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ARTslant



[Rey Akdogan](#)

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Hannah Hoffman Gallery

1010 N Highland Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

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This Bag is Not a Toy

by Chelsea Beck

Pay attention or you might miss something. Confoundingly both vague and precise, slightly anemic but convincing enough to pass a physical. Rey Akdogan de-brands and de-materializes that which may be most familiar to a consumer, triggering a visual asphyxiation, that will have you gasping for the nearest billboard.

Akdogan here takes the logos of the international German-based discount supermarkets Aldi Markt and Aldi Sud as her point of departure. Aldi operates in seventeen countries worldwide, under many different names including Trader Joe's in the US. Their international market presence is close to that of Walmart's, though most Americans probably don't know that, which is perhaps the point.



In *Carousel #7* (2014) Akdogan pigments, layers, and distorts plastic Aldi shopping bags, using them like lighting gels or a finger or dirt over the lens. Many of the slides appear to be out of focus mistakes, as if the carousel has been misloaded, yet Akdogan persists and the muddy blurred forms develop a mysterious rhythm. Though unrecognizable as a logo or even a bag, this ubiquitous consumer object is present, hiding in plain view.

Using industrial grade plastics and rough rudimentary forms, Akdogan methodically dissects elements of the Aldi bag, treating them to varying degrees of abstraction. In some works, this act obscures the brand and its humble receptacle to a subliminal level. In a series of drawings titled *Episode*, transferred fragments of the Aldi Markt logo cling to their

Plexiglass support barely holding themselves or a cohesive image together. The logo's diagonally ascending blue lines hint at a landscape, but the mind scrambles for a mark to grasp. The smooth transparency of the Plexiglass adds to the tenuous nature of the image. There is a mere wisp of ground holding this collection of marks close, no tooth or weave or whiteness to bridge the strips and bits of blue and red color.

Adding a few extra steps to this process, the two series titled *Sequence* and *Section* fill in some of the layers she obliterated in *Episode*. Patterns are formed, shapes emerge, depth comes into focus, and with these small gestures that incorporate extra layers of visual information comes a little extra comfort, as fleeting identities emerge from what seemed like random blips. It's a cruel and calculated intention to make us hungry for a cold corporate logo.



Once your senses have adjusted to Akdogan's oblique yet methodical interventions, merely passing through *PVC Screen Curtain* (2014), just like the kind used in supermarkets to regulate different climate zones, feels like a brief but gleeful spin. The feeling dissipates immediately on the other side. It's a placebo effect, but the air actually feels different on the other side—colder, clinical, thin as if we're being exposed or protected from something. It's eerie. Exiting the gallery becomes another shock.

Sometimes, it's necessary to be deprived.

—[Chelsea Beck](#)