

## Interview with Nezaket Ekici

Realized by Rose Merriman  
on the occasion of the exhibition

### ***WATER(PROOF)***

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At MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin

<http://momentumworldwide.org/exhibitions/waterproof/>

Curated by Rachel Rits-Volloch & Tainá Guedes

During the length of *Water(Proof)*, we are very pleased to share interviews with various artists who are participating in *Water(Proof)*.



I visited Nezaket Ekici at her studio in Kreuzberg. As I entered, I was immediately greeted with a rack of amazing colourful costumes, all from different performances. She pointed out one, a grey dress, with an apron made of yellow dish cloths. We sat down at a table with a red tablecloth, across from each other. I asked her about her experiences with food and food art. For Ekici, her main tool is her body, whatever else she uses in her performances is a material. Food is never just food. Whether it's a discussion on politics or cultural differences, "everything has a meaning." One of her earliest pieces using food as an artistic material was in 2002. '180 wishes' is based on the Spanish custom of eating 12 grapes with every chime of the bell on New Year's Eve, making a wish each time a grape is eaten. In her exaggerated performance, Ekici consumed eight kg of grapes in three minutes. It is a discussion on how dangerous our greed can be. We don't need so many wishes. She has also used various other foods, like apples and spaghetti. Another of one of her most well-known performance that involves whipping cream by hand and churning it into butter.

To Ekici, water means freedom. I asked her does she think that it is important to talk about climate change in her practice. Shrugging, she says, “every project is different.” In *Water to Water*, Ekici looked at this vital resource and questioned what we would do if one day we didn’t have water. Where would we find our water? How would we use lakes and other bodies of water differently if that was the case? “Globetrotters already have a system of cleaning water.” She says. “They go to a lake with a pump system and make clean water from the dirty water.



I decided to show it and do it as a performance. I was on the middle of the lake with a small pump and a filter machine. I take dirty lake water and hand pumped it, making fresh clean water.” The now clean water she pumped by hand would then flow down the red dress she wore and into glasses that were waiting to be filled and which were then passed to observers to drink. “This was interesting as I had the location to do something (like this). I found it interesting if people would drink from that water, how brave they would be,” Ekici continues. “I cleaned it with this hand pump but even if you clean it, you still have 1000s of these micro- plastics. This is a big discussion now. Fish are consuming it, and so are we.”



She also discussed her collaborative work *Salt Dinner*, which she performed with Israeli artist, Shahar Marcus. *Salt Dinner* was filmed on the Dead Sea in 2012 “Shahar is from Israel, I am from Turkey and Germany. He is Jewish, I am Muslim. It is about how do you share and what does a relation mean between two cultures and two religions but is mostly about what is the salt. You use salt. It is an element. You don’t need salt separate like on a picnic table. You have it already (in the water). The salad is dropped into the water and then you take it into your body. But this salt is not the same as the salt you buy in the supermarket. You don’t need to wash. You already have your water. If I want to clean my glass, I put it directly into the water. It is about the struggling. The water is different your body comes up and floats. You cannot sit comfortably. Everything moves. You can’t control. At the same time the crystals of the salt are sharp. On the feet you have this sharpness. How do you make it in this heavy situation? With the sun at the middle of the sea, the water is like a mirror. The effect is so hot. This piece works with the limits of the body and nature. There is also a fight between us. I share with Shahar but we both need control. We are in a difficult position.”