

ARTFORUM



Elif Erkan, *Compass - Heart Disease*, 2016, kale, pigments, Plasticine, 10 1/2 x 14 1/2 x 1".

The quality of the light at Park View feels quintessentially LA—specifically, those neighborhoods that lie east, dusty and browner than the pastel palette famously used by David Hockney to render this town. Elif Erkan’s exhibition “ex oriente lux” is characteristic of a transplant intrigued by the unreal, contradictory metropolis. However, Erkan’s work rests comfortably here, her sculptures drawing on the city’s tensions. The focal point is a series of hunched concrete slabs titled “Poses” (all works 2016), which weave a path through the gallery. From certain angles, edges lifted slightly upward, they appear to float a bit off of the ground. Laced with beige pigment and featuring tiny neon liquid construction levels embedded throughout, they gently usher you around them; but not unlike LA’s network of freeways and winding hills there is always another route, another landscape unfolding. Two wall-based sculptures, *Compass - Heart Disease* and *Compass - Blood Clotting*, look over the floor-bound works, where the interiors of food containers are cast in fleshy Plasticine with kale and fish-oil capsules littering their surfaces.

Erkan’s vision is more indebted to the massive infrastructure that shuttles us to and fro—and the debris that collects alongside it—than that sleek Finish Fetish look that dominates the city’s aesthetic history as exported to the mainstream. She mobilizes signifiers of defeat—wilted vegetables and crumbled rock—to prompt us to read into these objects the disillusionment of moving here with an image of cruising the coast only to find oneself sitting in traffic on the 101. The artist’s work maintains a quiet grace that suggests these apparent contradictions and disappointments might just be the strange look of equilibrium, a balance not found in a center but through dispersal.