore the struggle of the Kurdish community in the Middle East, as well as his own roots. Focusing on individuals, *Back Drop* puts a face to a complex political struggle, exploring a culture that struggles for its rights. Faced with the realities of war and an uncertain future, what are the responsibilities of individuals to their communities, their heritage, and their beliefs?



Kurdistan--an area that is not a country, but an area spread across Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria--is inhabited by the Kurds, a group considered to be the largest ethnic community without its own country. For decades, resistance groups have fought for a homeland for the Kurdish people in a continuously tumultuous region. With no national boundaries, identities are formed through self determination--and political rights in autonomous Kurdish communities are only obtained through the resistance of the people.

In a triptych created in collaboration with Martin Nordström, Boyraz tells the stories of two Kurdish individuals: one who is preparing to leave to join the guerilla struggle against Daesh (ISIS) and one who has returned from the fight. Each individual is situated in front of a backdrop, a prop once used by guerrilla theatre troupes. Set against varied landscapes, the borders of the backdrop provide an oddly precise framing for the portraits. The three stories in triptych format recall religious artwork and encourage the viewer to reflect upon not only the stories being told, but their role in the personal struggles of others. Boyraz not only captures war from the perspective of those fighting it, but explores internal struggles and his relationship with the subjects. He presents the future, present, and past of the Kurdish guerilla struggle, uniting the stories of individuals with one, common backdrop.

Savas Boyraz was born in Istanbul, Turkey. He obtained his BFA in photography from the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University and his MFA from the Art in the Public Realm program in Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. Boyraz has received awards from the Hasselblad Foundation, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, and the HSBC Photography Award. He has participated in exhibitions in the Duhok International Film Festival (Iraq), Amed Art Gallery (Turkey), Berlin Kurdish Film Festival (German), Teatro di Nascosto (Italy), Aperture Foundation (US), Les Rencontres d'Arles (France), and Michaelis Galleries (South Africa) among others.