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## Elif Erkan “Konzentration der Kräfte” at Portikus, Frankfurt

“Konzentration der Kräfte” (Concentration of Forces), the title of the exhibition, identifies a central theme in Erkan’s art. A recent graduate of the Städelschule who is returning to Frankfurt for this show while living and working in Los Angeles on a Fulbright grant, Erkan presents new work. Two sculptures are the centerpieces of the show. The remains of two plaster-and-porcelain large-scale produced plates are the product of a process the artist has explored for quite some time, as her previous plate pieces illustrate.

In a performative act, she shatters china plates and, without arranging the shards, pours plaster over them. Although made of classical sculptural materials, the works suggest snapshots recording the brief moment of violence. As such they capture more than a photograph could. Erkan is interested in the breaking of plates as an act associated with rage, depression, and melancholy, but also with joy: we all know the characteristic scene in a movie classic in which the furious wife smashes the china, while a German custom calls for plates to be shattered during a bachelor party to celebrate a happy marriage. The isolated act associates images in the viewer’s mind and sets the plot in motion in our imaginations. In the version for Portikus, the highly fragile and delicate quality of the material was pushed to its limit by its ambitious dimensions. The possibility of structural failure and the exhaustion of the material while erecting the plates and leaning them carefully against the wall was implied. As a monument to an impossible sculpture, the entire piece reiterates the parts as an index of the action that produced it, and functions as a reservoir of memory. In other pieces on show here, she used T-shirts or sweatpants, cast them in plaster and stacked them. This action directs our attention away from the intended purpose or provenance of the objects and toward their social connotations: the mental images we see as we are confronted with the objects. Sculpture predominates in Elif Erkan’s exhibition at Portikus, but the focus is on the

Press Review  
Mousse, January 2015



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