

Dr. Didem Pekün

Didem Pekün (b. 1978, Istanbul) is an award-winning artist-filmmaker and academic based in London and Istanbul. She works across moving image, text, photography, sound and theory. Both in her education and in her approach as an artist and educator, Didem's work is characterized by a synthesis of theory and practice. She has made several works that address political violence, displacement, and their many intersections.

CONTACT

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Turkish – British nationalities
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EDUCATION

Goldsmiths, University of London, UK Ph.D., Visual Cultures (supervisors Dr. Nicole Wolf & Prof. Tony Dowmunt) Examinors: Dr. Alisa Lebow & Gail Pearce	2014 – 2016
Goldsmiths, University of London, UK M.Phil. Visual Cultures (supervisors Dr. Nicole Wolf & Prof. Tony Dowmunt) Examinors: Dr. Mark Fisher & Dr. Ros Gray	2011 – 2014
Goldsmiths, University of London, UK M.A. Screen Documentary — <i>Merit</i> “Improvisation in Documentary Film”	2006 – 2007
SOAS, University of London, UK BA (Hons) Ethnomusicology — <i>Merit</i>	2002 – 2005

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Goldsmiths, Fine Arts Department, Lecturer in Fine Arts (part-time) • <i>Critical Studies (BA)</i> • <i>Portfolio of Art Writing (BA)</i>	September 2025 - current
Boğaziçi University (part-time) • <i>Experimental Film and Video (BA)</i>	Jan 2025 - August 2025
Fellow @ Berliner Künstlerische Forschung / Berlin Senate (full-time)	Jan 2022 - December 2024
Kadir Has University Istanbul, Film and Television Department (full-time) • <i>Experimental Cinema (BA)</i> • <i>Visual Grammar (BA)</i>	Sept. 2021 – April 2022
Universität der Künste, Berlin Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Sciences (BAS) / Graduiertenschule Fellow (full-time)	April 2019 – April 2021

Central European University, Budapest, Fellow, Visual Studies Platform & Institute for Advanced Study (full-time)	Sept. 2017 - May 2018
• <i>Visual Grammar (MA and PhD)</i> • <i>Artistic Research (MA and PhD)</i>	
Goldsmiths, Visual Cultures Department, Visiting Research Fellow	2017-2018
Koc University; Lecturer (full-time)	Sept. 2013 – January 2019
• <i>Documentary Film: Theory and Practice (BA)</i> • <i>Video Art and Installation: Theory and Practice (BA)</i> • <i>Video Basics (BA)</i> • <i>Film Theory (BA)</i> • <i>Independent and Graduation Projects (MA and final year undergraduate level)</i>	
Sabancı University; Lecturer (part-time)	2011 – 2013
• <i>Documentary Film: Theory and Practice (BA)</i>	
Bilgi University; Lecturer (part-time)	2008
• <i>Non-Linear Editing</i>	

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

Gabriele Münter Prize (longlisted)	2024
Between Bridges Residency	2024
Residency at IASPIS	2021
Grant by SAHA for new film	2020
UdK Grant for two years residency (monthly stipend + studio)	2019/2021
Foundation for Arts Initiatives Research Grant	2019
Best Documentary in Human Rights, Sarajevo Film Festival	2018
Visegrad Grant	2018
Grant for new production New Film Fund	2018
Grant by SAHA	2017
Commission for a new film – Locus Athens	2017
ZK/U (Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik), Berlin, Artist in residence	2017-2018
Nominee for A 38 Production Grant Kassel.	2017
Commission for a New Project by SAHA.	2015
Commission for a New Project by SALT.	2014
Delfino Foundation, London. (2 months)	2013

Research Residency, SALT, Istanbul. [2 months]	2012
Ph.D. Scholarship, Royal Holloway, University of London [declined].	2011
Nominated to Best Documentary by SIYAD (Turkish Film Critics Association).	2011
British Council, 'Creative Entrepreneur of the Year Award in Cinema'.	2010
Greenhouse Documentary Development Project, funded by the EU.	2009
Berlinale Talent Campus.	2008
Dolby Digital Award for the School of Sound Symposium.	2007
University of London Award for the School of Sound Symposium.	2007

SELECTED SCREENINGS AND EXHIBITIONS

Ayvalik Film Festival	2025
Munich International Film Festival	
Hrant Dink Foundation Screening	
Filmkoop Screening	
Istanbul Film Festival, Documentary Competition	2024
Between Bridges, solo exhibition, Berlin	
Istanbul Modern, film screening	
Goldsmiths, Visual Cultures Public Program, screening and talk	
STATIONS, Berlin	2023
Sinema Transtopia, Berlin	
Tavros, Athens	2022
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven	
Stroom, Den Haag	
Netwerk, Aalst	
Council of Europe, Strasbourg	
Shifting Patterns @ Kunstverein Tiergarten	2021
BFI London Film Festival	
Van Abbemuseum 'Araf' solo exhibition	2020
Lulea biennale, Sweden	
Moderna Museet, Stockholm	2019
'Where is cinema going?', Istanbul	

Forum Expanded, Berlinale Geometries, Athens Istanbul Film Festival, Documentary Competition Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival, Hawick Summer Nostos Festival, Athens Sarajevo Film Festival, Documentary Competition Festival Diritti Umani, Lugano Lulea Biennale, Sweden Gezici Festival, Ankara, Focus on Didem Pekün's films in a program titled "I want to feel" Human Rights Foundation Cinema Days, İzmir	2018
"Sen ve Ben", 5533 "Sis", DEPO 'In Spite of', Documenta 14 Public Program Athens / Kassel "Thickness of Time", Locus Athens	2017
33 rd Kassel Dok Fest "Freundschaftsspiel", Museum für Neue Kunst Freiburg "Of Dice and Men", solo at Delfina Foundation "Through the Fog", State of Concept, Athens	2016
"Joy, Passion, Fury" MAXXI, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome 56 th Venice Biennale, Curriculum, Creative Arts Summit "A Century of Centuries", SALT Istanbul	2015
Screening of The Dream of Shahrazad (dir. Francois Verster, Associate Producer. Didem Pekün) 27 th IDFA, Masters Section	2014
59 th Oberhausen Film Festival, Germany. Sheffield Fringe, UK. Arnolfini, UK. "Panorama Méditerranéen" du Festival Millenium, Belgium	2013
Tropentheater, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Culture Unplugged, India	2012

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Assemblies, in conversation with Taous Dahmani @ Ibraaz, London	2025
"On bodies, choreography and political violence" in conversation with Sandra Noeth @ Between Bridges Foundation, Berlin	2024
Stroom, Symposium on "re...", Den Haag Tavros, Discussin on Disturbed Earth, Athens Council of Europe, Screening and lecture on, about Disturbed Earth, Strasbourg University of Sarajevo, "Films of Didem Pekun", discussion within the Conference of "ottoman histories on Bosnia"	2022

Berlinale Forum, conversation with Clarissa Thieme Interflugs, Conversation with Övül Ö . Durmuşoğlu Art in Dark Times, Conversation with Galit Eliat & Erden Kosova	2020
Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Conversation with Petra Bauer and Kim West as part of Filmclub	2019
Stuck in Migration. Waiting Zones and (Internment) Camps, A joint international conference in Budapest and Munich, co-organized by IAS CEU and CAS LMU. "Between Movement and Stasis: Aesthetics and Politics of Migrant Itineraries in Contemporary Essay Filmmaking"	2018
Hebbel Am Ufer, Berlin, Violence of Inscriptions 58 th Annual Conference of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Chicago, Illinois	2017
DAI, Roaming Assembly#7 intraAction: TransUrbanism Visible Evidence XXIII, <i>New Frontiers in Documentary</i> , Montana State University Conference: <i>Cinema and Time in Films from Turkey</i> , Kadir Has University, Turkey, In conversation with Teju Cole, UK In conversation with Nick Aikens, UK	2016
Symposium: <i>Crossing Borders, Traversing Narratives</i> , University of St. Andrews, "Two Essay Films from Turkey" Conference: <i>World Cinema and the Essay-film</i> , University of Reading, UK. "Two Essay Films from Turkey" In conversation with November Paynter, SALT, Turkey	2015
Conference: <i>Video Vortex</i> , SALT Istanbul and Bahcesehir University. [With Hale Tenger] "Art, Archives, and Activism."	2014
Conference: <i>Performing Documents</i> , University of Bristol, UK. "Performing the Self". Seminar <i>Of Dice and Men</i> , Audio-Visual PhD Group, Goldsmiths, University of London	2013
Perspectives from Turkey in the New Millennium Conference, University of Exeter. "Tülay German: A Forgotten Icon."	2010
Conference: <i>Mental Health and Human Rights: Sociological Perspectives</i> [with Margaret Jessop]. University of Warwick, UK. "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered: Coercive Treatment within Mental Health Services and Films for Education of Professionals"	2007

PUBLICATIONS

Pekun, D. [2026]. Monograph in progress.

Pekun, D. [2025]. "At night, on faultlines, in Istanbul" in Trigger.

Pekun, D. & Mohaiemen, Naeem [2017]. "Never liked goodbyes anyway" e-flux

Pekun, D. (2017). "Can't help it; the oldest mind on the planet is hot" Laure Prouvost in Conversation with Didem Pekün, e-flux

OTHER ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Workshop and Screening Organization

Organizer of the seminar by Vasif Kortun, Koç University.	2015
Organized weekly documentary screenings titled "Stranger than Fiction".	2014
Organizer of a seminar given by Aylin Zoi Tinel, Koç University.	2014
Organizer of the screening and seminar given by Orhan Eskiköy, Koç University.	2013
Organizer of the panel discussion led by Aaron Cezar, Director of Delfina Foundation, London. "The Artist's Toolkit for International Opportunities" at Sabancı University. (Aaron Cezar was accompanied by Abbas Akhavan and Aslı Çavuşoğlu.)	2013
Organizer of an artist talk given by Banu Cennetoğlu (Venice Biennale Turkish Pavillion, 2009), at Sabancı University.	2012
Organizer of an artist talk given by Yasemin Özcan, at Sabancı University.	2011
Organizer of an artist talk given by Ali Kazma (Venice Biennale for Turkish Pavillion, 2014), at Sabancı University.	2011
Organizer of a seminar given by Necati Sönmez (Director of Documentarist) at Sabancı University.	2010

Departmental Service

Chair, BA Student Staff Forum, Goldsmiths	2026
Film Certificate Coordinator, Koc University	2013 – 2017

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Founding member of Beyond Istanbul: Center of Spatial Justice
<https://www.mekandaadalet.org/>
Audio-visual PH.D. Group, Goldsmiths, University of London.

LANGUAGES

Turkish (native), English (native fluency), French (fluent), Spanish (beginner), German (A2.3)