



Serra Tansel
GÖKYÜZLERİ

Skyscapes

Serra Tansel's new solo exhibition, titled *Skyscapes*, opens on December 18 at Pilot Gallery.

The exhibition brings together the artist's new works, which focus on her multi-layered relationship with the sky, as well as her site-specific installation. The installation takes its name from poet Mahmoud Darwish's lines "*Where Do the Birds Fly After the Last Sky?*" and features birds that are near-endemic to Palestine. The installation, titled *Where Do the Birds Fly After the Last Sky?*, is inspired by the imagery of a cardboard bird Serra Tansel encountered at the Palestine Solidarity March in London. The bird, a symbol of movement, freedom, and peace, combined with cardboard boxes, the everyday material of global logistics networks, reveals the contradiction between the fluidity of trade objects and bodies condemned to forced migration or immobility.

The artist's gaze, turned towards the sky during the first months of motherhood, focuses on how this space, laden with transcendence, hope, and mythological promise, has been redefined by death, loss, and absence in the era of wars we are living through. The place of the sky in cross cultural memory stars as refuge, the horizon as a projection of the future, intertwines with experiences of personal grief, birth, and collective trauma to form a new narrative. Tansel's plaster sculpture, cast from her baby's footprints and painted to resemble the sky, offers a poetic intervention into spatial perception. These small feet, which invert the idea that the sky begins where the earth ends, bring the distant heavens shaped by imagination, belief, and mythology closer through the materiality of the body, prompting us to rethink the sky as an accessible space.

The exhibition's sky-centered conceptual framework further expands with other works that bear traces of invisible violence. The photographic series *Under the Same Sky* preserves only the sky portions of images taken by Gazan journalists whose lives were cut short, making visible the silence of the destroyed lives and images, as well as the dual burden created by censorship. When placed side by side, these skies create a topography that holds both the void of a lost world and the resilience of imagination.

A metal assemblage, pressed and transformed from police barriers, emerges as a gesture of resistance that explores the possibilities of dismantling and reconstructing existing structures. Positioned in front of a wall painted in barrier blue (ultramarine and sky blue) tones, the sculpture invites reflection on the horizon line, the threshold between earth and sky. The barricade irons, broken apart and crushed into a new form, evolve from an obstructive structure into an opening, a newly imagined horizon.

Tansel's works that engage with scent, surface, and memory translate the relationship between body and environment into a sensory register. An oil burner cast from orange peel, produced in reference to Palestine's orange groves - which created the biggest orange supplies to the world between mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries - carries the intimate fragrance of displacement and the idea of home; while the limestone plinth invites the memory of geography into the space. This sensory intensity leads the viewer on a simultaneous journey toward contemplating a distant geography and their own inner world.

The trace left in the sky by political violence turns into searing satire in another work: *The Donkey Flights Project*. With Gaza's roads destroyed, donkeys that became rescue vehicles are seized by the IDF and transported to Europe under the name of an "animal rescue

operation,” addressing the contradictions of destruction and the absurdity of its representations. Donkey portraits hung on galvanized metal sheets folded into origami planes reveal the tension between flight and captivity, compassion and exploitation, prompting viewers to question how the political meanings of the sky are reproduced.

FREE-range transforms the political connotations of language into a spatial play through remotely controlled, chicken-sized letter mechanisms. While the sky is imagined as a zone of escape, *Puerto Rico* offers another kind of false refuge: an oil-painted reproduction of a Puerto Rican beach poster hung in the open visitation areas of a prison reinterprets images of controlled freedom. The brightness of the exotic landscape holds both the promise of freedom and its unattainability.

Tansel’s new exhibition, *Skyscapes*, moves beyond traditional romanticized interpretations of the sky, instead treating it as a space where both personal and collective fractures are recorded today. She removes the sky from its position as a fixed vantage point and positions it as a being that touches, trembles, smells, sounds, and bears witness. Throughout the exhibition, the idea that everything living under the sky is bound together by invisible ties is recalled through different materials and sensory experiences.













Sky Starts Under Your Feet, 2025 / Göküzü Ayaklarının Altında Başlar, 2025

Oil paint on gypsum / Alçı üzeri yağlı boya

Framed size: 37.3 x 37.3 cm



Returning Home, 2025 / Eve Dönüş, 2025

Oil burner: Brass, limestone, tea light candle, orange oil / Buhurdanlık: Pirinç, kireçtaşı, mum, portakal yağı
10 x 13 x 13 cm



“Where should the birds fly after the last sky?”, 2025 / “Son gökyüzünden sonra nereye uçmalı kuşlar?”, 2025
Oil paint on cardboard, cardboard boxes, wooden beams / Karton üzerine yağlı boya, karton kutular, tahta çubuklar
Various sizes

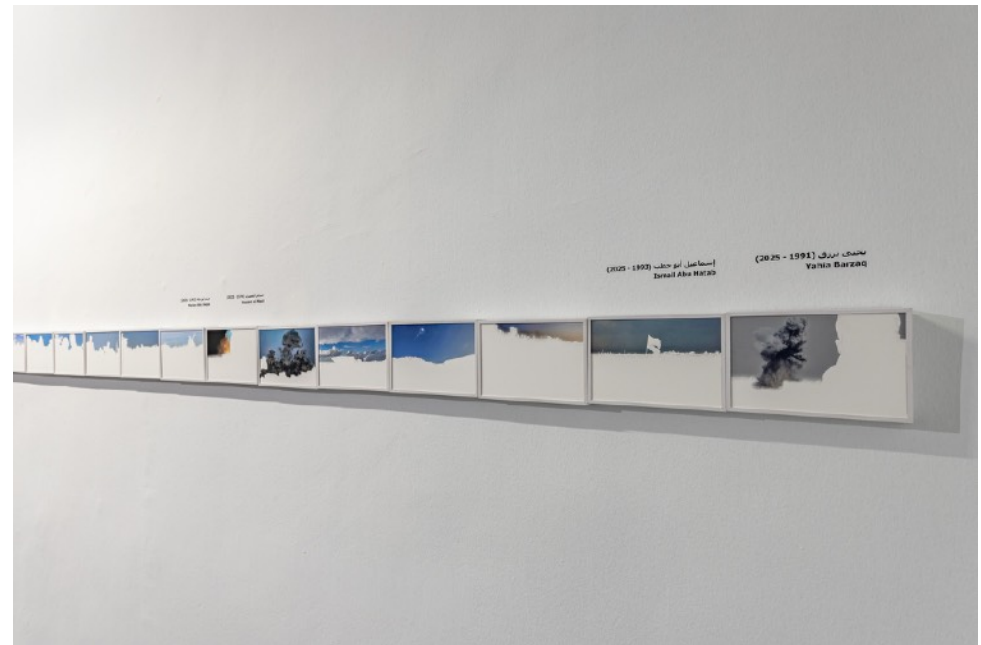
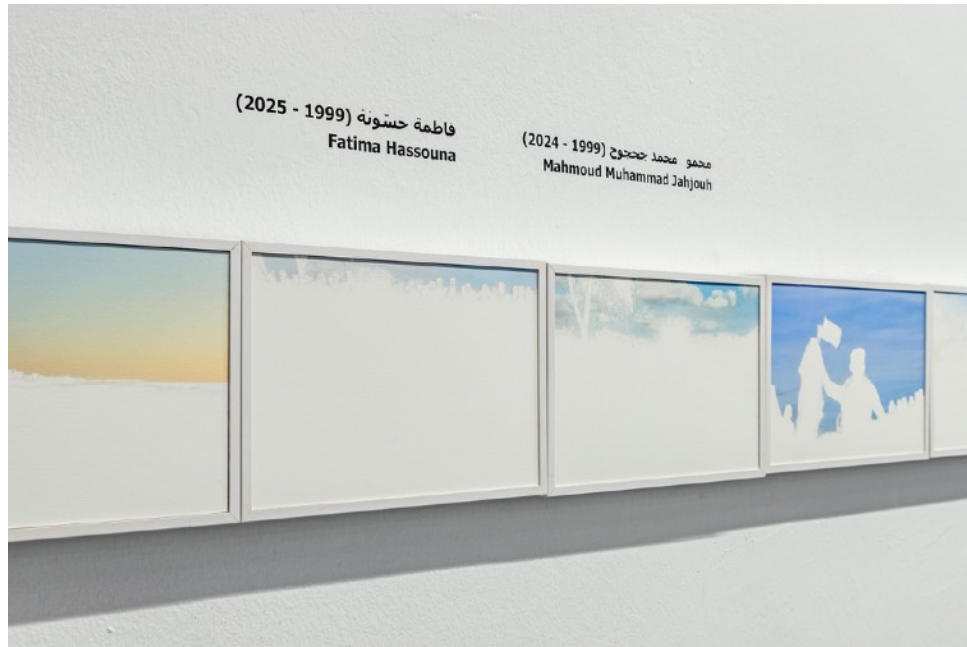


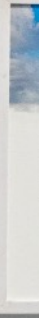


Under the Same Sky, 2025 / Aynı Gökyüzünün Altında, 2025

Fine art prints, photos taken by photojournalists: Ismail Abu Hatab, Yahia Barzaq, Hussam al-Masri, Mariam Abu Daqqa, Mahmoud Mohammed Jahjough, Fatima Hassouna

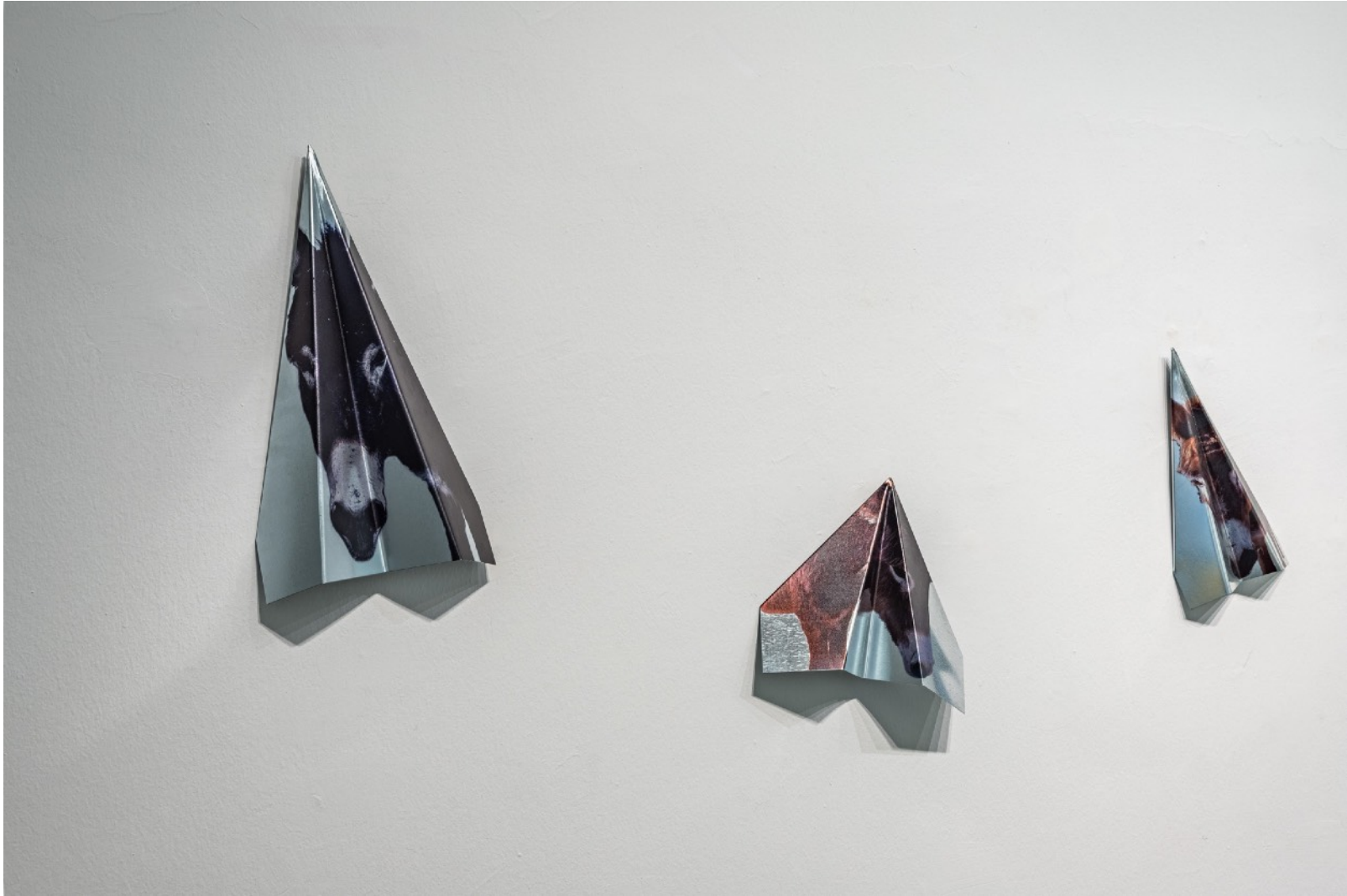
Framed sizes: 15.2 x 22.2 cm







The Donkey Flights Project, 2025 / Eşek Uçuşları Projesi, 2025
UV prints on galvanised sheets / Galvanize sac üzerine UV baskı
30 x 17 x 3.5 cm / 42 x 22.2 x 7 cm / 25 x 23 x 6 cm





FREE-range, 2025

Remote controlled letters: RC cars, styrofoam letters covered with Aluminium, wooden control panel / Uzaktan kumandalı harfler: RC arabalar, alüminyum kaplı strafor harfler, ahşap kontrol paneli
apx 40 x 26 x 8.5 cm each / 40 x 26 x 8,5 cm Herbiri
Panel: 27,5 x 44,5 x 4,5 cm



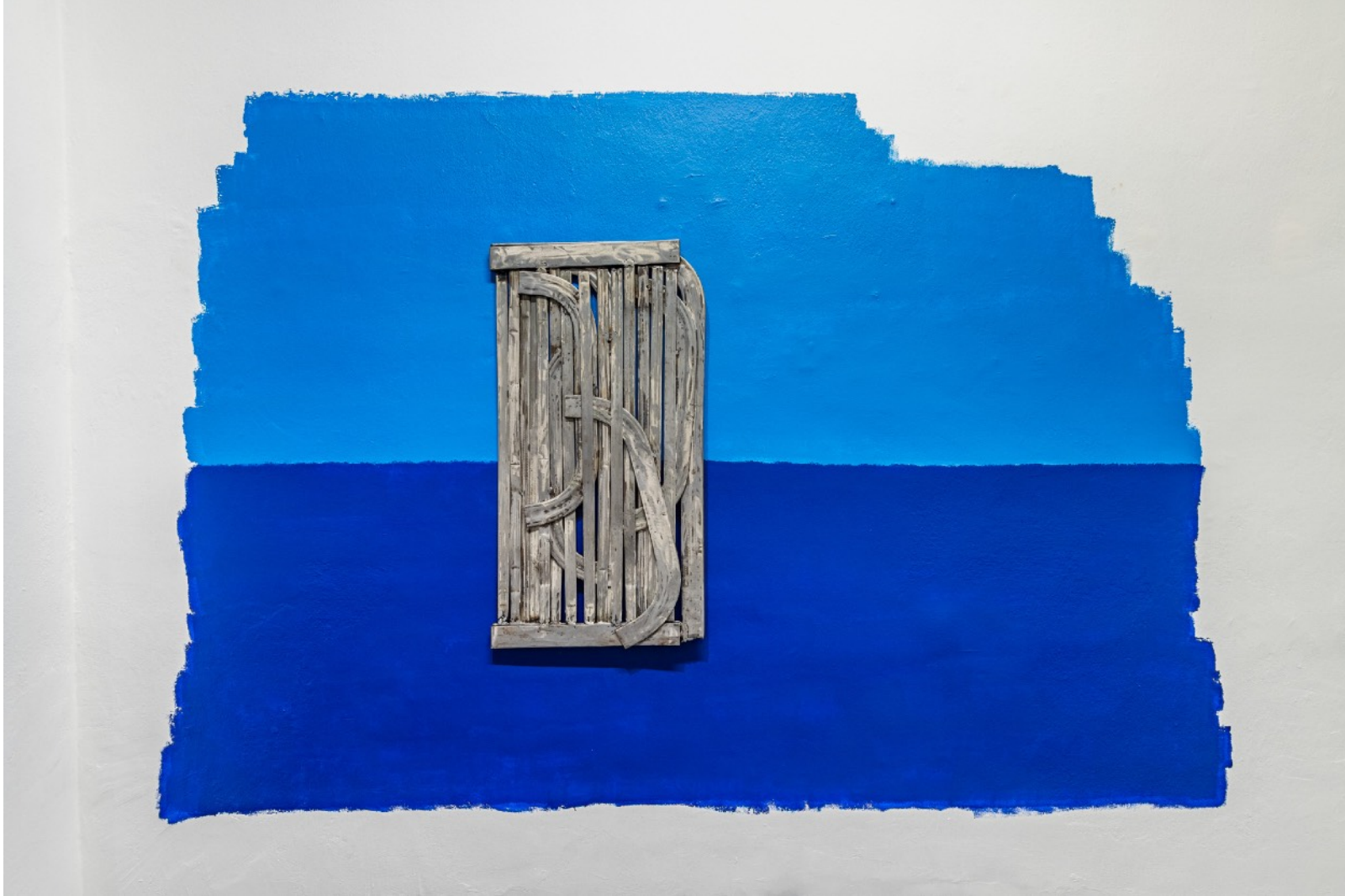




Puerto Rico

Oil paint on canvas, detachable wooden legs / Tuval üzerine yağlı boya, demonte edilebilir tahta ayaklar

Painting 150 x 85 cm + legs 100 x 4 x 4 cm : Resim: 150 x 85 cm + ayaklar 100 x 4 x 4 cm



Horizon (5002 / 5015), 2025 / Ufuk (5002 / 5015), 2025

2 iron police barriers, wall paint in the colours used in barricades: RAL 5002 Ultramarine and RAL 5015 Sky Blue/ 2 adet demir polis bariyeri, barikatlarda kullanılan renklerde duvar boyası: RAL 5002 Ultramarin ve RAL 5015 Gök mavisi.

103 x 54 x 3 cm