



Can Demren

0m away

Today

Kids (Commemorating 15 July
Coup Attempt)

2022, oil on linen and audio, 3'32"

On the evening of 15 July 2016, residents of Turkey were informed via the state broadcasting channel's emergency public announcement that a military coup was taking place to overthrow Erdoğan's regime. The intervention of police forces and civilians— incentivized by Erdoğan's call for resistance in a speech on live television—gave the government the golden opportunity to put a stop to the coup.

To provide moral support for the civilians who fought against insurgent troops in the streets, the government made the mosques send out broadcasts of “sela prayer” every half hour until dawn. More than 200 people lost their lives in the fight.

The same date has now become a day for mourning under the name of 'Democracy and National Unity Day'. Some of the country's iconic infrastructure has been renamed and a museum about the coup attempt was opened.

In primary and secondary school curriculums, students are now required to learn about the significance of the event and the virtues of martyrdom. Each year, they are asked to prepare mood boards and commemorative ceremonies such as the scene depicted in this painting.

The image seen here was made from a YouTube video still. This video was shot in a school in Edirne, as children acted out a scene with Islamic scholars, sultans and their wives resurrecting a martyred soldier during the coup attempt. The children are singing a modified version of an Islamic hymn:

“Martyrs on the throne, smiles at the Lord
Says, “Wish I had thousands of lives”
Martyrs on the throne, smiles at the Lord
He eats from a table that's the price of a soul

Not without hope, not without hope
Not without Love, not without Love
Not without hope, not without hope
Not without Love, not without Love

If they carve the mountains and make them dungeons,
They cannot extinguish the light of Allah
If they carve the mountains and make them dungeons,
They cannot retain me from my cause

Not without wounds, not without suffering
Not without martyrs, not without sacrifice
Not without wounds, not without suffering
Not without martyrs, not without sacrifice

Martyrs on the throne, smiles at the Lord
Says, “Wish I had thousands of lives”
Martyrs on the throne, smiles at the Lord
He eats from a table that's the price of a soul

Darkness dies, cruelty dies
In front of our eyes, and death dies
Darkness dies, cruelty dies
In front of our eyes, and death dies
I now understand Uhud and Bedir
And what is Hope, Love,
Martyrdom is
I breathed the grave,
the apocalypse
And Hope, Martyr and Love”

Translation by Nur Betül Çelik and Can Demren

Say something...

