

In the Belly of the Whale: Two Waters Folding Into One Another

Water is both a vessel and an agent of transformation. It dissolves what enters, reshapes it, and opens it to new forms. The exhibition *In the Belly of the Whale* draws on this nature, bringing together Eda Soylu's paintings and installations with Hatice Utkan's poetry to blur the boundaries between word and image, matter and meaning, the seen and the sensed. Colors lean toward verses; verses move through images to reveal new layers. Rather than simply an exhibition, this encounter becomes a threshold—one where painting becomes readable and poetry takes visual form.

Soylu's works engage with the surface of silence. In the meeting of pigment and water, form loosens while color slips away from stillness. These works occupy the space not as static images, but as states of being. At times the colors expand like a long breath; at others they condense into a single shade that quietly touches the viewer. More than figures, they present conditions, less shape than transition, less surface than the impression of depth.

In Utkan's poetry, the layers of time and existence gradually unfold. Her lines carry sound as well as image and thought, forming their own flow among cycles, pauses, shadows, and light. Words emerge sometimes like inscriptions carved into stone, other times like silhouettes shimmering on water, leaving an echo in the reader's inner landscape.

The silence that permeates Soylu's paintings and the philosophical tone of Utkan's poetry begin to move together. Rather than meeting in conflict, the two disciplines create a single current. Like two waters merging, one carries the other; one dissolves into the other. The viewer finds themselves within this confluence.

Colors in the works resonate with the poems. Deep blues hold the weight of time invoked in the verses; the sudden flicker and retreat of red leaves a trace, like meaning catching light within a single word. Yellow approaches pink with the glow of inner transformation. Gray and black create a ground that recalls the poems' "shadow-burns." Here, color becomes a second language in dialogue with the poems' voice. The poems enter the paint; the paintings become lines.

The exhibition invites the viewer to shift from seeking explanation to inhabiting presence, from demanding meaning to listening to silence. Nothing here resolves; everything moves. Like water, each element remains in a state of becoming.

Soylu and Utkan's collaboration also gestures toward the lineage of visual and written tradition shaped by Emin Barın. Moving from image to text, from craft to intuition, the work transcends presentation and reveals its own nature.

Verses and images stand as vessels of a consciousness resonating outside of time. And from within the spirit of the exhibition, another quiet voice emerges:

"The more we are separated from one another / the more we unite."

These lines speak to more than two individuals: they embody the meeting of two disciplines, two senses, two forms.

In the Belly of the Whale is an encounter, an act of contact.

A moment suspended, where matter and meaning are carried by water, where text and image pour into each other.

Is everything ending today?

Perhaps.

Yet *In the Belly of the Whale* may just be the place where everything begins again.

More than an exhibition, it is a threshold.

And what crosses it is transformed.