

EVENTS

ART IN THE CITY LECTURE:
MERİÇ ALGÜN
Wednesday 23 October, 6pm
Please note, this event is taking place at Arnolfini, 16 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA
£5, £3 concessions (free for UWE Bristol students), booking advised at www.arnolfini.org.uk
Meriç Algün introduces her work as part of the UWE Fine Art / Art in the City series of lectures.

IN CONVERSATION AND EXHIBITION WALK AROUND:
MERİÇ ALGÜN AND CARMEN JULIÁ
Thursday 24 October, 6.30–8pm
£5, £3 concessions (free for Spike Associates), booking advised.
Meriç Algün discusses the themes of her exhibition *Day Craving Night*, including desire, separation and boundaries, with Spike Island curator Carmen Juliá.

FINDING THE EDGE: THE WRITING OF ANNE CARSON
Thursday 21 November, 6.30–8pm
£5, £3 concessions (free for Spike Associates), booking advised.
Canadian poet Anne Carson's book *Eros: The Bittersweet* (1983) has been a long-standing influence on Meriç Algün's work. To coincide with her exhibition, Dr Laura Jansen and Dr Rebecca Kosick from the University of Bristol and British poet Alice Oswald discuss some of the central subjects in Carson's oeuvre.

Day Craving Night is supported by SAHA – Supporting Contemporary Art from Turkey



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



INFORMATION

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design, located in Bristol's harbour area. Admission to the gallery is free.

Spike Island
133 Cumberland Road
Bristol BS1 6UX

0117 929 2266
admin@spikeisland.org.uk
spikeisland.org.uk

Facebook: [Spikeland](https://www.facebook.com/Spikeland)
Twitter: [@_Spikeland](https://twitter.com/_Spikeland)
Instagram: [@Spikeland](https://www.instagram.com/Spikeland)

OPENING HOURS
Gallery: Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm
(during exhibitions)
Café: Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm
Saturday to Sunday, 10am–5pm

Spike Island

MERİÇ ALGÜN *DAY CRAVING NIGHT* 28 September – 8 December 2019

For her exhibition at Spike Island, Meriç Algün presents a series of new and recent works that explore the precarious nature of love and the environment in a world that is obsessed with individualism, borders and consumption. In the face of global warming and the extinction of life forms, alongside the rise of all kinds of constructed negative *isms* such as racism, terrorism, separatism or consumerism, Algün's exhibition evokes the idea of togetherness under threat. Gathering a wide range of sources from the Carboniferous period to today, *Day Craving Night* takes the form of a spatial collage and draws analogies between love, nature and culture.

Upon entering the gallery, a reproduction of a print by the nineteenth century French geographer Antonio Sinder-Pellegrini depicts the world before and after the separation of the continents¹, and serves as an introduction to one of Algün's ongoing concerns: the rise of borders and their impact on the formulation of human desire. The idea of a large-scale displacement of continents has a long history. In 1912, the first comprehensive theory of continental drift was proposed by the German meteorologist Alfred Wegener. Continental drift is the movement of the Earth's continents relative

¹ Antonio Sinder-Pellegrini, *La création et ses mystères dévoilés; ouvrage où l'on expose clairement la nature de tous les êtres, les éléments dont ils sont composés et leurs rapports avec le globe et les astres, la nature et la situation du feu du soleil, l'origine de l'Amérique, et de ses habitants primitifs, la formation forcée de nouvelles planètes, l'origine des langues et les causes de la variété des physionomies, le compte courant de l'homme avec la terre, etc. Avec dix gravures*, 1859.

to each other, thus appearing to "drift" across the ocean bed. Bringing together a large mass of geological and paleontological data, Wegener concluded that throughout most of geologic time there was only one continent, which he called Pangea. Late in the Triassic Period, Pangea fragmented, and the parts began to move away from one another. The idea of continental drift has since been superseded by the theory of plate tectonics, which explains how the continents move.

Plate tectonics and continental drift theory is further explored in gallery one, where the work *Finding the Edge* (2017) stands as an allegory of Pangea. The work consists of a freestanding shelving unit cut into seven sections which correspond proportionally with the surface area of each of the seven continents. Similarly, the gaps between the rows of shelves relate to the surface area of the oceans. The shelves display a variety of objects relating to Algün's research on continental drift and Eros (the Greek god of love), ranging from ferns and animal fossils, to world globes, handmade books, videos and sculptures, drawing parallels between the separation of the continents and the origins of human desire; borders awake our desire to transgress them, to go beyond and across.

Finding the Edge takes its title from a chapter of the book *Eros the Bittersweet* (1986) by Canadian author Anne Carson, where she speaks of desire and love in relation to the edges and boundaries of the self: 'Eros is an issue of boundaries', she writes, 'He exists because certain boundaries do. In the interval between reach and grasp, between glance and counter glance, between 'I love

you’ and ‘I love you too’, the absent presence of desire comes alive.² Eros symbolises want, lack and desire for that which is missing. As such, according to Carson, the experience of love or desire as lack alerts a person to the boundaries of herself, of other people and of things in general.

Alongside *Finding the Edge*, the text work *Edges* (2017) reproduces an abstract from Algün’s ongoing novel, an attempt to capture the intimacy between two lovers; in the proximity of their bodies, borders and boundaries grow taller, while distance grows longer. Opposite, a 4.5 metre-high wall drawing depicts the legendary ghost ship the Flying Dutchman, doomed to sail the oceans forever. For years, an image of the Flying Dutchman featured in the logo of the Dutch airplane company KLM. In the context of the exhibition, the ship’s eternal journey stands for the never-ending search for the object of desire; a search that has come to represent our susceptibility to late capitalist modes of consumption, which exploit our innate tendency to want what we don’t have, exposing the relentless drive of consumer culture to create new wants and needs.

A collection of full page magazine adverts of Calvin Klein’s iconic fragrance Eternity, dating from the late 1980s to today, hangs on the gallery’s perimeter walls. If desire is our driving force, then appealing to emotions is the most powerful way to persuade consumers to act. As such, the fragrance has variously been described as ‘An unchanged constant, a new forever... a visual history, [with] its timeless values of love and commitment’, and for a period of nearly thirty years, the adverts have featured the same model, Christie Turlington, who is portrayed with different men and children, perpetually roaming in eternity in search of the object of her desire. In her last advert from 2017, she is portrayed side by side with her actual husband on a beach in a British overseas territory, her voice repeats: ‘I was searching and then, I have found you and I will love you for ever and ever.’ Husband, beach and fragrance fuse in everlasting desire.

Elsewhere in the outer perimeter, a ghostly coal forest pattern wraps around the gallery walls. *The Plot (Utopia Bloemen)* (2017), a collaboration by the Swedish artist duo Goldin + Senneby with designer Johan Hjerpe, is a multi-layered work that connects capital, art and pre-human history. The work comprises a plot of land that the artists acquired in Genk (the old coal mining area of Belgium), a poem by Turkish-born Belgian poet Mustafa Kör about his father’s uprooted life as an immigrant working in this region, and a series of stencils depicting patterns reminiscent of carboniferous-era fossils unearthed in this same location, which Algün has borrowed for her exhibition. Those plants which originally decayed into coal have come to new life here in the form of a coal-made mural. A number of fossils from that same period are displayed alongside a series of clay works which are an imprint taken from the inner palms of two holding hands.

Finally, a section of a tree trunk with two equal-sized growth rings hangs on the wall. Inosculation is a natural phenomenon in which the trunks, branches or roots of two trees grow together. In forestry, such trees are known as

² Carson, Anne. *Eros the Bittersweet*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

gemels, from the Latin word meaning ‘a pair’.

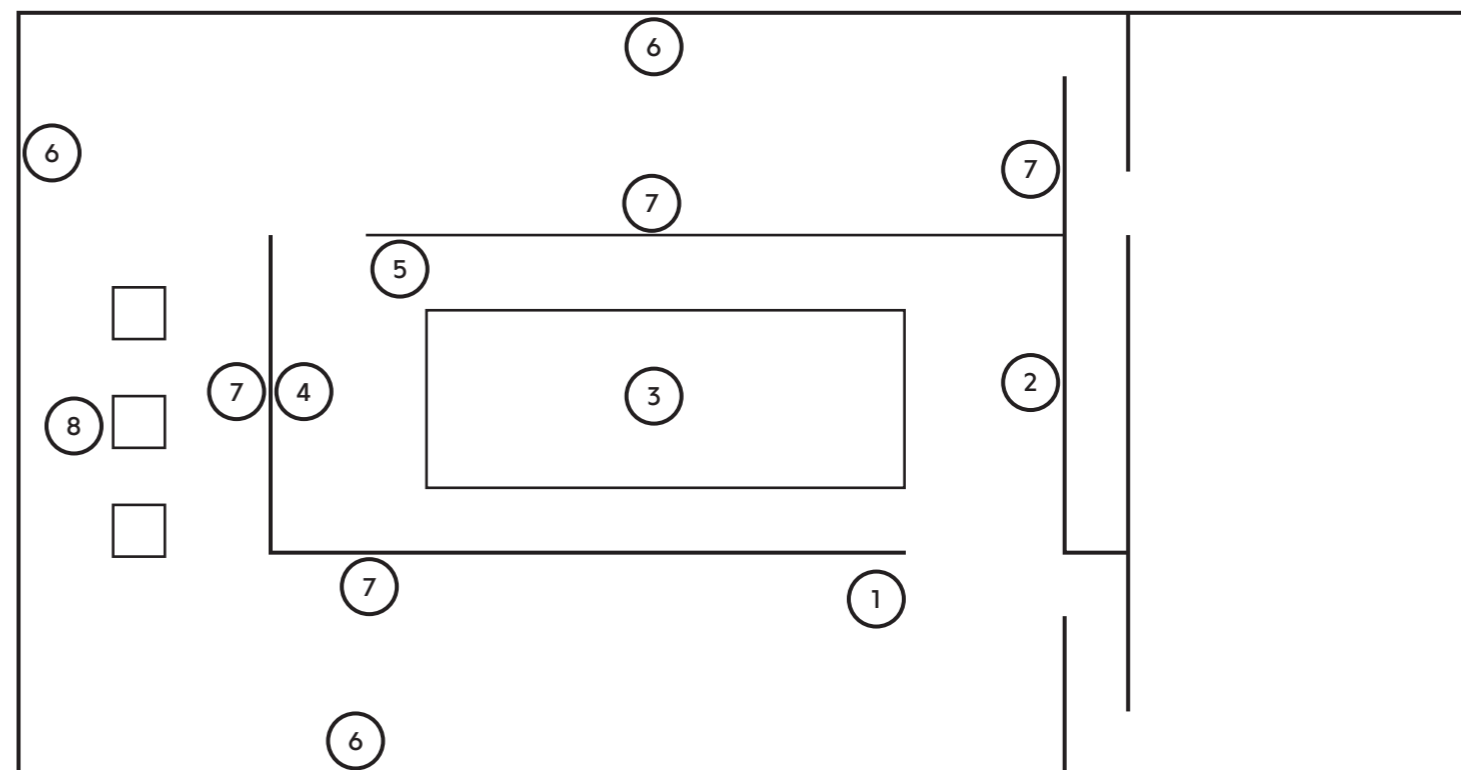
Here Algün makes reference to French philosopher Alain Badiou’s theory of love, when he writes ‘love is a Two scene’, a statement that offers a dual perspective and represents a basic political matrix. According to Badiou, in love two different individuals come to share a ‘scene’, a situation, a world, but in such a way that their radical difference is preserved, embraced and renewed. Love is no longer an experience of the other, but an experience of the world under the condition that there are Two; the world is no longer yours nor mine, but *our* world.³

³ Badiou, Alain with Truong, Nicolas. *In Praise of Love*, London: Serpent’s Tail, 2012.

BIOGRAPHY

Meriç Algün (b. 1983, Istanbul) is an artist based in Stockholm. She studied at the Sabanci University, Istanbul, and later at the Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm. Algün has held many solo exhibitions in Europe and has participated in numerous international biennials such as *SALTWATER: A Theory of Thought Forms*, 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015); *Between the Pessimism of the Intellect and the Optimism of the Will*, 5th Thessaloniki Biennial (2015); *All the World’s Futures*, 56th Venice Biennale (2015); *Leaving to Return*, 12th Bienal de Cuenca, Ecuador (2014); *You Imagine What You Desire*, 19th Sydney Biennial (2014).

FLOORPLAN



LIST OF WORKS

1 *La création et ses mystères dévoilés...* by Antonio Snider-Pellegrini (1859)
Reproduction (2019)
Ink on paper
Each 1640 × 1120mm
Image courtesy of the Earth Sciences and Map Library, University of California

2 *Edges* (2017)
Paint on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

3 *Finding the Edge* (2017)
Shelves, books, honeycomb, fern fossils, globes, ferns, cards, sound, animation, postcards, fern frond, beehive frame, wasp nest, bee, honey jar, framed taste bud diagrams (sweet and bitter) printed on OHF film, two videos in endless loop, apples, postal stamp,

wax mould, shungite, knucklebone
3000 × 6000 × 2090mm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nordenhake

4 *The Flying Dutchman* (2019)
Paint on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

5 *Untitled* (2019)
Oak
580 × 780mm
Courtesy of the artist

6 *The Plot (Utopia Bloemen)* (2017–2019)
Goldin + Senneby with Mustafa Kör (poet), Johan Hjerpe (graphic designer)
Coal, vaseline
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of Goldin + Senneby

7 *Eternity (1988–2017)* (2019)
Collection of Calvin Klein magazine adverts
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

8 *Untitled* (2019)
Clay and fossils from the Carboniferous period
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist