

art ON Istanbul hosts a solo exhibition titled "BLACKOUT" by FIRAT ENGIN on May 2 – June 1, 2013. As a young artist working in different areas and applying to various techniques such as sculpture, video, photograph and neon installation, just to name a few, Firat Engin treats the place and the exhibition as a whole; by this means, he creates his artworks around a theme and allows them to exist as visual works in several techniques and ways of expression. The notion 'blackout' may stand for covering, hiding, concealing or preserving and it also connotes censorship, darkness, or gloom. This is why Engin decides to name his exhibition "Blackout".

According to the young artist Firat Engin, art censorship is heavily applied and ideal concepts are perverted and thusly made useless in political, economic, and cultural areas through advanced strategies by those in power and authority. This pathetic reality is the starting point of Engin's exhibition. Generating his works based upon the idea that societies open to the censorship strategies pursued by the government or the authority are silenced and made passive in socio-cultural, economic and socio-political areas, the artist successfully depicts this by employing different materials in his works.

The artist, with his neon installation "Not Equal" on the display window, calls into question the understanding of equality both in the social structure and in the government's attitude towards the society; by this way, he invites the onlookers to the exhibition through minimal aesthetic means. Besides, he designs some of his works in the form of playing cards on which there are the symbols of the government in question rather than spades, diamonds, hearts and clubs, and then he stacks them on top of each other; thus creating a card tower and/or a house of cards. Naming the works as "Yes We Can", "One Minute", "NATO House", and "Lets Stay Together", the artist focuses on and highlights the possibility that politicians and leaders of today's world are standing on a slippery slope and they may fall or fail at any moment. On these high-quality bright colour sculptures, stencils of political figures like Barack Obama, Recep Tayyip Erdogan are used as representative images and the flags of NATO and European Union also appear on these works. In Engin's video installation "Due Diligence", we hear the classic sound of a typewriter and it presents the opportunity to compare the definitions of the concepts given in three dictionaries published by TDK (Turkish Language Association) in 1950, 1960 and 2011. The fact that the definitions of the same words or concepts greatly differ from each other as the publishing year changes, is the impressive example that lays bare the attitude of the government towards the notions of race, religion and gender. The artist, in his exhibition, chooses to use especially the objects (ready-made) we all often use in our daily lives; he either changes the function of these appliances or remains faithful to their functions; however, in the end, he makes them somehow different and turns them into video installations.

Firat Engin's solo exhibition "Blackout" can be visited at art ON Istanbul between May 2 – June 1, 2013.