

Cover Art Concept

Artist's Note

Following the Gezi Uprising, my friend Fatma Belkis and I felt the need to learn from the grassroots struggle against the construction of run-of-the-river-type hydroelectric power plants in various valleys in Anatolia since 1998. The shared slogan “Rivers will flow free” strongly resonated with us as a radical desire for the right to life for all beings. In the valleys we visited, we encountered value systems and forms of life that flow against the mainstream of progress and profit-driven neoliberal agendas. Women are at the forefront of the struggle as their sustenance, identity, and everyday life are rooted deeply in ecosystems dependent on flowing water. Resisting private companies and the state with hazelnut sticks in their hands, they speak with determination: “I’ll give my life, I won’t give up my water!” The watercolor series emerged from the process of learning from the discourses articulated by this struggle. Titled in reference to Paul Celan’s poem “Breathturn,” the watercolor on the *JMEWS* cover is part of a series, ongoing since 2014, shaped by the desire for water and consciousness to flow free. In this body of work, gray stands for dispossession, enclosure, exploitation, progress; blue, for water, freedom, self-determination, flow, ecosystem, cycle; red, for source, consciousness, life, female subjectivity, struggle. Red and blue align to resist gray! — İz Öztat

Editor's Note

The cover watercolor piece by İz Öztat depicts water as the flowing and irrepressible context for the nourishment of life. Water is also an archive of unsustainable consumption, dense pooling, death, blockages, and barriers. Like several pieces in this issue, Öztat’s watercolor emerges from a storytelling project that asks us to pause and expand the range of what is familiar to us. The watercolor and a number of contributions in this issue call on us to recognize barriers and experiences outside our privileges of citizenship, class, and sexuality. Some of the interventions reflect on

the limits of reading texts, voices, and translations as they travel across borders. Others explicitly engage with flows and blockages to mobility and life, the latter evoked for me by the carceral bars in the watercolor. The most rewarding flows are often two-directional, emerging from collaboration and mentoring, as reflected in the interview and in multiple essays and articles. — *Frances S. Hasso*

