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| Transcript                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p><b>Julianne</b> You're listening to <i>Mutfak</i>, a show that dishes out diasporic and decolonial perspectives on food, family and fictions peppered with interviews, field recordings, sound archives and poetry. I'm your host, Julianne Chua, and in our very first session I will be speaking with a dear friend İpek.</p> <p>İpek Çınar is an artist, co-creator of the board game Good Deed Bad Deed, and co-editor of <i>Orta Format</i>, an online magazine that publishes interviews, articles and projects about contemporary photography practices. I've had the pleasure of meeting İpek at a wonderful and inspiring workshop called <i>Counter Archives, Potential Histories</i> that she organized earlier this year, and collaborating on two exhibitions at Kunstraum Potsdamer Straße and UdK, the University of the Arts here in Berlin. And in addition to her art practice, she also works in the field of anti-discrimination and social justice.</p> <p>Hoş geldiniz İpek!</p> <p><b>İpek</b> Hoş bulduk Julianne! Thank you for hosting me but right now I'm a bit suspicious that you invited me just because you wanted to play that song İpek.</p> |

**J** Probably. This is actually a song that a friend of Faruk's, his trumpet teacher Barış Demirel... I mean he's a great musician and I noticed that he has a song titled İpek but it's actually named after his sister.

**i** Hm.

**J** And I was like ok I'm going to play this song and see how you react. *Welcome* once again. I know I've said this many times before but I'm so grateful that our paths crossed here in Berlin. *We've* cried in a room full of pickles, and painstakingly made a hundred fortune cookies together at midnight, and also kudurduk!

**i** Yes.

**J** We danced. I guess to start off, considering this is the first episode, what does "mutfak" mean? *Which* is the title of the show. So mutfak, it can be kitchen or cuisine and it could be both and I wanted to start us off with a little paragraph that I came across in this magazine called *Al Hayya*. It's from an article that's called "But First, Let's Eat" by Manal Aziz.

"Women have historically gathered in kitchens not only to cook but to build, share, and resist. The kitchen as a space offered possibilities for political and personal congregation and conversation. Although kitchens were initially labeled and instrumentalized as a women's domain, like a tool of oppression, this particular space in the house became for some a place of survival, empowerment and cultural transmission."

Yeah that's a lot but I guess when I titled this show "Mutfak" or "Kitchen" those were some of the ideas behind it and I'm looking forward to exploring how food connects with family but also the stories that we tell around the dinner table.

So, to start us off İpek, could you tell us about your project *Tea Sugar Dream*? Maybe also touch a bit about how that title came to be. How did you come up with that idea? Where did it all begin?

**i** Yeah of course. *Tea Sugar Dream* is a project that I worked on, explored more on, migration and collective joy in collaboration with aged women from Turkey who migrated to Germany in the 60s and 70s as guest workers or family members of guest workers. So together with a group of women, we worked on collective joy. *We do*

events and different workshops that will bring us collective joy and there were two reasons why I decided to focus on this issue, especially also in terms of approaching the migration experiences through joy because first of all, I am also a newish immigrant in Berlin. I came here three years ago and during my settlement process I was feeling quite alone, isolated, sometimes even wrong or unfit actually, and at those days while also thinking about these things and thinking about those feelings, at some point I admitted that I lost my joy. I think it was really about the experiences of migration. So I started thinking about the women who came here before me. I'm also from Turkey, I didn't say this at the beginning and those women's stories, those women's experiences were actually way more difficult than what we are experiencing today. So I just started to think about how these women find joy, found joy in their migration experience, or if they found joy in their migration experience at some point and I was just thinking maybe their way of finding joy can show me some ways as well, so this is the main reason behind the story. But also, I wanted to work with aged women because there are not so many sources of the experiences of these women and even in the feminist and queer debates we don't hear these women's stories, women who are out of a certain age, or class or educational circles. So I just wanted to make the archive of these stories actually.

**J** That's so interesting that you brought up archive because as you were speaking I was thinking these are the unarchived stories and narratives and how these are sometimes maybe intentionally left out of the archive? It doesn't maybe fit with the narratives of the guest workers who came from Turkey. Also, not all of them are Turkish right? You mentioned this, some come from Iran and...

**i** And Kurdish regions of Turkey.

**J** Yeah, Kurdish regions of Turkey... What about the title?

**i** Yeah, actually there are again two reasons why I chose this title *Tea Sugar Dream*. So first of all it is based on a wordplay evoking the Turkish expression for "thank you," which is teşekkür ederim. When you say this word combination quickly, teasugardream or teasugaradream, it sounds like teşekkür ederim and that was the initial idea of choosing that title. But also, it highlights a socializing method in Turkey. Unfortunately, there are quite limited places, spaces for women over a certain age to socialize, public spaces I mean. And coming from this necessity actually the women in Turkey especially elder women organize something called altın günü or kısır günü which is a kind of a event for a group of women friends to gather monthly in one of

their houses and the host of that month cooks some desserts or pastry and of course tea is always an accompanying element of these tables and those women socialize in that home. Sometimes they dance, they gossip, they tell each other stories and at the end of this event, everyone gives the host some amount of money that they decided in advance. So this is both like an empowerment event by sharing with each other and also it provides the host a little bit of financial support. So this is a very long tradition in Turkey and as I said, tea and sweets are the main accompaniments of these tables so this is why *Tea Sugar Dream* also refers to that altın günü tradition.

**J** Wow, I've always known about altın günü because of the band (Altın Gün). But it's interesting, I mean this is also new to me. I never realized that there is this exchange of money and that it is a form of mutually supporting one another and exchanging. And that these practices migrated in some sense from Turkey here to Germany as well.

**i** And just a side note about this. I was also thinking about if altın günü tradition can continue here. Maybe we can create our own altın günü, who knows?

**J** We should!

**i** And maybe it didn't work very well here because of architectural differences between German apartments and Turkish apartments because living room doesn't exist here and it is so sad!

**J** The living room is the mutfak, it's the kitchen!

**i** But you cannot invite 20 friends to your kitchen. You can, but...

**J** You could, but it would be tight yeah. Wow, that's interesting. Yeah I feel like it's also this sense of being grateful, I mean you talked about this transfer or the opportunity to learn from people who have come before you but I think it's also this sense of gratitude I mean to also thank in some way the people who have opened these paths and made some things easier I'm sure bureaucratically and socially. When you talked about how women or Turkish women do not have these spaces to socialize or the spaces are more within the house or within these kitchens whereas men would have kahvehane, which I also saw in Germany, in Berlin, and I was so surprised because they have these tables, where you can play games and card games, but it's very... it's a very male space, right? I feel like if I stepped in I would be kind of stared at or...

**İ** Yeah I remember that this year during the New Year's Eve, we needed some toilets with the other İpek, İpek Aşıkoğlu, and we just ended up in one of the kahvehane and we were just the center of the whole attention, of course.

**J** Of course... But they let you use the bathroom?

**İ** Yeah, of course. I mean right now there are some women kahvehane in Turkey as well but they are more like... they are not a part of the tradition of kahvehane but they are more like a counter-

**J** Counterculture, in some ways?

**İ** Yeah yeah and generally they are the feminist spaces. They are still not for my grandma, for example.

**J** A lot of the events that you organized as part of *Tea Sugar Dream* were at the Türkischer Frauenverein, or the Turkish Women's Association here in Berlin. And I had the privilege of joining, pretending I was a Turkish woman for a day or two. I feel like it's so amazing that such a space exists and that we could sit around a table and yeah, maybe you could tell us more about— so the first thing that I attended was the collage table, or kolaj sofrası, and we met with many lovely teyzeler or aunties, that day. I wonder if you could tell us more about that day.

**İ** Yeah sure. Maybe I can also quickly explain the Türkischer Frauenverein. It is an association founded in 70s, 75 I guess. And it was the first independent women immigrants' association in Berlin actually. It is quite important.

**J** Goosebumps. So powerful.

**İ** Yes, so its main aim is to support women from Turkey. At least they started like that but now I think they are also working more with the women who can speak Turkish, so it is not only for women from Turkey but there are people from Azerbaijan for example, Bulgaria, sometimes Thailand.

**J** Oh wow!

**i** So I collaborated with this association for the workshops and in each Friday morning they have a gathering event for aged women. Generally these events are not based on a certain theme. But it is just for women to socialize actually. Some come with their paintings, some come and do knitting, some just come to drink tea. And they just share their experiences, stories with each other and it is a very nice empowerment again. We do those workshops generally in Friday mornings with that group and in the kolaj sofrası, we collaborated with a collage artist Hilal Bozkurt and the main intention, the main idea behind the workshop, was you know in collage actually you bring a lot of unique elements like images or other elements together and create a collective product at the end. I mean even if you are one person, the collage is the collective result of those—

**J** True, other people who have taken the photos or—

**i** Yeah, and we thought that it is also the same in migration stories because most of the images used on that collage were from women's history or migration history or women's own history like the association women's own history and together we just made one big collage that everyone puts their stories or perspectives inside so it was also a participatory collective work at the end. Thank you for your contributions too.

**J** Oh no, thank you for inviting me. I love that you incorporated these personal photographs that were from previous sessions of the workshop and at the same time you also had you know stills from Cem Kaya's *Aşk Mark ve Ölüm* and also one image that stood out to me was Carrie Mae Weem's portraits at the kitchen table. It was this photograph of a mother and daughter at the kitchen table but it's a series so there are other images also at the kitchen table. But I think in this particular one, the girl is looking at the mirror.

**i** Ah, yes yes yes. Of course.

**J** And yeah, one thing that Hilal mentioned at the start. She used this analogy of being in the kitchen, right? And that there are many helping hands, and everyone's kind of contributing to the same dish, whether it's like slicing or mixing and also how I guess there is no fixed recipe to follow when you are making a collage? And I think that really helped to like frame things or put things into perspective, especially for someone who might not have done a collage in their lives ever before or even if they have, they might not have done it collectively or in a group. Yeah and at the start of the session we talked about the photographs that you bring when you leave home

and the memories that they hold and Gülşen teyze mentioned photographs on the fridge door and I was wondering if you had any particular photographs that you remembered from your kitchen back in Turkey. Could you describe them?

**i** Errr, to be honest not so much from the kitchen because I have never been a—

**J** Kitchen person?

**i** No, I am a kitchen... Kitchen was always the center of the house actually.

**J** True.

**i** But for photographs, maybe not. And also for me, I have a special relationship with photographs because I am a photographer so it also makes me to think about how my relationship with photographs change through the years. So for example when I was living in Turkey, not in my kitchen, but in my work space, work area, in our living room, there were always photographs. And mostly I print and frame those photographs. And they were, almost all of those photographs are either my photographs, the photographs that I took, or from the photographers that I love, so it was more like an aesthetic purpose. But for example, while coming here to Germany, of course I had a limited baggage capacity so I had to be very careful about the things that I brought in the first time, and it also includes photographs because they were framed. And I just noticed that I mainly brought photographs of my family or friends or my boyfriends to remember those support mechanisms, emotional support mechanisms. So yeah, it is also something interesting, how photography's meaning changed for me. And right now they are not in my kitchen, but they are still hanging on the walls of my room actually, family and beloved photos.

**J** Aw, that's sweet. Yeah the meaning of photographs change when you shift your context. And maybe also, the meaning of food changes. Um, this is like me doing a little segue. But yeah, so a lot of your work, you talked about this earlier but one thing I love about your work is that it is very socially engaged, it's participatory and it also deals with these elements of play, joy and creating unexpected encounters. Part of that I think is this radical act of putting together things that you might not immediately associate with one another, so for example cooking and collage, and also kısır and karaoke, which is another workshop that you organized. Do you find this a fruitful and productive space, these unexpected encounters? What are some things that emerged from this process... like even the collage making right, what were some

things that emerged from this that maybe surprised you? Because you can come in with a plan but then I think what is the result of it on the table would've been something completely different from what you had in mind at the start.

**i** Yeah, definitely. Uh, I don't know where to start. Maybe first, unexpected encounters as you asked. I find it quite important and for me what I mean by unexpected encounters is to experience or encounter arts in the places outside of our artsy bubbles.

**J** Mmhmm, the museums and galleries...?

**i** Yeah because most of the times even in some participatory or socially-engaged projects, when they are done in a museum space for example, they might be exclusive especially for the ones that are most marginalized... people who doesn't have time or confidence or—

**J** Or 20€ to pay an entrance fee.

**i** Yeah, of course. So by unexpected encounters I try to use the ordinary and daily spaces, especially public spaces or semi-public spaces for producing art. And yeah, I just wanted to say this.

**J** You had a work in a spāti too, right?

**i** Yeah, yeah for example there was a sound installation in a spāti because it is also important to encounter with different people.

**J** Maybe for some context, a spāti is where you would buy alcohol or cigarettes and snacks but what İpek did was like when a random customer opens the door to where the beer is, that activated a sound recording that you—

**i** Yeah it was a recording about the people who were imprisoned in Gezi trial in Turkey so yeah. And about collage? In the collage, first of all it was the first time I also did a collage, I don't have so much experience on that. So we decided on the concept of the workshop with the women in the association. It was always like this from the very first day and we were always talking about doing something based on visual arts but we were also thinking about what could be the best method for this because most of the time visual arts is based on skills, high skills, I might use the wrong word for this.

Sorry, English is not my mother tongue. So collage seemed like a more non-hierarchical and user-friendly method to us. And also the idea of doing something all together. Because we could have done, everyone could have done their own paintings or their own collage but instead of that we created one big piece all together and we liked the idea of that as well and yeah as I said it is the first time that I am also doing a collage and I was also questioning how to start? I had never done this. Do you start with an idea in your mind? Or do you just put some pieces to another person's collage, so to complement each other so I was questioning that too. And at some point I think actually Emine took the initiative and she created a kind of stage based on one of the previous workshop's photo and we somehow turned into the protagonists of that stage and everyone started to put some other elements to make that stage even shinier and more beautiful so I think it grew like that and it was really nice to see that.

**J** Aww, I love that the stage was the centerpiece and it had this disco ball also that was hanging down which you kind of recreated in some way when we did the karaoke, right? Yeah, I don't know if you want to talk about the karaoke day and maybe kısır because I think most people might not be familiar with kısır.

**i** So kısır... actually maybe people in Berlin might be familiar...

**J** They might know it, yeah that's true.

**i** Kısır is a bulgur salad from Turkey maybe also from the region, not only from Turkey. And I have this secret mission in this world to make the best kısır in the whole world so I am still working on that.

**J** Yeah.

**i** But also the event was called Altın Günü: Kısır & Karaoke party. So kısır is not something very difficult to cook actually and because of that, most of the time in the shared tables, people make kısır. It is also difficult to make a good kısır, but it is not so difficult. So we decided to make this event. And also, like I said, we always talk about what should be the workshops together with the women, we decide on the concepts together, and an event to sing was always on the table. Some people, some women really love music and singing and we wanted to make an event based on that. But also it is very important to think about the inclusivity in these kinds of things. Because karaoke, for example, it is something quite nice and funny and we thought it

would be nice but most of the time in karaoke parties you don't look at each other but you look at the computer first of all, and also—

**J** True, you're looking at the bouncing dot on the screen.

**i** Yeah yeah yeah. So we were thinking about this and also in terms of inclusivity, karaoke is exclusive for illiterate people for example and some of the women were also illiterate in the event. So because of that we started with a singing circle exercise that we will look into each other's eyes and open our breaths... I don't know if this is the right word, opening breaths, opening chests.

**J** Opening the diaphragm.

**i** Yeah yeah yeah.

**J** Shaking the body too.

**i** Yeah. So karaoke was not a part of the workshop but it turned into a final celebration event for *Tea Sugar Dream*, the farewell of *Tea Sugar Dream*. And one thing I have to add this, for example, also in collage workshop, for the first time I also started to invite my friends. Like the younger generation people, newcomers. And the whole concept of this project *Tea Sugar Dream* is based on creating an intergenerational dialogue, so it was really nice that in collage workshop we started to do that. And it was so nice to notice that, for example, the older generation were even more eager to tell their stories because they were doing this in a recommendation, giving advice format. It was so nice. And because of that, also in karaoke party, I wanted to invite younger generation as well so that we can have joy all together and also connect with each other because also unfortunately there is a tension between the older generation coming from Turkey and younger generation and these two generations have some prejudices around each other so it was nice to create a place that we can connect and create a solidarity all together. And now for example, the people, the women in the association is asking you, "Where is Juli? Where is Jülide?"

**J** That's so sweet. Maybe last final question. Besides this intergenerational dialogue that happened kind of organically right, when these conversations that came up, as we were making the collage, or as we were singing, or in between songs, but you also I think prior to starting this project looked at, or maybe at the very early beginnings of the project, you kind of asked your friends what joy means or if they could share

examples of what neşeli işler, joyful works right, joyful artworks, and I think some of the examples were like Ayşe Erkmen's *Evde* which is like this text that is installed on the wall, so the facade of a wall. And also Fatma Bucak, which I felt really resonated visually with what you created and with the women.

i Yeah, these are great inspirations to me.

J What was that like? I guess when you had this longer lineage, which is also collectively gathered from the people that you knew. This longer lineage of figuring out where joy fits in the migration experience. So I wonder, maybe to end off, what does joy mean to you and where do you find joy?

i First of all, I think I'm quite moderate when it comes to joy. The things that bring me joy are generally quite simple things like I love reading for example. It brings me a lot of joy. Having a long walk, listening to ordinary stories of people and seeing the sparks in people's eyes when they are telling these stories. I love these kind of small things. But also while working on this project, for example, one way that I was going in the participatory arts practices that brought us joy, as you mentioned right now. And the other was the theory of joy of course. And at some point it started to change for me, not change but at the very beginning I was thinking that I am working on migration and joy. But at some point I noticed that I am working on migration and collective joy. So the collective word is also very important there. And we can talk about the individual joy, the things that bring us individual joys. But also the collective joy is a very important subject—the joy that we gathered, that we have when we are together, when we are talking, the joy coming from being together. And for example, for me, one of the most inspirational work is the work of Silvia Federici. She has a very short but very beautiful text called *Joyful Militancy*, where she actually criticize—by the way, Silvia Federici is a Marxist feminist thinker who comes from the movement itself like she is also an activist—and in that short text she was criticizing the left movement actually by being so much future-oriented. And she was telling that we focusing so much about creating a future and we forget in order to create that future, we took so much burden today. In the present moment. And at some point that burdens make us lose our energy and motivation to continue.

J And hope.

i Oh, hope is a very—uh, I don't know.

**J** Loaded term.

**i** So what she suggests is to create joy today so that we can have a motivation for the future to continue actually. And I like it quite a lot actually. And I don't know the things that she describes as joyful events are the gatherings, tables, collective gardens, fiestas, altın günü, she doesn't talking about altın günü but I want to add that. Commonalities and I find it quite beautiful and I think my description of joy is also going in that way. And I want to come together more, yeah.

**J** That's the dream, in *Tea Sugar Dream*.

**i** Yeah.

**J** Yeah. Thank you for sharing that and I guess if you have any final words? Before we end off this conversation, which I hope we can continue at some point.

**i** Yeah of course, me too. I don't know, I didn't think about this. Maybe uh something, I mean we generally talk about the positive side of the project or our collaborations—

**J** Let's end on an unhappy note.

**i** It is sad that I will finish with a critique actually. But in these kind of things one of the very core questions is how to maintain them. For example, right now *Tea Sugar Dream* was a project for six months and right now, I'm thinking about how to continue that because otherwise having a few joyful events together will not be enough for maybe structural change or long-term collaborations, connections, and etc. So this is the question that is in my mind right now. Hopefully we will continue that. I really want to continue it. And yeah, I love my people. I love my women.

**J** Yeah, sustaining joy. Yeah, thank you so much.

**i** Thank you for inviting me.

**J** Yeah, it was great to talk.

**i** Teasugaradream.

**J** I was going to end off with that joke! But teasugardream or thank you. Yeah teşekkür ederim.

**İ** Ben teşekkür ederim.

**J** Or teşekkür ederiz.

**İ** Yes.

**J** Alright.

**Mutfak** dishes out diasporic and decolonial perspectives on food, family and fictions peppered with interviews, field recordings, sound archives and poetry.

In our first episode, we discuss İpek Çınar's participatory and socially engaged project *Tea Sugar Dream*, which plays on the Turkish phrase for "thank you," teşekkür ederim. Tracing the intergenerational experiences of migration between Turkey and Germany through a conversation on food metaphors and gendered spaces, we unravel strands of unexpected encounters, modes of finding and sustaining collective joy, and ways of transmitting somatic knowledge through karaoke, cooking, collage, dancing and breathing.

Artwork by Hilal Bozkurt, Emine Can, Julianne Chua, İpek Çınar, Gülşen Dur, Aysel Özçoban, Nevim Şen, and Nursena Topcuoğlu

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Always room for dessert:

*9/8fight41*. Directed by Gizem Aksu, gzmaksu, 2022.

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