

PROFILE

Yüksel Arslan explores intellect, eroticism

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In 1984 as part of "Autoartures III," an exhibit titled "Premier Souvenir" (My First Memory) displays a young man with long golden hair and an androgynous face wearing short pants with the zipper undone. As a young boy, the Turkish artist Yüksel Arslan had hair that made people think he was a little girl. One day he unzipped his pants and cried, "I am a boy!"

This memory permeates Arslan's work and affirms eroticism, both mental and physical, as the primary source of power in his life. Arslan, who also takes influence from his time spent in Paris, is an

artist who explores himself and his ideas, and throws open the psychic apparatus to the observer in the form of visual language. He dissects his subconscious intimately and breaks it down into the totems of his inner universe. He is self-examining, self-exploiting and deliberate in rendering his obsessions.

Arslan's "artures" vacillate between sketching and writing, and between painting and poetry. Arslan works in a series with titles "Phallisme," "Portraits," or "Influences," for example, arose long after periods of deep reflection on a particular subject or

idea. Once his psyche can no longer contain all the ideas, they explode outward onto the page. The subjective becomes objective. The intense need erupts in the same way he felt an urgency to declare himself a boy. The source is from the same compulsion—to affirm his essence as his intellectual and erotic minds merge. He has intellectualized the erotic and eroticized the intellect. And he unzips them for the viewer.

The Yüksel Arslan Retrospective is ongoing exhibit at santralistanbul through March.