

HOMECOMING

Odysseus's journey home after leaving Troy took 20 years, while PILOT's return home took 12 years. PILOT has finally resettled at its birthplace: 83 Siraselviler Street.

PILOT's first exhibition at this venue, **Homecoming**, brings together works by artists with whom the gallery has collaborated for many years. Rather than following a specific theme, the exhibition focuses on works in which each artist centers their own questions; however, this does not prevent distinct connections from emerging among the works.

Heidegger's concept of *gestell* (framing, shelf, chassis, window) is defined as a structural tool that defines the boundaries of the ways we perceive, interpret, and move through the world; just as a window frame limits our view or our skeleton enables our movement. Works created using various media and techniques—centered around fundamental concepts such as the relationship between human, nature, and technology; the tension between the sacred and the mundane; the “gaze”; the materiality of time; and the archaeology of memory—define the framework of the exhibition.

Ali Miharbi's work titled *Value, Experience, Change, Knowledge* (2026)—part of his Volvelle series, which reinterprets paper mechanisms historically used as analog computational tools in fields such as astronomy, cryptography, and divination—is based on Andrea Fraser's article “The Field of Contemporary Art: A Diagram” (2024), which draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of fields of cultural production. Building on this diagram, the work offers a perspective through a rotating mechanism that presents curated lists of terms related to the fields of knowledge, social/political change, experience, and value production. The framed pointer in the center allows the viewer to establish binary pairings among these different fields.

Velázquez's 1656 work *Las Meninas*, which has been reinterpreted by many artists since its creation, distinguishes itself from both earlier and contemporary works in terms of the relationship it establishes with the viewer. The figures in the painting interact with one another in their natural states; it remains a matter of debate whom the artist is looking at (the king and queen, or the

viewer?). Although inspired by Van Eyck's use of mirrors, the work goes beyond the period's perception of reality through its three-dimensional composition, depth, and narrative structure. In 'Las Meninas', the space opens up both backward toward the figure on the staircase and forward toward the viewer through the mirror and the gazes. As **Atif Akin** interprets it, in *Las Meninas* (2026), the viewer is part of the scene. Thus, the canvas expands, and the play is reconfigured with every glance.

Another work where perspective and the viewer are present on stage is **Emir Erkaya's** new oil painting titled *We Meet in Dreams* (2026). Presenting an iconography of Turkish classical music, stage history, and popular culture, this work is structured around proscenium architecture. Bringing together Turkish Art Music composers from different eras, famous soloists and singers, theatrical characters, and the orchestra on a single anachronistic plane, the work forms a frieze with a series of portraits on stage, transforming individual faces into a collective pantheon. The larger figures in the lower section, meanwhile, are positioned within the pictorial space as representatives of various performance forms such as cabaret, drag, belly dance, and music. Rather than reconstructing a specific historical moment, the work brings together different generations, genres, and cultural layers on the same plane; thereby blurring the distinctions between high culture and popular culture, as well as between mainstream and subculture.

Halil Altindere creates another work that blurs the boundaries between popular culture, mainstream and subculture, and historical heritage. His piece titled *Star Wars: The Knights of Malta vs. Ottoman Drones* (2025) is an extension of Altindere's miniature practice—which he has been pursuing for nearly a decade—in the form of textiles. Drawing inspiration from the Ottoman conquest of Rhodes and the historical struggles against the Knights of Malta, the work establishes a visual and symbolic connection between the knights' battle masks and the Stormtrooper figures from the 'Star Wars' universe. By placing science fiction archetypes within traditional historical scenes, Altindere proposes a narrative in which different eras and cultural symbols intertwine, rather than treating history as a linear progression from the past to the future.

In **Altindere's** work titled *Old Battles, New Protocols* (2025), the classical composition of the miniature is preserved; however, the actors on the scene belong to the present day. Unmanned aerial vehicles, autonomous ground

systems, military robot dogs, and AI-powered defense devices share the same plane as historical representations of power. The distancing of war from humans, the delegation of decision-making to algorithms, and the operation of violence through new protocols are documented through the language of the miniature. Altındere's practice establishes a strong connection between contemporary art and political memory by rendering images of the future on traditional surfaces, making today's wars and surveillance regimes visible within the forms of the past.

Uğur Cinel's *Homo Ludens* series, which he began in 2022, draws inspiration from Johan Huizinga's thesis that "civilization is born in play and exists as play." The series treats Lego figures—which serve as a bridge between childhood and adulthood and embody the universal language of play—as archetypes. This time, by reinterpreting Darth Vader and the Stormtrooper from the Star Wars universe in Lego form, the artist brings together mythological figures of popular culture with the materials and techniques of the ancient sculptural tradition. Bronze casting and stone carving transform the icons of the age of mass production into timeless objects, while the artist establishes a dialogue between individual memory and the collective archive, between toys and cult culture, and between the past and the future. Here, play is not merely an activity belonging to childhood; it becomes a practice of making sense of the world, reconstructing it, and confronting images of power.

Murat Şahinler's oil-on-canvas work titled *The Principle of Moments* (2020–2026) brings together more than 30 characters side by side. The viewer feels as though they are witnessing a historical moment, a spectacle: on one side, the "yellow vests," miners, and proletarians; on the other, figures of power—Christine Lagarde, oil-rich Arabs, fashion designers, and bankers... In the center, caught between these two groups, are anti-monarchists, with healthcare workers at the forefront of the struggle. Şahinler's painting offers a condensed and almost surreal expression of today's fragmented struggles.

In **Gözde Mimiko Türkkan's** practice, waves are the carriers of energy moving between bodies, beings, and the environment. The artist establishes the boundaries between human and non-human not through fixed categories, but through the flows and interactions that connect all beings. The wave—ranging from water waves to migration and heat waves, to emotional and social disturbances—becomes a vehicle for movement, memory, and transformation.

For her, waves are a transfer of energy that moves through space and time, passing through bodies, breaking, or continuing on its path after transforming. In this way, the artist explores the possibilities of conceiving the world not as fixed opposites, but as a whole of constantly changing and fluid relationships. Türkkan's performance and installation project *Fight Like a Girl*, which she has been working on since 2022 and which uses the concepts of resilience, violence, and gender as reference points through the lens of martial arts, stands out among her recent works. The bronze gloves with the "Fight Like a Girl" logo, which also reveal the artist's relationship with concepts of body politics, power, and resistance, stand out as a sculptural extension of this narrative.

Parterre gardens, characterized by ornamental flower beds arranged in complicated patterns, were structures that became popular in England in the 17th century and were designed to allow nature to be perceived from above in a geometric order. This arrangement determined not only the shape of the plants but also the position of the viewer. The garden is designed for a perspective that organizes and dominates nature. Birds, on the other hand, are creatures that naturally possess the bird's-eye view conceived by humans. The two works **Ece Ağırtmış** created for this exhibition return to humans the very idea of shaping and restricting nature—an idea originally imposed by humans. The viewer stands opposite the garden but remains behind its borders.

Tufan Baltalar's recent ceramic works serve as a continuation of the world he has pieced together with an imaginative yet realistic sensibility throughout his interdisciplinary practice. The artist's works invite us to reflect on the "individual" and the individual's experience of the world, and to reexamine these within the context of humanity's relationship with nature. As Baltalar traces the path of his personal experience, he discovers the collective and social connections in the issues he explores. Beginning his practice by exploring ceramic forms, the artist carries his experimental approach into this medium. Figures emerge from the surface of the plate to occupy space; the ceramic surface stops being a canvas and becomes a pedestal or a sculpture. Over time, the plant-like figures become independent of the plate. The artist approaches human representations not as autobiography, but as an introspective exploration of the individual's experience within the conflict between city and nature. In Baltalar's sculptures, human figures are surrounded and overtaken by plants; it is a matter of submission, not resistance. With the calm indifference on their faces, humans have surrendered to nature after long struggles.

In her dialogue with the tradition of miniature painting, **Hamra Abbas** takes a contemporary view of “Pietra Dura”—the Italian marble inlay tradition—which has been refined in Central Asia and the Mughal world. After returning to her homeland of Pakistan from Boston, where she had lived for many years, the artist—influenced by Islamic architecture in Lahore—makes the texture of natural stones a fundamental element of the landscape in her *Everyday Paradise* (2026) series; while the veins and layers of the marble evoke topographical formations, the surface conveys the image of the Garden of Paradise from Islamic art in a contemporary manner. Shaping a miniature landscape with mountain silhouettes and geological layers rather than botanical details, these works are shaped by the artist’s journeys through Pakistan and other regions.

İrem Tok’s work titled *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2026) is a conceptual exploration of knowledge and its construction. The artist reconstructs the Celsus Library using books that she has hand-carved and transformed into architectural elements; the books cease to be functional objects and become building materials. The layered pages form a surface that reveals the material remains of time. Rather than a historical reference, the work takes a critical stance toward contemporary regimes of knowledge: it offers a heavy, silent, and material contrast to the speed of data flow and the instrumentalization of knowledge. This reconstruction opens up a space for reflection on the transmission, preservation, and erosion of knowledge over time.

Zeren Göktan’s triptych of photographs titled *Between You and Me / Off White* maps a reality of womanhood through female figures emerging among weeds and thorns. Clusters of thorns serve a dual function—both as a protective shield and as a barrier that reveals the contradictory nature of the relationship: they both envelop the woman against external threats and shut her off from others. Göktan’s framing shifts between the intimate and the collective; the figures appear and disappear among the thorns, suspended on that fragile line between presence and absence. The triptych form opens the moment frozen in the photograph to an intergenerational temporality; the relationship between the mother and the artist herself and the distance the female body establishes with nature, her own past, and the social gaze—as a barrier that is crossed once again each time but never truly overcome—is carved into the photographic surface.

Melih Çebi's work titled *Thank You Have a Nice Day* (2025) transforms plastic bags collected from Istanbul markets over the course of thirteen years into a vessel of memory; the fruit stickers bear the traces of years and seasons. The elderly man depicted on this surface, pushing a shopping cart, symbolizes the physical weight of time, while the artist's refusal to use the cart and his continued use of plastic bags to carry his load represents a contradictory form of resistance against aging. The distance between carrying and dragging opens up to both a personal and a social sense of time. Through consumption, urban waste, and devalued objects, the work unites the individual archive with collective memory within the ordinary materials of daily life.

M.K. Perker's *Angels on a Break* (2026) series transforms his intense line textures—created with ink and a scanning tip—into a contemporary drawing practice by merging them with the visual memory of the scratchboard and engraving traditions. In the series, angels depicted wearing pilot's caps and showing signs of human tiredness convey the tension between the sacred and the ordinary in an ironic tone: the dualities between duty and a break, the divine and the mundane, are revealed through these figures in a surreal and dystopian atmosphere. By manually recreating the black-and-white contrast and meticulous texture of the scan, Perker brings the technical memory of the past into a contemporary narrative; thus, the angels become figures caught between two worlds, bearing traces of both the sacred archive and contemporary tiredness.

Two photographs by **Constantinos Taliotis** focus on iconic moments from gangster and B-movies. The artist transforms the genre's recurring symbols—such as briefcase exchanges, car chases, hostage-takings, and shootings from behind—into a narrative device; by freezing the fluid motion, he elevates each frame to a monumental moment where tension and suspicion intensify. As Taliotis unearths the genre's stereotypes like an archaeological excavation, he actually reconstructs the grammar of suspense that cinema has taught us: every frame is the shadow of the next, every gaze is on the threshold of complicity.

PİLOT's first exhibition at its new venue will be on view from September 17 to October 31, 2026, at 83 Siraselviler Street.