

June 25

Hello Bahar,

Cornucopia Magazine posted today your call for work for a social remembrance of Gezi Park.....

I have been working on a new piece in response to the resistance these past 3 weeks. It is not quite finished but can be, in time to send to you next week.
2 work-in-progress photos are attached. I hope for a professional photo session before shipping.

Title: Kara Lale (tulipa negra)
Medium: Hand-cut polypropylene and solar film
Dimensions: 12" x 57" (30cm x 142cm)

A few questions to you:
What are the dates of the show?
What is your address?
Could you please clarify what happens to the work once the show closes? Will you ship it back to me?

Thank you for the opportunity to show!

Best,
Helga Felleisen

June 26

Dear Helga,

This is totally a volunteering organization and we have so few time and not so many volunteers..

We are planning to open the exhibition on the 5th of July and collecting the pieces till the 28th of June.

We are still trying to clarify lots of things about the sponsorships, PR etc.

Can you please send me the latest photo of your art work and do you think your piece will be here on time with the shipping?

Love
B

June 26

dear bahar,

thanks for your reply. your show will have a life of its own; it will become something you have yet to imagine!!
as for being a volunteer group---take heart, i also manage one. there is never enough time, nor enough helpers. always! do what you are able.

the latest photo of my piece (in progress) is attached. istanbul and turkey have a special place with me, so i'm making every effort to be a part of your show. i have an appointment with the photographer monday. my plan is to ship the work to you per express thereafter.

can we make this work?

best
helga

June 26

Hello again..

Thanks.. Please send it as soon as possible I will try to find a place for it. If I cant for this time we are going to continue with another mixed exhibition we can maybe add your work there too..

I will let you know.. Thanks again

July 1

Jane stopped by to check out this new piece. We then packed it up and I took it to the post office.

Initially I filled out an USPS international express form. When I got to the counter, the rep said I needed a different form. He handed me a global express label to fill out.

I looked at it carefully. It's all about commercial products, which is NOT what I want. Filled it out and when I returned, I commented that the form was incorrect. The contents were *not* commercial. That this is art on loan for a show. He stated this was indeed the correct form.

Ok, I say, how about the 'value'. I wrote \$300 because I'd like to insure it for \$300, not that this is the value though. You can't insure it, he said. I was unsure and nervous. Even having hot flashes. None of this felt right, not like when I send packages to Germany.

July 1

hello bahar,
the work is photographed and in the mail for you. i sent it global express; it should arrive wednesday, july 3.

please let me know you've received it.
many thanks
helga

July 2

Thank you so much..

We would like to talk about the prices too..

We wish to make an auction and sell the art works and give the money to our friends

who need support in the hospitals after Gezi resistance.

Please let us know about your basic price.

Thanks alot..

B.

July 2

hi bahar,

yes, you may sell my piece through your fundraiser. please be sure to have solid, minimum bids for all artwork to assure you raise your intended goal. it's disheartening to see work sold for too little money.

please tell me the name and dates of the show so i may advertise it.

best,
helga

July 3

Lay awake a long while last night worrying about that 'commercial' form the guy made me fill out. Still doesn't sound right.

July 3

DİRENİŞİN ESTETİĞİ GÖNÜLLÜ KARMA SERGİ 5 Temmuz 2013 cuma günü saat 19:00'da Park Art İstanbul Sanat Galerisi'nde açılıyor. Gönüllü bir ekip ile birlikte yürütülen bu sergi, ülkemizin bir çok bölgesinde devam eden direniş hareketinin gönüllü sanatçılar tarafından estetik boyuta taşınmasını, sergilenmesini amaçlayan bir başka harekettir. 1 ay sürecek olan sergi, sanatçı komitesinin birlikte karar vereceği şekilde hareket edecektir. Açık arttırma ile satılması planlanan eserlerin geliri yine sanatçı komitesinin birlikte karar vereceği bir şekilde değerlendirilecektir. Komite toplanıp kararını duyuruna kadar eserlerin satışı olmayacaktır. Bir sonraki duyuruya kadar gündüz ve gece Yoğurtçu Parkı'na doğru gelen herkesi bu çok özel fotoğraf, ilüstrasyon, heykel, video, resim, enstelasyon, dijital art ve karikatürlerden oluşan gönüllü karma sergiyi ziyarete bekliyoruz..

Sevgiler,
Park Art İstanbul Ekibi adına,
BAHAR AYKAÇ

July 3

AESTHETICS OF RESISTANCE VOLUNTARY EXHIBITION will be opened on the **5th of July at 19:00'da** in **Park Art Istanbul Gallery**. The exhibition has been directed by a volunteer group which sees this exhibition as another movement, like a dance, with the big resistance movement which continues all around our country. The exhibition will continue for a month, and all decisions will be made by the committee of the artists. The committee will decide about the sales and auction prices and what the monies will be used for and will announce it as soon as possible. Till then every day and night whoever would like to come over to Yoğurtçu Park in Kadıköy is very welcome to visit the voluntary exhibition which includes photographs, illustrations, sculptures, videos, paintings, installations, digital arts and cartoons.

Love,
From BAHAR AYKAÇ
Representative of The Park Art Gallery Team

July 4

Dearest Helga..

We received a letter from the duty office. They say they are keeping your box in the border office and won't give us your art piece unless we pay like 314 Dolars + 150 TL. And it is very difficult for us to pay for it right now. We asked some advices to some consultancy but we are not sure about the system. We are so busy because of the opening. There are 63 artists in the exhibition and 150 art pieces too. Maybe you can imagine how much a big chaos going on right now. We will let you know about the news. Sorry for that. Really you know Turkey is not an easy country, especially these days..

Best wishes,
Bahar

July 4

dear bahar,

I've reflected on the unfortunate circumstances concerning my artwork for the show. the problem lies with the customs form the u.s. postmaster had me fill out. i specifically stated this is NON-commercial; that this is work i made for an art show; that this is NO merchandise; that this was a LOAN to you and your gallery; that the work would return to me. no duty should be charged since no money has changed hands.

please reject the packet and ask that it be returned to sender.

you may freely send this letter on to the Turkish duty office.

best,
helga felleisen

July 9

Hello Helga,

I'm Merve, Bahar's sister. I talked to the lady who works on the shipping company. She told me that you have to request back your art piece from FEDEX. We couldn't do anything legally and officially. So sorry but you have to deal this situation with FEDEX. You need to write an email or make a call them and tell about the situation. Tell them you want it back and there is a mistake about the receiver name-adress. We can't do anything because there is no official company called "Park Art" and its really horrible system on our customs. Let us know if you need anything, or Fedex wants us to do..

best,
Merve Aykaç

July 9

I call the 800 number at USPS global shipping. I explain the situation to the woman. She's sweet and understanding. She asks whether I'd been informed there'd be duties to be charged. No, the guy at the post office said no such thing. I told him I wanted to insure the work, that it was art I made for a show; he said that couldn't be insured. OK, she says, I'll affix a note that it be returned to you.

Thank you.

July 18

Called USPS again about my piece. Thought it would be returned by now.

Well hello. USPS said they couldn't do anything any more. Since it arrived at its destination it's now in the hands of FEDEX International since they're the carrier.

She connected me with FEDEX. The first person I spoke with said I'd need to pay return shipping before they could send it. How much is that? Let me see... \$175. What!? What do you mean? That's more than what it cost to send. Between shipping and the cost of photography I could have personally delivered the work! There's no way I can afford to pay that. Then the person responds, hold on, there's a note attached. Says shipping will be charged to an account. Whose account is that? I don't know she says. Let me connect you with someone who does.

After a few minutes someone else comes on the line. No, you don't need to pay. Billing goes to an account. Whose account? Ours. Great, I say. So, how does this happen? Well, the woman says, it also says they require a letter requesting release of the packet from Turkish Customs. Who needs to write this? I'd think it is FEDEX since it's our responsibility. Let me check to confirm.

After a bit she returns. She still doesn't know, but she'll look into it. Can she call back tomorrow?
Sure, I say.

Nothing.

August 2

I've been waylaid with Open Studios. An utterly frustrating two weeks. After last night's meeting things finally seem to be figuring themselves out. Feel like I'm decompressing, feeling liberated.

Time to turn to Kara Lale.

Call FEDEX International. It takes a while to get through, my tracking number has become kind of non-existent but, finally, yes.

Yes, says the guy at FEDEX, they've gotten an account number approved for the charges. And whose account is that? The Post Office. They've provided an account number. The Post Office, the USPS? You think they will pay this? (OMG, I think to myself, I may never get this back.) They're bankrupt. What are the charges? There's a brokerage and storage fee. Right now it's considered abandoned. If you abandon it, there's no charge.

No way, if this weren't sad, it'd be funny, I say. This belongs to me and I'd like to have it back. It was all a mistake.

He says they'll need a need a letter requesting release of the package. Who's to write this letter? Since you're the sender, that would be you. Ok, not the shipper but me? Yes. To whom do I send this? Is there an email address? Yes, you can write to 879416@fedex.comwe. .comwe? I repeat questioningly. Yes, .comwe. Explain why it is you want the package returned.

I write my letter, cc myself and click send. Oops. It bounces. Hmm. I try the variation 879416@fedex.com.we. Also bounces.

August 2

Back to FEDEX. This time I speak with Brandon. Sounds sleepy but friendly. He provides the correct address 879416@fedex.com !

Hey, I say, can you tell me specifically what kinds of charges are attached to this?

He says customs fees. There's

- Brokerage and warehouse fee \$75
- Terminal fee \$85
- Export warehouse fee \$63
- Government Stamp fee \$32
- Freight TBD

But, there are no charges if you abandon it.

No way. I laugh, say if this were funny, OK, but I feel like crying. Is there any way you can send me this info? I'd like to make art about it. No, he responds. I tell him this belongs to me. It's my artwork. Sorry for sounding upset, it's not about you.

Thank you, have a good day.

August 2

I cut and paste my original letter into a new mail, addressing it to the correct place. Maybe.

Subject: tracking 8287855332

To whom it may concern:

On July 1, 2013, I shipped a 7oz. packet to a small gallery in Istanbul, Turkey. The package contains artwork made by me; it was sent as a loan for a show, and intended to return to me, its owner. This small packet is currently held at Turkish Customs Office.

At time of shipping no person indicated that either receiver or sender would be responsible for custom's duties imposed by Turkey. Nor did we know this could happen. On July 9, I requested the package be returned to me. After repeated phone calls with fedex since that time, I understand you require a letter requesting release of my packet.

I hereby request Turkish Customs in Istanbul to release my package and return it to me, its owner. I further request no charge be incurred to any party as all transpired in ignorance. I request, too, that this process be expedited since the art is scheduled to hang in a show in Boston in September, 2013.

As a frequent traveller to and a friend of Turkey, I am disheartened by the current situation. I hope it will be resolved.

Regards,
Helga Felleisen

August 5

Subject: tracking 8287855332

Hi,

This tracking number is missing. Please advise correct number.

Thanks Elif

FedEx Global Service Participants (GSPs) are licensees of Federal Express Corporation for the transport of FedEx Express shipments. Any information, statements, claims, guarantees, or other obligations contained in this email from the GSP are the responsibility of the GSP.

August 5

Subject: tracking 8287855332

hello elif,
the tracking number is [8287855332](#).

thank you,
helga

August 5

Subject: tracking 8287855332

Helga,

This number is not correct. It is missing.

Thx Elif

August 5

Subject: tracking 8287855332

hi elif,

the tracking number is [8287855332](#). the shipping went through fedex global express per the united states postal service. each of the 10 or so people with whom i have spoken since july 1 has found the file under this number.

thanks

helga

August 5

Subject: tracking 8287855332

Then , pls contact with Fedex USA. Because Fedex trk numbers should be 12 digits. I could not find any information regarding your shipment.

Thx Elif

August 5

Subject: tracking 8287855332

they informed me to write to this email address. the package went to and is in istanbul.

Helga

August 5

Called Fedex USA. Provided my tracking number to Curlene who says this is an international number. Shall I connect you with Fedex International?

Good morning, this is DJ at Fedex International, how can I help you? Hi DJ, I hope you can brighten my day.

Yes, you need an international tracking number. That number is 898287855338.

Yeh! I hope this works! Have a good one.

August 5

Subject: fedex int'l tracking 898287855338

hello elif,

On July 1, 2013, I shipped a 7oz. packet to a small gallery in Istanbul, Turkey. This packet contains artwork made by me; it was sent as a loan for a show, and intended to return to me, its owner. It is currently held at the Turkish Customs Office in Istanbul.

At time of shipping no person indicated that either receiver or sender would be responsible for custom's duties imposed by Turkey. Nor did we know this could happen. On ca. July 8, I requested the package be returned to me. I have spoken repeatedly with representatives at Fedex International concerning the problem. They are able to track my packet, Fedex Int'l number 898287855338 (USPS number [8287855332](#)), and have alerted me as to its status. Currently they tell me you require a letter requesting release of my packet.

I hereby request Turkish Customs in Istanbul to release my package, tracking number 898287855338, and return it to me, its owner. I further request no charge be incurred to any party as all transpired in ignorance. I request, too, that this process be expedited since the art is scheduled to hang in a show in Boston in September, 2013.

As a frequent traveller to and a friend of Turkey, I am disheartened by the current situation. I hope it will be resolved.

August 6

Helga,

Pls also fill the AGR Form and send to me.

Thx Elif

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August 6

hello elif,
regarding the agr, what is the port? istanbul?

helga

Helga Butzer Felleisen
helgafelleisen.com

<American Goods Returned Declaration.pdf>

[I chuckle. Imagine, this is a form from the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.]

August 6

pls fill in only below blanks:

- 2 **(date the form is filled)**
- 3 **(tracking number)**
- 6 **(reason for return)**
- 9 **(description of goods)**
- 10 **(invoice amount)**
- 12 **(name and surname)**
- 15 **(signature)**

Thx Elif

August 7

Hello Helga,

Return airwaybill number is 5665 3917 2551

- ****ATTENTION ** HOLIDAY NOTICE!!!!** -

- TURKEY WILL BE OBSERVING RAMADAN HOLIDAYS
STARTING 08/08/2013 TO -

- 08/10/13 AND WILL BE BACK ON AUGUST 12 ... -

Thx Elif

August 7

elif, teşekkür ederim.
enjoy your break.

August 30

hello bahar!

your call for 'discovering unity' is thought-provoking. the upbeat, positive perspective is refreshing!

kara lale, which i sent for 'aesthetics of resistance' returned to boston two weeks ago. it took five weeks of communication with fedex to arrange. all is good. my one regret is that the piece did not hang in your show.

a heartfelt thank you for your assistance!

in the interim i created a companion piece. the mood is different and intense, flowing and integrated. conceptually it would fit well into your new show. because i don't wish to repeat my encounter with the duties' office, i'll refrain from sending it on to you. it will be with you in spirit. perhaps we can connect another time.

best wishes,
Helga

August 31

Oh dear Helga..

Thank you so much..

I wish you can join the next exhibition..

Can't you do anything digital and i can print here on canvas or wood or glass or textile what ever..

Oh dear Helga..

September 2

hello bahar,

I'll send you digital images for discovering unity tomorrow. the new piece is difficult to photo, so it may be only a short video. will let you know. if this is too late for the show, no worries!

hope all is well.

best wishes,

helga

September 5

hi bahar, it was great to talk with you today!

thanks for looking into printing my images. please know i'm flexible about which you choose to print and hang.

attached here are my cv; the artist's statement for kara lale; and an image of the companion piece to the original of this summer. the video will be sent via dropbox. it is intended to help you understand the work.

this is exciting. thanks so much.

best,
helga

September 23

Mail from FEDEX arrived today. It's a duty and tax invoice. It also includes two pages of rules for why one pays duties.

Duties, Tax, Customs, and other fun stuff totals \$210.68. Hey, it also says 'Other discounts may apply.'

So much for believing anything anyone says.
Feel like some fool.

January 29

Mail from FEDEX arrived today. Dated January 26. Still another duty and tax invoice.

March 21

Mail from a creditor collecting for FEDEX. In addition to the \$210.68, they've added on a collection fee of \$29.50 for a grand total of \$240.18. Interesting how quickly I can rack up charges without doing anything. Wish my work could sell similarly.

March 25

This morning I call FEDEX.

Trina transfers me to Sheena in the Tax and Duties Department.

I explain my story to her, that I've documented it since the beginning. Sheena listens and then explains to me that the only thing anyone ever said was that shipping would be waived, not the taxes and duties; that they're only charging for taxes and duties for which one is ALWAYS responsible. I explain that no one even mentioned the possibility of these costs when I shipped the work in July. It is non-commercial and has no commercial value. The cost of sending to Istanbul alone is likely more than I'll ever make in selling the work.

So, she says, the only thing she can do is give me a partial credit for the charges. She can do 50% of \$210.68. That'd be \$105.34. The bill is over 180 days old so you'd have to pay now, there's no payment plan.

Sheena makes the adjustment and transfers me to Courtney in billing. I pay with my cc. Confirmation no. 90805616.

DONE.