

REY AKDOGAN

Rey Akdogan creates subtle interventions into the spatial, temporal, and material conditions of a given environment through an understated use of repurposed industrial and display materials.

Akdogan's early work developed architectural proposals on the basis of fictional scenarios, pulling apart unrealized models in order to develop new and different configurations on the basis of hypothetical parts. The reconfiguration and détournement of teleological materials continues to characterize Akdogan's process, though her engagement with architecture has become at once more nuanced and diffuse.

Recent works have employed—in a manner contrary to their intended use—materials from stage design, commercial photography, and industrial manufacturing: theatrical lighting gels, packing material, cinefoil, neutral density filters, PVC curtains, and fluorescent rods, among others. United by their literal and figurative capacity to filter, these materials are conventionally put toward utilitarian ends that seek to render them invisible through the act of use—they are *seen through* rather than looked at. However, in the case of Akdogan's work, they simultaneously gesture toward the industrial context from which they came as well as the space in which they are exhibited. In her *Faction* series, French cleats are arranged in a manner contrary to their intended use, becoming functionally redundant. Akdogan brings to the fore the backbone that holds the picture—those objects that are conventionally hidden from sign and used for hanging artworks—unraveling the hierarchical support/surface relationship between the wall, the cleat, and the artwork.

Akdogan's practice engages the shifting climatic conditions of the exhibition space through subtle manipulations of standard fixtures as well as the incorporation of new elements. Its atmospheric quality interpellates thresholds such as windows, open doors, and air vents, in addition to that which surrounds the envelope of the exhibition space. In *night curtain*, a N-9 neutral density filter fitted over the gallery entrance simultaneously produced an interior space while absorbing and reflecting the street outside. This progression of layers was mirrored in miniature through a set of eighty handmade slides, comprised of theater gels and transparent packing materials secured between the frames of 35-mm slide cartridges and projected through a standard Kodak carousel.

Without the use of celluloid or a camera, Akdogan employs light and transparent materials to construct a paracinematic apparatus in which the space itself functions as a projection screen. In *night curtain*, the shadows cast by a modified industrial fan, itself initially concealed from view, echoed and expanded structural film's meditation on the medium. Circumventing the photographic negative and cinematic filmstrip, Akdogan's work bears an iconic rather than indexical relationship to its material referent while remaining paradoxically abstract. The interrelation of these materials carries its own logic, and the artist arranges and rearranges them almost like objects. In doing so, she sets into motion a poetics of transformation that brings together the standard-issue and the custom-made. These subtle interventions are palpable, though the degree of intentionality at play often remains opaque. The materials evoke fleeting memories of other spaces, ranging from industrial warehouses, aircraft hangers, factories, supermarkets, and perhaps even the cinema, but with a destabilizing difference.

Akdogan's work invites a material and historical reading in addition to a formal one. Its physical presence is abiding at the same time that it gestures toward the space outside; both forward and backward in time, toward the process of production and other cycles of use.

*Rey Akdogan (b. 1974, Heilbronn, Germany) completed the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2004 after receiving an arts degree from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London in 2001. Recent solo exhibitions dedicated to her work have been held at Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2026), Galerie Anke Schmidt, Cologne (2025, 2021); Miguel Abreu*

*Gallery, New York (2023, 2017, 2015, 2012); Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2022); Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles (2017, 2014); Radio Athènes, Athens (2016); and Andrew Roth Gallery, New York (2012).*

*In 2012, a solo exhibition of her work, off set, was held at MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York. Akdogan was included in the 15th Baltic Triennial in 2024 and the XIV Bienal de Cuenca in 2018, as well as in major group exhibitions at Dia:Beacon, Greene Naftali, Real Fine Arts, Simone Subal Gallery, Elisabeth Ivers Gallery (all in New York); Galerie Eva Presenhuber (Zurich); Galerie Anke Schmidt (Cologne); Galerie Max Mayer (Düsseldorf); Rhona Hoffman Gallery (Chicago); FraenkelLAB (San Francisco); Galerie Balice Hertling (Paris); and Rodeo Gallery (Istanbul), among others. #46, a book of the artist's work, was published by PPP Editions in 2012. Published by Minerva Projects, Akdogan's Plant Light Curtain, a limited-edition artist book, was launched in the spring of 2023.*