Culture Istanbul

A Day in the Art Life of Mari Spirito



Photograph of Mari Spirito by Zeynep Fırat

The 'A Day in the Art Life' series is meant to convey a sense of the life of art world figures; a taste of their routine or an ideal day in their life, sprinkled with some philosophical musings.



In this edition of the A Day in the Art Life of... series Mari Spirito speaks about her daily routine in Istanbul. She is the founding director and curator of Protocinema – an ambulant arts organization that extends over various sites in the city. Her own experiences lead to meaningful encounters that provide inspiration for the organization.

I start my day with a short routine: matcha green tea looking out over the back garden of the French Palace with its single palm tree. There is a view of the Bosphorus and the ever-changing skies. However, my daily routine is no routine. I am open to the unexpected because ultimately, at the end of the day, there is so much that is out of our control, so much that we just cannot plan for or put in our calendar "in ink." In my personal life, I gravitate in two directions: towards movement because there is so much to do right away, and simultaneously towards stillness. To be really still, in small special places such as Vacilando cafe, steps away from Performistanbul.



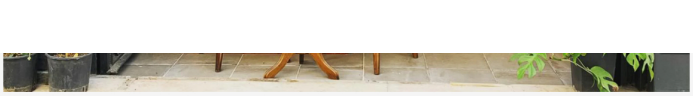

Image: Vacilando. Image courtesy: Seturday.

My daily routine is no routine. I am open to the unexpected because ultimately, at the end of the day, there is so much that is out of our control.

Inspiration for Protocinema, my ambulant art organization, comes from artists. It comes from their ideas as well as places — neighborhood, cities, buildings— and what happens in those places on personal and political levels. Artists find ways not only to exist, but to be heard. This is why we find it rewarding to collaborate with places such as Kiraathane Literature House (*A Few In Many Places,* multi-city exhibition) and Postane (*Permanent Spring, Delayed Bloom,* Protocinema screening tour) specifically because they support creative people in dynamic and sensitive ways.



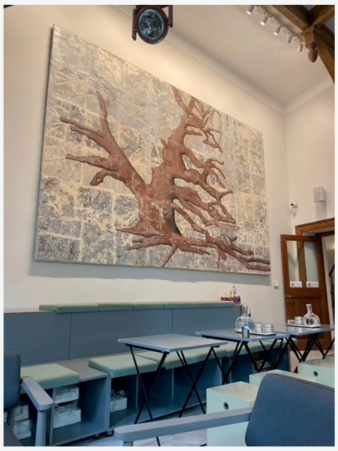

Image left: Kiraathane Literature House. Image courtesy Kiraathane Literature House. Image right: Postane. Image courtesy Protocinema.

I spend a lot of time walking around empty places and talking to people about the meaning of subcultures in these locales. For the past eleven years we have been making our exhibitions in different sites. This means that we start from the artist – not the other way around. My mind and heart feel good when imaging what feels right in a certain place or another. This is an exercise in empathy through considering others' perspectives.







"A Few In Many Place Istanbul" exhibition view. Image courtesy Protocinema.



I find joy in walking down unknown streets, but also in discovering something that has always been on a familiar road. This act is tied to an on-going struggle against rapid gentrification in both New York and Istanbul. At Protocinema, our process is one of many moving parts: specific sites, commissioned artworks, potential funding sources, visas, and timing are all in a delicate moving balance. This method of working is an extreme-sport of navigating a constant flux.

We are always looking to make interventions fit different conditions, contorting sometimes, going with the flow other times. How can we be truly responsive? How can we slow it all down? How can we more deeply experience what we are surrounded by? These are the issues that contributed to conceptualizing Protocinema's current installation called *Running in Place*.



Image: "Running In Place" Exhibition View. Image courtesy Protocinema.

I found a respectful partner at Polat Piyalepasa Çarsı because it's a safe haven for art, even though it's a new urban development. There are six art galleries there: artSümer, Martch Art Project, Art On Istanbul, Merkur, Pi Artworks, and Zilberman Gallery which is significant at a time when it's harder to find empty spaces due to rapid gentrification.

Our show, *Running In Place*, considers the circulation of ideas, water, and bodies along with their inherent contradictions. Artists represent

three perspectives: **Beatriz Santiago Muñoz**'s is that of suspension, David Horvitz's is of regulated mobility, and Onur Karaoglu's is of free-flowing forces of nature and imagination. Generally, circulation is considered to be good – good for healthy societies, oceans, and human bodies. The current dissonance lies in extremes of hyper-movement and restricted mass-movement.

> I find joy in walking down unknown streets, but also in discovering something that has always been on a familiar road.



Image: "Running In Place" exhibition view. Image courtesy Protocinema.

Globalization has magnified a schism: between the complete freedom of global transit awarded to those with the specific class and nationality, and the restriction of movement even in times of flight for survival. This grotesque dissonance of circulation holds humanity captive, frenetically running in place.

21.7K

Newsletter

Subscribe to our newsletter to stay up to date with the latest news and updates.

Enter your email Send

Social Media

Follow us on social media to stay up to date with the latest news and updates.

The Museum
Of Private Collections

Discover
Artists
Artworks
Collectors
Galleries
Experts
Courses
Magazine
Campaigns

About Us
Press
Public Support
Help Center
Contact

© 2024 Collecteurs. All Rights Reserved

Terms of Use Privacy Policy Copyright Consent Preferences Cookie Policy Disclaimer Do not sell my personal information