



ArtDog Istanbul  
TURKISH EDITION  
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# ArtDog Istanbul

“ CONTEMPORARY DEDUCTIONS ”



## TOWARDS EXTINCTION

TOWARDS EXTINCTION: ON ART & ECOLOGY | POLITICIANS TURNED EVERYTHING INTO CHILD'S PLAY  
LAND& RIVER ART BIENNALE | WHAT'S NEXT?: AMID DISASTERS | HÜSEYİN BAHİRİ ALPTEKİN: AMID FRIENDS  
FRIEZE SCULPTURE BY FATOŞ ÜSTEK | CARBON OXIDE TOO | OTTOMANS' UNFULFILLED MUSEUM PROJECTS

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Billie Grace Lynn, White Elephant  
Ripstop nylon, paint, electric fan, 0'1 x 6'W x 8'H



**GÖZ  
ALABİLDİĞİNE  
İSTANBUL**

**BEŞ ASIRDAN MANZARALAR**

**20.09.2023  
26.05.2024**

**ISTANBUL  
AS FAR AS  
THE EYE CAN SEE  
VIEWS ACROSS FIVE CENTURIES**

**Küratörler | Curators:  
Şeyda Çetin, Ebru Esra Satıcı**

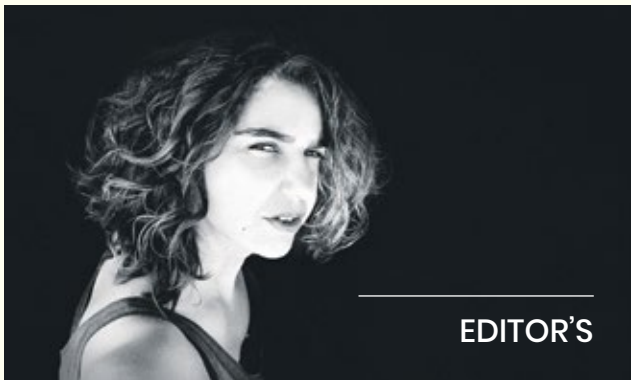


Detail: Rudolf Hellgrewe, Gün Batımında Haliç | The Golden Horn at Dusk, y. | c. 1900, Tüval üzerine yağlıboya | Oil on canvas.



# ArtDog

a term that describes those that are **totally consumed** and **obsessed** with art, “**art aficionado**”



**A**kbelen Forest, home to various tree species, such as pine, oak, alder, and chestnut as well as; different wild animals such as bear, deer, boar, fox, and rabbit has been under threat by a coal mine plan since 2021. If this plan works and the coal mine is fully developed, it will destroy thousands of trees covering around 400 hectares of forest.

Lately, the local community and NGOs have been protesting against this decision. Locals of İzköy at Akbelen reacted to the mine project. They are still protesting against Limak Holding's mine Project with NGOs and environmental activists.

Limak Holding's Executive Board Chairwoman Ebru Özdemir is a member of the SAHA Association, which supports Turkish artists, curators, and writers in improving their work.

No doubt, Limak is not the only example in this issue, but rather the most current one.

Companies that harm the environment try to create the 'illusion' that they are committed to sustainability by sponsoring artistic projects related to environmentalism.

Recent history is full of examples of companies sponsoring modern and contemporary art museums or exhibitions. Both in Turkey and around the world. Academic Fırat Arapoğlu delves into this subject as he asks:

- How should the art world react to companies that sponsor the arts while damaging the environment?

- Is it ethical for such companies to sponsor art?

- Will the art world ignore this contradiction, or will it bring it to light?

- Does sponsoring artistic events erase these companies' environmental destruction record?

- Shouldn't arts institutions that receive sponsorship from these companies also bear some responsibility?

- Will the art world continue to trust these institutions?...

Arapoğlu's piece titled “*Towards Extinction: On Ecology and Art*” is our cover story. During the summer months, while discussions of “transparency” in the arts and culture world were on top of our agenda, we believe it is also our responsibility to address this equally important issue.

Amid the ongoing problems and uncertainty in the country Autumn has arrived - known as the most important season in the arts and culture arena. Turkey has recently experienced a massive earthquake, undergone an election, facing a deepening economic and refugee crisis coupled with a housing crisis.

We've contacted some of the most influential figures in the art world and asked for their predictions regarding the upcoming season. The special feature titled “*Whats Next?*” is a collection of their answers.

The *Land&River Art Biennial* starting on 23 Sept, which will be held on Mount Nemrut, in Adıyaman, is on our radar.

Land Art, which is not very common in Turkey, is more important than ever in the age of ecological disasters caused by the climate crisis. The biennial, which will take place in a breathtaking geography, will last until the end of this year.

The National Women's Volleyball team achieved great success that will be talked about for a long time.

Art and sports naturally transcend everything else and it is high time we celebrate our girls who won European Championship.

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Orhan Alkaya has commented on the appointment to the General Directorate of State Theatres

# “Politicians Turned Everything into School Play”

Evaluating Tamer Karadağlı's appointment as the General Director of State Theatres, actor, poet, and author Orhan Alkaya emphasizes that legitimacy is crucial for society.

By ŞEYMA ELAMAN  
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**Tamer Karadağlı was appointed as the General Director of State Theaters by the Presidency. How do you evaluate this decision?** Appointment by political figures to public art institutions is a problematic situation in itself. Founded in 1949, State Theaters is an art institution with significant historical depth. It has never undergone a management revision commensurate with its expansion. While the latest appointment has raised serious concerns, it won't be fair to point fingers to Tamer Karadağlı. The root of the problem lies in the self-confidence of those who believe they have the authority to appoint whomever they want, and the monist, authoritarian, statist power holders who embody this self-confidence.

Moving on to the second part of your question, there are many factors that ensure the continuity of a corporate structure. One of the most important factors is the rooted “traditions” However, during this current government's rule, the appointment of the General Manager, one of the most important practices of the State Theaters, has been violated twice before this latest move. The appointment of an artist who has no prior experience with State Theaters or any public art institution as the General Manager is a clear indication that the problem is becoming even more problematic.

**How would you evaluate the intervention of the governments and politicians to state theaters?** Tragically most of the politicians in power somehow believe that their profession is above all professions so it is not very surprising when they try to manage an even guide our careers. If one had a role in child's play during primary school years they even feel more equipped to do so. I am afraid this is the case and it will be so.

What should be a must for all public art institutions is that “intervention” should be made impossible and supervision should be limited to economic control and care to preserve the weight of local copyrighted works. This is the issue of culture and embracing culture, which is where most of our dilemmas arise - in short, it would be good for art lovers to share a little of Aytmatov's motto “to love is to love” Love is hard work.

**Today, we often see that individuals who show loyalty are rewarded in institutions even when they do not deserve it. But, when we look at the history of that particular institution, can we say that the current situation results from unresolved underlying issues? What was the most significant problem that caused this situation? When we talk about “competence”**

and “suitability”, we must consider both merit and legitimacy. In your words, “today”, lack of legitimacy is the biggest threat to society. Without legitimacy, these terms lose their true meaning. Nowadays, lack of legitimacy poses the greatest threat to society. The determination of merit and deservingness is often based on brute force. And since power begets power, the primary criterion for success is often limited to one's ability to exert power.

The second part of your question holds great significance. The State Theaters Law No. 5441 had once granted the institution immense powers and autonomy, but today, it has been severely curtailed. The art institution should have taken a strong and collective stand to prevent these powers from being constantly disrupted by political bureaucracy. However, there is a weakness in their approach that needs to be discussed in detail. Furthermore, restructuring the “expanding body” on the basis of decentralization was inevitable. Although there were some valuable initiatives taken in a short period of time, this restructuring requirement has not been fully realized yet. I should say that is a long and serious topic. I am in my 47th year of being a professional and, without exaggeration, I am someone who has been talking about this issue for 47 years and I am bored of it.

**It was said that the source of dismissals in state theaters was always based on security investigations. How do you react to the artist being profiled in this way?** I am one of the theater actors who was dismissed by Martial Law - Law No. 1402 following the 1980 coup. In our heavenly homeland, those in authority who wanted to send us directly to heaven never failed us. However, since I am not familiar with the internal workings of the State Theaters, it would not be right for me to express an opinion on this matter. There were investigations and dismissals at the Istanbul City Theaters as you said. How can I cope with this situation as a professional Turkish citizen who has been tagged for life? Of course, I will shield my chest against all struggles!

**Do you have any thoughts on the concepts of “state artist” and “awards” to state artist? In socialist countries, the state's relationship with artists has often been controversial. Many films have explored the pressures faced by artists due to censorship. It's often asked whether socialists truly create a free environment for artists. What are your thoughts on this matter?**

The title of State Artist in our country was established by the wisdom of the 12 September military Pashas (Turkish military's highest rank). However, it would be unfair to blame the Soviet bloc for it solely. In fact, every Western country has similar medal ceremonies at the central or federal level, which are not necessarily bad. For instance, I have many friends who have received the Legion d'Honneur from the French government, and I did not tease them by asking if they had become French mercenaries. I believe that the issue (problem) is between power/state and the artist and this comes from from a simple opposition (conflict). Power/state tries to maintain the status quo, while our side represents imagination. It is a straightforward antagonism. We should separately discuss your query's last and most significant question, and

I think 1928 was the turning point.

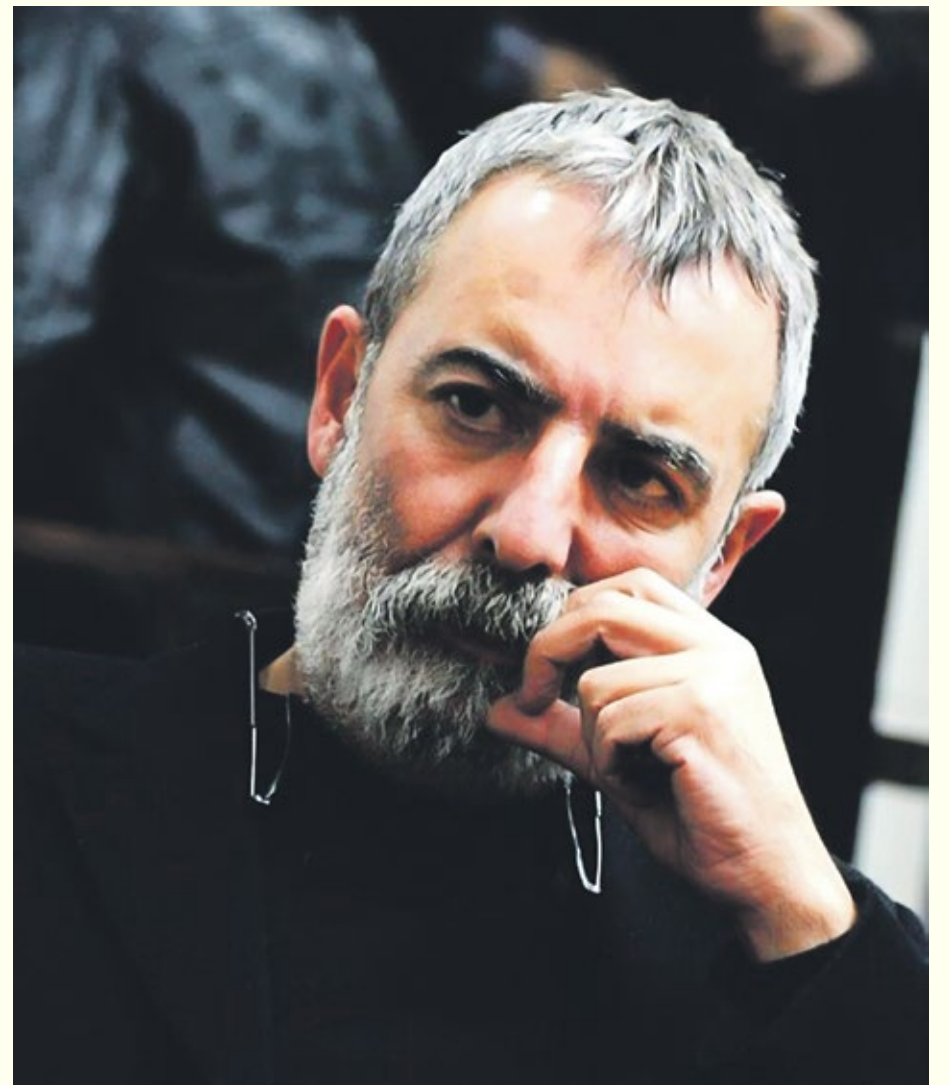
**It has been difficult for “state” and “theater” to coexist harmoniously. Can the private sector help bridge this gap? Would supporting the private sector lead to a better outcome?**

Although the concepts of state or municipality may seem unappealing, we can frame the issue as “public subsidy”. By doing so, we can separate the discipline of theater from an organization that has ideology and coercive tools. Even an Asiatic organization, which collects taxes from its citizens, accepts that it must provide services to them. These services include infrastructure such as sewage systems, highways, railways, wastewater treatment plants, as well as entertainment options like opera, ballet, theater, and cinema. While some public services generate income, others, like sewerage and theater, fulfill necessary public needs. By moving away from wild capitalism and its profit-maximizing derivatives, we can focus on providing for the mandatory needs of our citizens.

I wouldn't object to the private sector sponsoring the arts without seeking any concrete benefit, but I believe it would be a disaster if the task of subsidizing the arts was solely left to the private sector. Although there are private sector groups that invest in the arts, and they do valuable work. For example, İKSV, founded by the Eczacıbaşı group, has done an excellent job, but they haven't built any theater, opera house, symphony hall, or arts center as a festival venue. In short, the private sector can be more effective if it can establish a balance between wanting and doing.

**According to your observations, was there ever a time when merit was able to translate into life?** In a way, I can say yes. It is all relative, of course. In the year I began my professional career, Istanbul City Theaters, which was established in 1914, experienced the brightest moment in the history of public art institutions: Decentralization. This meant that the Mayor at the time, Ahmet İsvan, and his successor, Aytekin Kotil, were managers who valued merit in our profession and explored the boundaries of autonomy. Muhsin Ertuğrul, a great master, was the founder of the State Theaters, and he and his successors always placed great importance on merit in the profession. There are numerous examples, but it is important to note that only the unqualified fail to grasp the significance of merit.

**The salary of the theater actor has always been discussed. Do you think their rights are given enough? Could it be that the escape to these TV series distances the actor from his identity, thus preventing him from being insulted in solidarity?** After we were dismissed from the theater in 1980, the salaries of artists in the two public theaters of that time (Istanbul City Theaters, State Theaters) were equal to that of the Undersecretary in the bureaucracy. Many of those who were not expelled, secretly admired Kenan Evren for this reason. However, the salary gradually fell behind over time and became considerably smaller. Although they receive the same amount of money, those who earn too little and those who earn too much are on the same payroll. This issue has a technical



history that can only be understood among us. The system (code name 657) has major drawbacks that hinder motivation, but we must be careful while discussing it since the country lacks legal guarantees.

As to the TV series problems. During an interview, the General Art Director of Istanbul City Theatres expressed his concerns about the budget he manages. He stated that despite managing a budget of 25 million liras, he receives a salary of only 1600 liras, which he finds ridiculous. He went on to say that he believes that actors should receive the salary they deserve, and if they did, he would not allow them to work on TV series. The issue he referred to is commonly known as “code name 657”.

**What about the subcontractor staff issue? Isn't this insulting? Why does the artist allow himself to be featured in other casts?**

The way to answer this question is to define the concept of “staff”, which would take too long. Subcontracted staff is a gift from a political group that is a world record holder in changing the procurement law. It is little known, but while public theaters recruit guest actors, supporting actors and extra actors within their own budgets, in this imposed and accepted system, the subcontractor company that receives the tender officially pays 25 percent of the theater actor's gross wage. Especially if we take into account that the entire team working in this status at the State Theaters is included in the main artist staff, the subcontractor employment disaster gains a new dimension. By the way, I should also point out that this employment, which will have very dangerous consequences, has nothing to do with Karadağlı.

**Finally, what kind of struggle do you think should be waged? Would you like to make a call? Being honest is good for a start.**

## WHAT HAPPENED

On August 11th, new appointment decisions were published in the Official Gazette, signed by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, that resulted in high-level appointments across several ministries. As a result of these decisions, Tamer Karadağlı has been appointed as the new head of the Turkish State Theatres by President Erdoğan. Karadağlı is an actor who has been involved in several cinema and theater productions. He recently made headlines due to arguments with Nihal Yalçın, who won the ‘Best Actress’ award for her role in the movie ‘Zuhul’ at the 2021 Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival. Concerns have been raised about Karadağlı's behavior towards female actresses, as he has a reputation for being extremely rude. The appointment of Karadağlı caused controversy due to his past actions of targeting two female actresses and his support for anti-LGBTI rallies, sparking significant backlash on social media. In May of this year, Karadağlı disapproved of Merve Dizdar's speech after winning the best actress award at the Cannes Film Festival. Dizdar had criticized Turkey in her speech for her role in director Nuri Bilge Ceylan's film “About Dry Grasses”. Karadağlı disapproved of Dizdar's decision to criticize her home country while abroad, particularly given her previous work on state-run television which had helped her gain a large following and financial success...



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# Against All Odds 40th Anniversary of Siyah Beyaz

Black and White Gallery, which is one of the most established cultural venues in Ankara and the entire country, is celebrating **40th Anniversary**. We talked with Fulya Sade, the wife and companion of the late founder Faruk Sade, and their daughter Sera Sade, who now manages the gallery as a second-generation owner. Together, we delved into the history and story of Black and White.

By ŞEBNEM KIRMACI  
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Siyah Beyaz, 1993



Fulya & Faruk Sade with Suha Özkan during his exhibition titled "Biçim ve Bağlam". Siyah Beyaz, Ankara, 1988.



53-Photo by Murathan Özбек 30th Anniversary interview photograph



Siyah Beyaz, 1995



Siyah Beyaz, 1988

## 40.YEARS

Sinan Logie & Hayri Şengün Sep 22<sup>nd</sup> - Oct 21<sup>st</sup> 2023  
Ebru Döşekçi & Seçkin Pirim Oct 27<sup>th</sup> - Nov 25<sup>th</sup> 2023  
Yılmaz Aysan & Ela Cindoruk Dec 1<sup>st</sup> - Dec 30<sup>th</sup> 2023  
Alev Ermiş Mavitan & Bihret Mavitan Jan 5<sup>th</sup> - Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Günnür Özsoy & Nevzat Sayın Feb 9<sup>th</sup> - March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024  
Ardan Özmenoğlu & Gökhan Tüfekçi March 22<sup>nd</sup> - Apr 27<sup>th</sup> 2024  
Ali Kotan & Murathan Özбек May 3<sup>rd</sup> - June 1<sup>st</sup> 2024

**For 40 years, Black and White has been a staple in the capital. Did those years pass quickly or feel like a lifetime? To put it simply should we say 'in the blink of an eye'?**

**Fulya Sade:** This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Republic, while also being our gallery's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Considering how long galleries have been around in the West, forty years is really not that long. However yes feels like forty years flew by in a flash.

**In the West, yes... But isn't it a completely ball game to last as an art gallery in a geography like ours? You survived "against all odds"**

**F.S:** Against all odds! Yes this is the phrase. Forty years in a country where we really can't make plans. We are trying to plan a two-year exhibition program when we even don't know what is waiting for us in three months. We always say let's stop for a while. Let's wait. But we always carry on

**To last 40 years definitely is an act of passion...**

**F.S:** It is not impossible. It must be the same ordeal for you too. Despite your diligent efforts to create a magazine, it's possible that someone may discard the pages by using them to clean windows or pack items. Unfortunately, this is the reality of the country we live in.

**Siyah Beyaz is based in Ankara. How did this shape the identity of the gallery? The gallery's identity is quintessentially linked with that somehow, isn't it?**

**F.S:** I am originally from İzmir. They always call Ankara grey. City of civil servants... But let's go back to the eighties. To the years 81-82. Ankara has always been a place of unity and recovery. Writers, artists, thinkers and even communists have gathered in Ankara.

**So can we say Ankara is the place to hide, to recover?**

**Sera Sade:** I have always heard about it from my parents. This place became a hub for gatherings, meetings, and discussions. Even the exhibitions held here came to fruition through these meetings. People come together, meet, and talk because there is not much to do in Ankara, and the city does not restrict them.

**It is like a cultural phenomenon, isn't it?... Black and White also has a bar.**

**Fulya Sade:** Whish is our biggest sponsor.

**I was born and raised in Ankara and we used to frequent this bar quite often. It makes me wonder how many generations have gathered and socialized in this place over the years. It has always been a meeting point. Nowadays, it seems like there is a trend of organizing "events" and parties as a way to promote extend art exhibitions. In some cases, it feels like the event is given priority and art becomes a mere backdrop. However, this bar and gallery have always been more than just a place to showcase art - all in all Siyah Beyaz has always been a cultural hub where people get together. From day one the gallery and the bar have been inextricably intertwined and embody this unique way of life.**

**F.S:** It all happened spontaneously. The combination of a bar and a gallery is the vision of Faruk (Sade) Faruk was trained as an architect and his circle of friends were alumni of METU too. Not only in Ankara but we had frequent home exhibitions in Bodrum during the 2000s. Our friends from the METU Architecture Department purchased a piece of land in Yahşi, and each of us built our own houses.

**S.S:** A group of architects, including my father, had all built their own houses. Every August, our house and others on the peninsula would become exhibition areas, as all the furniture would be removed. These exhibitions also served as party areas, with everyone in the area coming to enjoy the festivities. It was a huge gathering, with around 250-300 people attending. There would be music, exhibitions, and lots of food and drinks for everyone to enjoy. Back then, liquor companies didn't sponsor such nights. However, we did it just for the fun of it. My mother would cook all the food herself.

**F.S:** Cooking is my favorite hobby. I used to love going to the market and buying fresh vegetables to prepare delicious meals. We would set the table with the food and plates and enjoy our meals together. Nowadays, many "events" are happening in Bodrum, but I haven't attended any of them yet.

**Nowadays, we see a new trend: let's do an "event" and include art in it**

**F.S:** Exactly

**Why is art becoming more prevalent at events? Is it to signify social status?**

**F.S:** I agree with you completely. Unfortunately, they include art in their events. They should stick to their parties and events without involving art. As a big construction company, they have plenty of empty space, so they shouldn't use it for art either. I believe art can legitimize and sanitize anything, but it shouldn't be treated as a background decoration.

**It is kind of tragic. Contemporary art today even serves as a background for Instagram photos.**

**F.S:** In my opinion, the ability to discuss and criticize directly results from knowledge. Writing a critical article is a challenging task that requires extensive knowledge and understanding. Criticism is incredibly important, yet we seem to lack it in today's society. Unfortunately, this lack of criticism is becoming increasingly dangerous. I fear we may reach a point where constructive criticism is no longer present.

**What are the milestones of Siyah Beyaz Gallery?**

**F.S:** First of all, its establishment. It was the Kenan Evren era in Turkey and Faruk (Sade) had just returned from Paris. Many graduates of METU did not choose to work for the state. Instead, they pursued their dreams. One such student was Faruk, dreamed of establishing a gallery and he did just that. Again the launch of Bilkent Universtiy has been a milestone in the cultural life of the city. A renowned institution where many notable names such as Vasif Kortun, Erdağ Aksel, Haluk Akakçe, Michael Morris, Hüseyin Bahri Atlıtekin were associated with. Bedri BaykamKaam -Ardıç Gürsel, and Sitki Kosemen were around.

**You never thought of leaving?**

**F.S:** We thought about it for a while, but instead of investing in Istanbul, we decided to invest in Ankara. We actually thought about opening up a place in Paris for a while.

**So back to the name of the gallery Siyah Beyaz (Black and White)**

**F.S:** We used to throw parties during construction around the black fireplace. It became known as "the place with the black fireplace". In fact, it was given its own name.

**Did everything develop organically on its own?**

**F.S:** Just like that. We loved getting together and discussing... That was our job. This place still preserved the way Faruk created it on the first day.

**This place has a rich history and an interesting story behind it.**

**F.S:** Our biggest asset is Sera (Sera Sade) Would you continue if she wasn't there?  
**F.S:** I love my job, and I consider it as my life. It doesn't end when I shut the door. I am not a banker and I don't live that way. We never pressured Sera though. We told her to do whatever she wanted.

**When were you born Sera?**

85.

**You referred to Sera as the second generation. You said Faruk Sade was the founder, but you never mentioned yourself.**

**F.S.:** In my opinion, Nevzat Sayın put it best. He used to say that Faruk is Faruk, while Fulya is a blend of Faruk and herself. This is the most accurate description of my life so far. I have learned everything from Faruk for forty years, and this observation sums up my Black and White existence.

**Sera, how did you decide to work here?**

**S.S:** I didn't even know it was a decision. I

didn't notice, happened so naturally. I was born into this place.

**F.S:** We did not interfere but required her only to do her BA degree in Turkey. She completed her master's in book art in London after studying Graphics at Bilkent.

**So how did you start working actively here?**

**S.S:** When I started here, my father always told me, "Do it yourself, do your own mistakes." He let me. So sometimes I failed. But I learned. Since I am kind of a control freak so the idea of making mistakes seemed strange to me at first, but mistakes has paved my way.

**For how long have you been working here at Siyah Beyaz Gallery?**

**S.S:** It's been 12 years.

**The gallery has never parted ways with the artists it has worked with for a long time, right?**

**F.S:** Some have been here since its founding. Some are new.

**You have witnessed many changes over the past forty years, including acts of terrorism. How did it affect you?**

**F.S:** There were days when the openings were empty. There were reports that a bomb would explode here.

**Have you ever been afraid?**

**F.S:** Would we be scared of the bomb? No, bombs were exploding all around when I was at the University.

**You created a book that tells the story of your 30-year history**

**F.S:** Yes, and we wanted everyone who was part of this story to be there. Only Rabia Çapa is missing from that book, she was unwell at that time.

**There is Faruk Sade Art Fund, right?**

**S.S:** Yes. This is something we do to support artists from different disciplines such as architecture and art history and to realize their dreams. Every year we support young talents under the age of 35. The first project we supported is the book version of the *Operation Public Space* installation created by Ali Şentürk in 2013. Şentürk's research covering the years 2000-2018; It lists what happened to the sculptures in public spaces in Turkey.

**You had an artist residence project in the 90s, right?**

**F.S:** We owned a three-story building in Sultanahmet that served as an artist residency from 1990 to 2003. The project was international, with the French government at that time also participating. It was a significant undertaking, as it facilitated the exchange of artists between Turkey and foreign countries. Turkish artists had the opportunity to work abroad, while foreign artists could come to Istanbul to work on their projects.

**Are you planning to host exclusive exhibitions for your 40th year this season?**

**S.S:** Yes. Our line up of artists are paired in duos. Both established and young are going to collaborate and produce together in duo's.

**Why is Sera's arrival significant in terms of the gallery's history?**

**F.S:** There was a clumsiness on our shoulders. Sera took that away from us. Let us not go without saying that Faruk's loss is inevitably a great mark in the history of the gallery too.

**Sera you and your husband opened a pizzeria within here about two years ago.?**

**S.S:** Yes. I believe we have established ourselves quite well. The gallery was established by my father when he was 28 years old, and he passed it on to me when I turned 28. The gallery is only a year older than I am. Surprisingly, the pizza place is the same age as my son. We are continuously expanding, and while doing so, I am doing my best to preserve all that we have accomplished.

**Have you never thought of giving up in 40 years?**

**F.S:** At one point I said enough was enough. Faruk (Sade) resisted. He never gave up. He was a very stubborn one.



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[sakipsabancimuzesi.org/en](http://sakipsabancimuzesi.org/en)



# On top of Mount Nemrut

# Land & River Art Biennial



Land & River Art Biennial will take place on three islands – Karakuş Tumulus, Cendere Bridge, and Nemrut Peak. The event is scheduled to begin on September 23 and will be held near the historical Nevali Çori which is now flooded. We had a conversation with Nihat Özdal about Land Art, a genre that is often overlooked in Turkey.

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Turkey is hosting its first-ever Land and River Art Biennial, titled **Commagene LAR**, in Adiyaman. The event will revolve around the theme of *The Value of a Metaphor*. The Commagene Biennial, which was held last year, inspired the creation of a new branch called LAR (Land and River Art). The Commagene Land and River Art Biennial will take place for the first time this year, with the participation of renowned artists from around the world and Turkey. The event will be held on the islands situated on the Euphrates River and will focus on the theme *The Value of a Metaphor*, based on a text written by Ismail Ertürk, a professor from the University of Manchester. The biennial will be open to visitors from September 23 to December 23, 2023.

**Land Art is not a well-known genre in Turkey. How come you became interested in it. How did it all lead to this?**

My fascination with maps began during my primary school years when I would draw 'em with my eyes closed. I have a special connection with the steppe colors that depict the majestic heights of Anatolia. "Make a picture about nature" was a common theme in art classes, but while most people would draw trees, I always drew short grasses. These grasses bloom in the spring, then turn yellow for a long time. The steppe is home to many creatures such as hyenas, desert hares, sand partridges, and bald ibises. The dry grasses provide a wide horizon that gives me a sense of freedom for both my thoughts and my gaze. In contrast, forests shrink both the horizon and the mind. This relationship is evident in everything from dinner conversations to folk dances. Regions with dry grasses have long halay rings, and the elves open their arms and step towards the west. Forests are confined to games played in narrow spaces. I had the idea to use this area of 'freedom' to create

artistic productions. Last year, we organized the Commagene Biennial, and the feedback from the artists who worked on land art was very productive. We decided to divide the biennial into two and continue working in this field for another year.

**The Biennial will take place in Adiyaman, focusing on the themes of Land Art and River Art. It's worth noting that the inclusion of the river in this event is groundbreaking.** The issue of climate change has prompted us to put more focus on water conservation. Perhaps we should have paid attention to this issue much earlier. Our geography is filled with rivers that are obstructed by dams. In recent years, more artists have become concerned about this crisis. If you are lucky enough to fly over Anatolia and observe the land below, the breathtaking river formations are truly magnificent. As an artist, I am someone who studies rivers and works with them. I collaborate with the Euphrates, the river where I was born, and other rivers I come across in my travels. I believe that rivers should have rights too. The New Zealand Parliament's decision to grant the Whanganui River the status of a living entity was an important milestone. Why can't the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, which have historical significance, be granted the same rights? River art is a form of collaboration with rivers, and we have been brainstorming about what we can create together with them for this biennial.

**In light of the current climate crisis, pandemic, Ukraine-Russia war, increasing fascist tendencies, inequality of wealth and justice distribution and the threat of artificial intelligence, do you believe that Land Art, which focuses on use of natural materials, is becoming more important?**

We are discussing the idea of reconnecting with nature, the countryside, and the earth itself. These catastrophes prompted us to question what truly matters.

**This year the theme was announced as The Value of a Metaphor. Can you tell us a little more about this theme?**

I have been keeping a close eye on *FutureEverything*, a UK-based organization that has been conducting long-term sessions on the intersection of money and the environment. This is a topic that we will be discussing in detail during the opening panel of the biennial this year. Ismail Ertürk's article from Manchester University on this subject has been a helpful guide for us.

**What was the impact of the inaugural Commagene Biennial held last year?**

We met last year and with the idea of creating an *Imaginary Civilization*. Commagene's ancient lands, where numerous civilizations have risen and fallen over time, and where multiculturalism still flourishes, sparked a discussion about what it means to be civi-

## LAR COMMAGENE

Turkey's first **Land and River Art Biennial, Commagene LAR**, is scheduled to take place in Adiyaman. The event, themed *The Value of a Metaphor*, will showcase the works of Turkey's leading artists and international participants. The biennial will be held at various venues, including the **Nemrut Peak, Karakuş Tumulus, Cendere Bridge, and the islands on the Euphrates River** in Adiyaman. The exhibition will be open to the public from **September 23 to December 23, 2023**.

lized. A considerable portion of these works has survived, and through the biennials' accumulation, our goal is to establish a Museum Island, which will be a world-first.

**Can you provide information about the main venues of the biennial in a restricted geography?**

The biennial is centered around **three islands** situated across from the historical Nevali Çori's flooded areas. These islands are free from any settlements and agricultural activity, and are currently used exclusively for art-related activities. Other notable places in the region include the **Karakuş Tumulus, Cendere Bridge, and Nemrut Peak**, all of which hold great significance in the region's archaeology and history.

**There are talks and side events to be held throughout the biennial, right?**

*The Sustainability, Economy, and Environment Panel* will be held at the opening of the biennial event. Ismail Ertürk will moderate the panel and will feature Betül Bildik, Fatma Çolakoğlu, Burak Delier, Sabahnur Erdemli, Bahadır Kaleağası, and Argun Okumuşoğlu as speakers. İrini Papadimitriou will give a speech titled *Money and Environment*, Sophy King will speak on *Anthropocene Age and Our Relationship with Nature*, and Becky Lyon will discuss the *Relations between Art and Ecology*.

**What awaits us at this biennial?**

We are excited to host a biennial featuring a group of talented artists who will produce artworks in collaboration with local artisans whose masters of craftsmanship such as blacksmithing, carpentry, bricklaying, and glasswork. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dear friends in the region who have supported us, to participating talented artists who will share their work with the world. So I would like to thank **Shirin Abedinirad, Odmaa Uranchimeg, Zaid Saad, Mariko Hori, Ana Laura Contera, Yalda Jamali, Kim Incheol, Meltem Şahin, Cengiz Tekin, Murat Cem Baytok and Vahap Avşar** for their invaluable support.

## The value of a metaphor

PROF. İSMAIL ERTÜRK

The *Money and Environment* project by Ismail Ertürk is a response to the global mobilisation of finance through various channels to deploy the global collective savings of people it manages for the good of ecology, climate, and society. Financialised capitalism, after having caused

one of history's most damaging crises in 2007, has been trying to re-invent itself as an ethical force for humanity. Modern finance's power emanates from its size and its all-encompassing logic that are a specific historical phenomenon resulting contradictorily from increasing economic precariousness of ordinary people under neoliberalism, who save big chunks of their income for their ever-postponed retirement and borrow heavily to save the day today.

Hence, when the financial sector and financial regulators announce their commitments to fight climate risk and to green the economy – like the private financial institutions led by an ex-central banker Mark Carney did in the last COP26 in Glasgow by pronouncing a seemingly gigantic USD 130 trillion for this purpose – they offer the size of finance, the number of big financial

institutions involved as axiom for success. The credibility of the money's environmental narrative is equated to its quantitative properties. This size, then, is formatted and nuanced for specific ecological and social targets by quantitative risk and return algorithms esoteric to the society and are embedded in a knowledge and value system that often cause crises and socio-economic destruction.

In this context and in the face of climate and ecological emergencies the *Money and Environment Project* aims to explore the possibility of a humanities-based financial and economic knowledge and globally shared/created societal values in business.

The recent rise in the number of greenwashing cases in corporate world that colour the pages of financial media, and the financial world's public acknowledgement of and insistence on its short-term interests at the expense of long-term societal needs for environmental causes –

like in the cases of HSBC and Blackrock, two giant financial institutions that manage money at multiples of the world's largest economies – necessitate urgent societal engagement with the financial world on a series of issues like values, knowledge, risk, return, common good, etc. regarding climate and environment.

"Money and Environment: the Value of a Metaphor" event is a tributary of "Money and Environment" project and forms part of a long-term cultural ambition in upper Mesopotamia, where the great rivers of Euphrates and Tigris give life to lands on their shores, to be a unique facilitator of engagements and dialogues between the art world, academics, NGOs, activists, and the financial and business world. A new language and a different logic about values and knowledge need to be collectively

imagined by cultural, societal, economic, and scientific communities. The French philosopher Michel Serres, who wrote extensively on environment, ethics, and science, articulated sharply the collective aspect of climate and environmental risks. He used art, the painting by Goya named *Fight with Cudgels*, to point out that there is no winner at a fight where the adversaries fight on a quicksand – the quicksand will devour both the winner and the loser before the fight ends. Hence the urgency to fight collectively the

quicksand, the climate emergency, environmental deterioration and to rethink our local priorities, values, and knowledges for global common good.

The German filmmaker Wim Wenders brought such success in fighting the quicksand to our attentions in his documentary film, *The Salt of the Earth*, on the Brazilian social photographer and economist Sebastião Salgado. Salgado has produced effective photographic expressions of the social consequences of human-made environmental catastrophes caused by pure profit-seeking economic activities. Salgado and his wife Lélia, then, had a chance to reverse some of environmental damages. They have regenerated a 1,754-acre Atlantic Forest that Salgado's cattle-farming parents destroyed. It took planting two million trees, using Vale's, Brazil's notorious mining company, regeneration engineers and resources, and twenty years to completely regenerate the biodiversity of this huge land.

Financial sector and businesses need to leave their bubbles of knowledge and values within which they self-referentially try to deal with environmental issues constrained by suspect quantitative risk models, impulse for short-term monetary returns, and constant search for high executive pay. Conversations and dialogues with artists, humanities scholars, activists are as important as finance and businesses organising themselves around institutional frameworks like Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting, Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) ambitions, stock market sustainability indexes, green taxonomies of industries, etc. But equally important is the society's engagement with the money managers to propose alternative economic values and knowledges in the deployment of their savings for environmental and social purposes. Art events like "Money and Environment: the value of a metaphor" can facilitate such dialogues and explorations in ancient lands of upper Mesopotamia and Commagene Kingdom.

Commagene Kingdom created a unique system of aesthetics and values that harmonized two strong civilisations and cultures: Persian and Greek. We invite artists to rise to this challenge of history on the shores of Euphrates in Mesopotamia to imagine a future where money serves land, rivers and society for humanity's peaceful pact with nature.



# Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin Among Friends

Galerist is now hosting *Among Friends: One Chapter of a Long Story*, the gallery's first exhibition of Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin since it began representing the artist's estate in 2020.

ARTDOG İSTANBUL

Part of the first generation of Turkish artists considered to be globally active and nationally influential, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin was fascinated by the difference between the promise of something and its banal reality. This promise could lie in the name of a cheap hotel offering the experience of a distant place, or in the branding of a mass-produced product unconvincingly simulating luxuriousness or exoticism. Alptekin was an artist who saw the profound effects of global capitalism on everyday life, and who observed the circulation of people and goods across different geographies, particularly in the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. He was a traveller who studied forms of brutal capitalism in places that are considered peripheral areas of Western modernity. In 2007, Alptekin represented Turkey in the 52nd Venice Biennial with his installation *Don't Complain* and participated in the exhibition *Global Cities* at Tate Modern, London. From 2000 to 2004, he initiated a non-profit artists' collective called *Sea Elephant*

*Travel Agency*. He collaborated with M.D. Morris and Grip-in, among many others, and was involved in numerous collectives such as the LOFT meetings, the Bunker Research Group and Barn Research Group, where subject, position and authorship would become irrelevant. His retrospective exhibition *Democratic Luxury* at M HKA in 2015 included a selection of studies, drawings and notes of the works exhibited from the Alptekin archive, offering a closer look into the thought process and his stream of consciousness.

Focusing on Alptekin, an artist who thrived on daily life and considered the process of creation to be more important than the artwork as the outcome, the exhibition undoubtedly reflects the way he lived, created, lectured, travelled, collaborated and drew friends together.

Always a firm believer in collaboration and collective production, Alptekin initiated many artist collectives in his lifetime. The artworks, which are part of this exhibition, are also actors in bringing



various perspectives of that period to today.

Rooted in these aspects, the exhibition brings together works by Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, Can Altay, Thomas Büsch, Tunç Ali Çam, Grip-in, Ayhan Hacifazlıoğlu, Minna Henriksson & Staffan Jofjell, Şirin İskit, Emre Koyuncuoğlu, Michael Morris, Serkan Özkaya, Camila Rocha, Vahit Tuna and Nalan Yirtmaç. According to curator Pelin Uran, "It is inevitable that Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, who has grounded all his artistic production on a philosophical

foundation, and who believed that everyone needed to study philosophy at some point in their lives, would have an eagerness to leave his mark in life, and for this passion of his to show throughout his oeuvre. This exhibition is significant for following these traces on the 15th anniversary of his passing."

Opening on Monday, September 11, accompanied by a performance by Emre Koyuncuoğlu, the exhibition titled 'Among Friends: One Chapter of a Long Story' will be open to visit until October 28, 2023.



## Collection Series of Ergin İnan at EArt Gallery

Ergin İnan's *Amos* series, which consists of drawings and manuscripts, meets with the audience at EArt Gallery, after his late exhibition *Me, Myself, Ergin İnan*.

İnan explores the impact of light and color in nature on humans in the *Amos* series. Through his fine art prints on rough gravure paper, İnan utilizes various techniques to depict nature, insects, and humans.

In one of his manuscripts, İnan explains *Amos* series in a poetic way, saying that: "Both colors and shapes are connected to your gaze. Ask the light from the sky, about colors and forms..."

If I bring together beautiful colors and shapes, why surprised?

If your arms and wings are blooming colorfully, why surprised?"

A specially designed set box contains 19 editions of drawings and a 7-page manuscript.

The collection series, which consists of only 100 pieces, is available for sale at EArt Gallery.

One of the most established artists of Turkish art scene Ergin İnan produced works in many mediums such as painting, collage, pattern, and sculpture. In different periods he focused on different themes such as Mevlana and his doctrines, nature, humans, ontology, and metaphysics. Later on, the "insects" became the artist's trademark.

Earlier in his career, he was awarded a scholarship by the Salzburg Summer Academy

where he studied painting with Emilio Vedova.

His works are in private and public collections in Turkey and around the world. Among these are İstanbul Modern Museum, İstanbul State Painting and Sculpture Museum, Antwerp Contemporary Arts Museum (MUHKA) (Belgium), Dahlem Museum (Kupferstich Kabinett) (Berlin, Germany), Kunstverein Frechen (Germany), Meermannano Mestremanium (Netherlands).

In 2010, İnan won the Presidential Culture and Arts Grand Awards, the annual awards awarded by the Presidency of Turkey, in the painting category.

Established in 2017, EArt Gallery offers a dynamic collection with its selections that blend the leading names of contemporary art and emerging talents nationally and internationally. EArt, which opened its İstanbul gallery in 2022, aims to reach a wider audience with its new 500 m2 gallery area in Kağıthane. EArt, which presents a great diversity with its unique artists working with different techniques and contents, focuses on playing an active role between the work and the audience with the different selections it has created in parallel with the changing concept of "collector". EArt, whose mission is to support the artists it represents on national and international platforms, contributes to their visibility by offering them a unique space for expression.

## A Budding Grove



Pi Artworks London is presenting Jyll Bradley's *Within A Budding Grove*, curated by Debbie Meniru. The exhibition will celebrate Bradley's *The Hop* at Frieze Sculpture Park, curated by Fatoş Üstek.

ARTDOG İSTANBUL

**W**ithin a Budding Grove takes its title from the second volume of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, which follows the protagonist's adolescence and his increasing sense of self-awareness. As a teenager, Jyll Bradley spent a lot of time sitting in her family's greenhouse in rural Kent observing the play between sunlight and glass, a visual language that has remained integral to her work since the 1980s. Presenting recent works across sculpture, photography, drawing and film, Bradley draws on the bold geometries of es-paliers: agricultural structures developed to train and direct the growth of young plants such as fruit trees and hops so that their crops attain the maximum exposure to sun.

In a series of new drawings, Bradley repeats complex linear patterns across blue carbon paper, revealing the mesmerising geometry of a hop garden and transforming it into an abstract architectural blueprint. Never quite settling between

transparency and opacity, visibility and invisibility, Bradley's sculptures similarly hover between states. Bright zips of neon loudly announce their presence while hazy yellow reflections dance softly across the wall. The agricultural structures they evoke can be used as both gathering places and hiding spots to seek solitude. Meanwhile, Bradley's photographic self-portraits hint at her desire as a queer woman in the 1980s to be seen and understood but also to hide away, obscuring her face from the camera and turning to abstraction in her art as a way to express the strange and unexpected.

Within a Budding Grove accompanies the presentation of Bradley's interactive sculpture *The Hop* in Frieze Sculpture 2023 curated by Fatoş Üstek. *The Hop* was first exhibited as a major commission for London's Hayward Gallery and will find its permanent home in Poplar, East London, next year.

The show will run 20 - 30 September 2023.



# Curator of Frieze Sculpture

## Fatoş Üstek

Frieze London is celebrating 20 years, and Fatoş Üstek is curating its Frieze Sculpture exhibition.

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Frieze London is commemorating its 20th anniversary this year. To mark this milestone, the fair will showcase special projects as well as prominent figures in contemporary art. Simone Leigh, Olafur Eliasson and Wolfgang Tillmans are among the artists selected by the fair, and each has chosen a partner artist to collaborate with. They will work together in solo stands. Frieze Masters will also feature a special section dedicated to female artists. How do you assess this year's Frieze? The fair promises to present a comprehensive and remarkable selection of art.

I find this utterly exciting. It is an outstanding achievement and Frieze London has a big role in the evolution and growth of the London art scene.

**When thinking about the 20-year history of Frieze, how do you define it? And where do you see yourself in the scene?**

The 2000s mark a milestone in the history of contemporary art in London. While European countries (due to Brexit UK is no longer a member), were showcasing young and contemporary artists in their institutions, the UK's commercial galleries and public institutions were still focused on modernism and impressionist painting. The seminal project named fig-1, 50 exhibitions in 50 weeks - that I had the honor of curating its revival in 2015 - pioneered this shift in London, pre-dating the concept of pop-up exhibitions, brought forward one exhibition a week for the whole of 2000, providing a platform for young and established artists and new graduates such as Richard Hamilton, Jeremy Deller, Damian Hirst, Mona Hatoum, Runa Islam, Hussein Chalayan... In its immediate follow-up, the opening of Tate Modern and the founding of Frieze London proliferated the opportunities for young artists to showcase their works and feel supported to continue their practices.

**Frieze Sculpture is a unique exhibition held in a public area. Could you describe how the event was conceived and the process of choosing a theme?**

I am truly delighted and honored to be invited to herald a new vision for Frieze Sculpture for its 11th edition. This edition brings together a plethora of artists and artworks that respond to the renewed curatorial vision focusing on the expanded notion of sculpture, bringing out the contrast between the monumental and the ephemeral and practices that employ aspects of other media such as light, sound, performance and digital technologies.

This year, existing works are joined by new commissions that are site-responsive and site-specific. The selection includes a multitude of artistic concerns, be it conceptual, experiential, political, humorous or imaginative. Treated like an exhibition with thematic undertones, 21 outstanding established, mid-career and young artists are spread across a large area of English Gardens, expanding the boundaries of the former editions. Alongside seminal and historically significant names, the selection includes



Ayşe Erkmen, Moss Column, 2023, Stone, moss and copper, H: 500 cm, Ø 60 cm. Courtesy of the artists and Dirimart.



Gülsün Karamustafa, Monument for the 21st Century, 2016, marine varnish coated MDF boards with digital print, 285 x 120 x 120 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Buro Sarigedik.

artists who have not realised any public realm works and young artists who are pushing the boundaries of their practices.

Alongside the exhibit, a public programme of performances, artist conversations and tours are scheduled throughout September and October.

**Could you please talk about the process of choosing artists? What did you prioritize?**

I wanted to bring together artists who have not exhibited together before, nor at the Regent's Park. In a way, I wanted to step outside the usual suspects list. I invited small to medium-scale galleries, and young as well as established artists to take part, and where possible to produce new works. I focused on their individual practices and how they engaged with sculpture and challenged it as a medium. Furthermore, I wanted some of the artists to respond to the specificity of the Regent's Park and its manicured and controlled environment. Goes without saying, for me a balanced female-to-male ratio was important, and you will discover many female sculptors this year.

**We see Ayşe Erkmen and Gülsün Karamustafa from Turkey, is there any specific reason you have chosen to work with these two artists?**

Gülsün Karamustafa and Ayşe Erkmen are the pioneers of Contemporary Art in Turkey and have outstanding international recognition. Their participation at Frieze Sculpture this year is an honour. I don't think I need to convince Turkish readers of my reasons and I hope to inspire international visitors to know these prolific and inspiring artists from Turkey if they have not already.

**When working on an exhibition that extends to public spaces, what should be the primary focus? Are there any different methods you use when operating in public spaces compared to your standard practice when working on exhibitions in galleries and museums? Or is there no difference at all?**

Working in the public realm and in an institutional context have similarities and differences. First and foremost, I study the context in which these projects will be taking place. My curatorial process is composed of extensive research into the history, habitual behaviors and values of these contexts. I then explore the scale of ambition I can bring and the potential of the place. You need to be very attentive to detail in the public realm and speculate on the immediate past and future of the place before envisioning something to take place in the present moment. Cities are constantly evolving organisms, and you need to know the pace of change in the area that you are working on new commissions.



**What are your priorities for the audience's experience of art in public spaces?**

As mentioned, for me, the first study is on the context, the scale, and the potential of the place/venue. For instance, with Regent's Park, I studied the use of the gardens by observing the daily inhabitants, but I also researched its history and transition, as well as its outlook, the trees that are in the park, where they have come from etc. I am very much interested in catalyzing unexpected encounters while protecting the artworks from the vulnerability of being out in the open.

**What kind of experience do you aim to provide the audience through this exhibition?**

I think this edition will be unlike any other. I think it is more durational and necessitates the audiences to spend time with the works and engage in their own ways. It is not a walk-through exhibition, more engaging and interactive. Some artworks will be changing in time, others will be activated through performances. I treated the selection of works like in an exhibition, hence each work and its togetherness with the artworks in close proximity have a weight in the layout. The sightlines and the inter-conversations between the artworks will be important to ponder upon.

**It is rare to find sculptures in public spaces in Turkey. What can you say about this unfortunate relationship of sculpture with public space?**

Commissioning art in the public realm is an arduous task that demands big budgets and patience in handling bureaucracy and regulations. I believe in a country where things are in a constant flux of change, it is not easy to establish a strategy for the public realm and execute it consistently.

**How do you define your curatorial practice?**

I am a concept-driven curator who likes working in different contexts and internationally. I am very curi-

ous and open to discovering artists and new artistic practices. I love working in close connection with artists and I can proudly state that most of the artists I have worked with to date, have produced their most ambitious and bold artworks and took the highest risks with me. I love supporting the growth of ideas and making them a reality.

**As a curator, what are your working methods and priorities? Which concepts do you prefer to work with?** It is varied. I sometimes respond to invitations and other times cultivate ideas for projects. At times, projects arise through my conversations with artists and other times it is the institutional conversations.

For me a good and healthy working environment, and colleagues who I am excited to work with and trust is primary. When it comes to my curatorial practice, being given a carte blanche rocks my boat.

**What are the challenges and benefits of being an independent curator? How does it impact the individual? Is independence a crucial quality for a curator?**

Nowadays, a group of colleagues are using a new term to identify their curatorial position, that is interdependent curator. This term stands for curators who work independently with and for institutions, thus they care for the institutions but also pursue projects that are free from the bureaucratic constellation of the institutions. I feel a close alignment with this position.

Art institutions have been a passion for me since the start of my professional life in the arts, and I think my criticality brought me to independence.

**You have spent most of your career working abroad. Can you share with us the reasons behind this decision? I understand that you received your mathematics education in Turkey and worked in the local art world for some time, but then you moved overseas quite quickly.**

I truly value freedom of thinking, freedom of imagination and freedom of speech.

**Could you please clarify why you are not doing more curatorial work in Turkey?**

I am engaged in projects that take place in Turkey. For instance, I was on the jury and curated the 40th Contemporary Arts Prize Exhibition at Akbank Sanat last May. I am currently the juror-in-chief for the Van Kose Public Art Commission.

I think the main reason for me not curating many projects in Turkey is the budget, given the currency exchange rates juxtaposed with the minimal honorariums and production budgets, it doesn't support living abroad.

**How would you define Turkish contemporary art scene?**

It is a complicated situation. I feel

Turkey has been in this vicious cycle of transitioning, which naturally has a huge impact on the arts and culture.

The main source of art is the freedom of expression.

**What are your thoughts on the gradual restriction of freedom of expression in Turkey? As a curator observing from the outside, how do you think this limitation will impact artists and their art production in the region?**

I observe a heightened migration, many artists are moving abroad through grants, or purchasing houses or teaching jobs. Only a fraction of my colleagues that I studied at University in Istanbul live and work in Turkey.

**How will the current global challenges, such as the climate crisis, pandemic, wars -- including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, migration, and the rise of fascist tendencies -- impact the world of art and cultural production?**

The 21st century is unlike any other. The crises in money, health, energy, climate,... the ongoing wars, with the mass adoption of the internet, have taken a seismic scale. This produces problems we cannot solve in the paradigm in which we reside. We need and I believe we are on the verge of a paradigm shift. We need a new alignment and conscientiousness.

I have been pondering these questions and the future of institutions for over the last two years. My book The Art Institution of Tomorrow Reinventing the Model is being launched in the new year. I have compiled examples of excellence and applicable solutions for the change to happen. We will need to work for it and it won't be easy as we need to leave our comfort zones but I believe it will be worth attempting a radical systemic change.

**Do you have anyone influential or any institution on your radar under the current circumstances?**

Absolutely, I have interviewed more than 50 museum directors, and senior curators from across the globe and I can give you a long list starting with the Mori Museum in Tokyo, Pinacoteca in Sao Paulo...

**Do you have a favorite book, movie, song, or other work that holds special meaning to you?**

Anytime. I am a lifelong learner and surrounding myself with art, books, films and music is my natural habitat. When we adhere to 'meaning', meaning is not a fixed gravitational force, it is more like a magnetic field with multiple cluster points. As I change, what I adhere meaning to changes and those books, and films gain different lifetimes. I am never at ease naming one book or one film, that is too limiting for my ever evolving and changing and growing nature.



# Carbon Oxide Too



Dick van  
Zijl

As one of the founders of a digital art center that opened in 2021 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, I was curious to know what our carbon footprint would be and how much it would take to be carbon neutral.

To give an idea: the center - a digital gallery - offers visitors a walk through about six rooms of various sizes that are fitted with heavy projectors, sensors and sound systems. Backstage are multiple computers and servers working to keep the show running: projections of animated worlds and digital art, that cover the walls and floor.

A consultancy firm, specialised in these matters, was asked to calculate the expected CO2 emissions of the center, based on 100.000 visitors for the first year. Practises, such as sorting plastics and paper waste and sustainable purchasing, had already been taken into account. The center was expected to produce 361 tonnes of CO2.

How do you make 361.000 kg of CO2 disappear, every year?

Multiple ways of doing this are being offered. For example, Stoves for Africa ([greenseat.nl/en](https://greenseat.nl/en)) offers the possibility of reducing CO2 by distributing efficient charcoal stoves, while also providing social, economic and other environmental benefits. Through Climate Partner ([Climatepartner.com](https://climatepartner.com))

one can invest in wind- and solar parks.

For this first year the art center decided to set off its CO2 emissions by planting trees using [treesforall.nl](https://treesforall.nl).

These are all very sympathetic but mostly very slow ways of compensating for CO2 emissions. Have you ever watched a tree growing?

In 2005 the EU established the EU Emissions Trading System

(ETS). The system covers industries with high levels of CO2 emissions, such as cement, steel and aluminium factories and power plants, which account for roughly 40% of total carbon emissions in Europe. These companies receive a certain, yearly allowance of emission rights, which can also be bought and sold on an exchange. This allowance is every year reduced. If a company's emissions are more than the allowance, extra rights need to be bought. If a company's emissions are less than the allowance, the excess can be sold. This way the system gives an economic incentive for these companies to reduce emissions and promote low-carbon technologies.

In the period 2009 - 2019 the price of an emission right was at an average of € 9,3 per tonne (1000 kg) and it began to look as if the system was going to fail. In 2019 the European Commission adopted the European Green Deal with the ambition that the EU would be carbon neutral by 2050. Since then, prices of emission rights have begun rising. In 2021 the price rose from € 30 to € 80 per

tonne. On March 10, 2023 the price reached a peak of € 109,31. It is expected that the price of emission rights will average around € 100 per tonne in 2023. After a difficult start the system now begins to have a serious impact on these high-emission industries.

The art center decided that it is better to focus on the industries responsible for 40% of all emissions. Instead of planting trees, excess CO2 is now compensated by buying emission rights. For example, Carbon Killers ([carbonkiller.org](https://carbonkiller.org)) 'destroys' the emission rights that are bought and so reduces the supply. The idea is, that this will drive the price up and makes the incentive for these industries stronger.



After this introduction it is time to put things into perspective.

The art center was able to claim being carbon neutral, right from the start, by planting 975 trees at a cost of about € 6.000, including a nice certificate. This represents less than 0,25% of the annual turnover of the art center or about € 0,06 per visitor. Let's face it: There is no excuse for businesses in the services industry to not be carbon neutral. Unless, of course, short term profitability is more important.

Compensating CO2 by buying emission rights is a bit more expensive and amounts to approximately € 36.000,- for the art center. A substantial amount, surely, but still less than 1,5% of annual turnover.

Maybe it is time for art centers and galleries to set an example: Allocate a small percentage of annual turnover to buying emission rights and proudly claim to be carbon neutral. If we then can get those law firms, banks and financial services companies on board, we can really help push up the price of emission rights and make a difference. Of course, planting trees is also an attractive alternative. Let's hope there is enough time left for us to watch them grow.

(<https://sebgroup.com/press/news/2022/price-of-emission-rights-expected-to-have-significant-impact-this-year>)

“Maybe it is time for art centers and galleries to set an example: Allocate a small percentage of annual turnover to buying emission rights and proudly claim to be carbon neutral.”

# Contemporary Istanbul 18th edition

Contemporary Istanbul (CI) 18th edition takes place between Sept 28 and Oct 1 in the historic district of Tersane Istanbul.

ARTDOG ISTANBUL

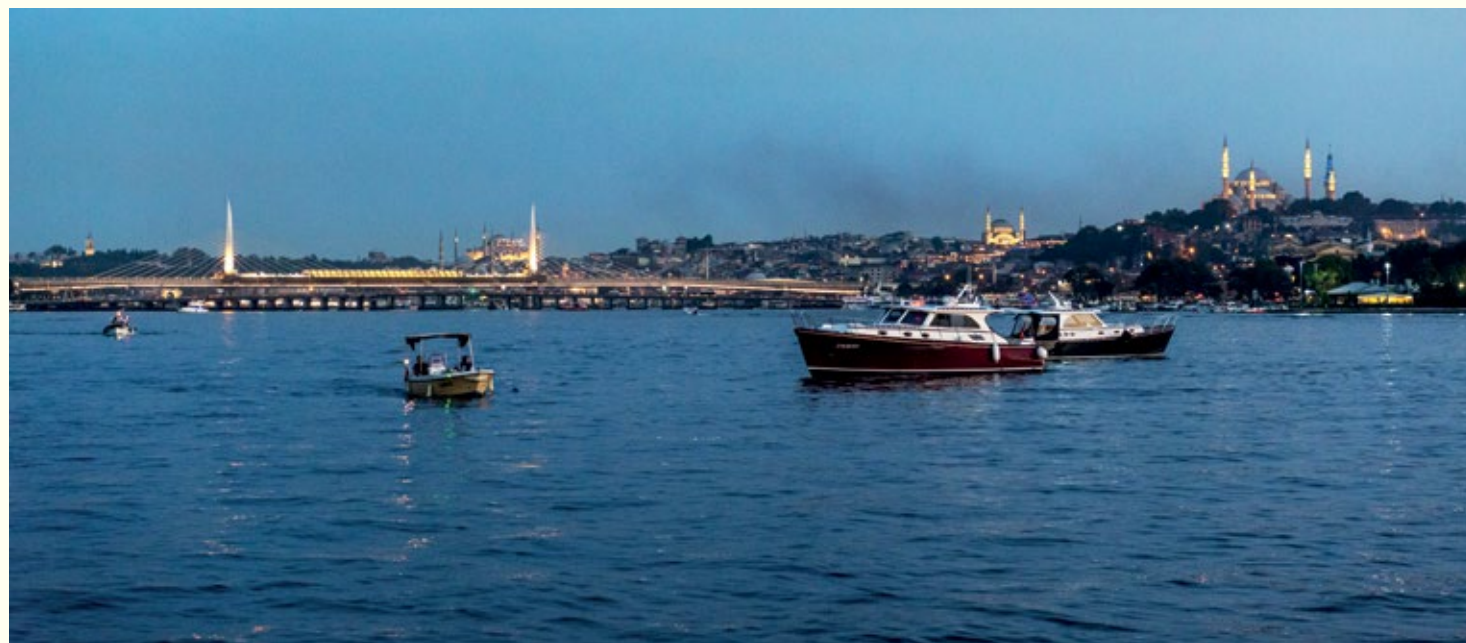
This year once again Contemporary Istanbul will be held over four days from 28 September - 1 October, 2023.

The fair is held in the historic district of Tersane Istanbul, on the premises of an old shipyard from the Ottoman era, located on the shores of the Golden Horn. It showcases works from 75 galleries and initiatives, representing 22 countries. The event features a strong lineup of galleries from Europe and the Middle East, as well as leading galleries from South America, Africa, East Asia, and the USA.

Initiatives, such as Ka Atölye Ankara; Noks Art Space, İstanbul; KOLİ Art Space, İstanbul; Kiyı Projects, Antalya will also take their places at the fair as well as, institutions: Bakı Museum, Bayburt; Borusan Contemporary, İstanbul; Contemporary İstanbul Foundation, İstanbul; Taksim Sanat, İstanbul.

## CI PHOTO FOCUS: A NEW PHOTOGRAPHY PLATFORM

New to Contemporary Istanbul this year is CI Photo Focus, a platform dedicated to contemporary photography that brings together artists, galleries and publications to explore the growing interest in photography. Overseen by Simone Klein, previously the Head of European Photography Department at Sotheby's London and Paris, and a former advisor at Photo London, CI Photo Focus showcases works by 20 international artists and will stage an exhibition presenting works from the Bousan Contemporary's private photography collection. This year's CI Photo Focus selection committee includes Ansen, Coşar Kulaksız (photographer and curator), Kumru Eren (Managing Director, Borusan Contemporary), Leyla Ünsal (Co-Founder of Versus Art Projects), Sarp Kerem Yavuz (artist) and Tony Ventura (collector).



## THE YARD - AN OUTDOOR

Staged at the outdoor courtyard of Contemporary Istanbul, **The Yard** is curated by Marc-Oliver Wahler, the Director of Le Musée d'art et d'histoire (MAH) in Geneva, and former director of Contemporary Istanbul. The third edition of the exhibition presents sculpture, video, and installation works by international artists themed around industrial design and their interaction with the outdoors.

## CIF DIALOGUES BY IGA ART

Running from September 27th-29th, **CIF Dialogues**, Contemporary Istanbul's talks programme, centers around three main themes: **CI Photo Focus**, **Art In Public Spaces** and **Art in Residence**. A three-day talks programme led by Marc-Olivier Wahler will focus on **Art in Public Spaces and Art In Residence**. Simone Klein will moderate a talks panel discussing **The Past, Present, and Future of Photography Market**.

Tersane Istanbul, the venue of the 18th Contemporary Istanbul, is known as an architectural landmark with a historical essence located on the Golden Horn. The site was used by the Ottomans as imperial shipyards and dates back to the 15th century. The historical buildings of Tersane have been recently renovated by the award-winning firm Tabanlıoğlu Architects.

## PARTICIPATING GALLERIES

Contemporary Istanbul 2023, gallery line-up includes; artSümer, İstanbul; 193 Gallery, Paris; 4710 Gallery, Tbilisi; AB Gallery, Seoul; Ambidexter, İstanbul; Anna Laudel, Düsseldorf, İstanbul; Arma Gallery, Madrid; Art On İstanbul, İstanbul; Aspan Gallery, Almaty; Bavan Gallery, Tehran; BFM Art Center, Suzhou City; Bogena Galerie, Saint Paul de Vence; Bozlu Art Project, İstanbul; BüroSarigedik, İstanbul; Callirrhoe, Athens, C.A.M. Gallery, İstanbul; Collect Gallery, Sofia, İstanbul; C24 Gallery, New York; Dastan, Tehran; den art, Antalya; Dirimart, İstanbul; FURIOSA, Mexico City; Galeri 77, İstanbul; Galeri Bosfor, İstanbul; Galeri Nev İstanbul, İstanbul; Galeri Siyah Beyaz, Ankara; Galeria Joan Gaspar, Barcelona; Galeria Senda, Barcelona; Gallery Schmidt, Zurich; HOFA, London; IBI ART Gallery, Johannesburg; IN THE GALLERY, Mallorca; INLOCO Gallery, Dubai; KAIROS, İstanbul; Kalashnikov

Gallery, Johannesburg; Karpuchina Gallery, Prague; Lazy Mike Gallery, Riga; Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, New York; Mariana Custodio Gallery, Lisbon, İstanbul; Mark Hachem, Paris, Beirut; Martch Art Project, İstanbul; Maze Art Group, Tehran; MERKUR, İstanbul, Muse Contemporary, İstanbul; Öktem Aykut, İstanbul; Omelchenko Gallery, Moscow; Pg Art Gallery, İstanbul; Pi Artworks, London, İstanbul; Pilevneli, İstanbul; PILOT, İstanbul; Pyramid Sanat, İstanbul; RED ART İstanbul, İstanbul; Ridvan Kудay Gallery, Diyarbakır; SANATORIUM, İstanbul; Sconci Gallery, Dubai; Sevil Dolmacı Art Gallery, İstanbul; SGR Galeria, Bogota; Simbart Projects, İstanbul; SISTEMA GALLERY, Moscow; SODA, İstanbul; THE PILL®, İstanbul; The Why Not Gallery, Tbilisi; Villa del Arte Galleries, Barcelona, Amsterdam; Vision Art Platform, İstanbul





Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing, "Ice Watch", 2014. 12 blocks of ice, Place du Panthéon, Paris, 2015. Photographer: Martin Argyroglou. Courtesy of the artist neugerriemschneider and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

# Towards Extinction

## On Art and Ecology

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Certain companies sponsor artistic projects related to environmentalism to appear committed to sustainability. However, their actions suggest otherwise. Supporting art while being harmful to the environment is a serious problem that the art world is aware of. Companies engaging in green laundering are periodically exposed to this contradiction. The art world faces a crucial issue: so we raise questions:

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By DR. FIRAT ARAPOĞLU

- \* How should the art world react to companies that sponsor the arts while damaging the environment?**
- \* Is it ethical for such companies to sponsor art?**
- \* Will the art world ignore this contradiction, or will it bring it to light?**
- \* Does sponsoring artistic events erase these companies' environmental destruction record?**
- \* Shouldn't arts institutions that receive sponsorship from these companies also bear some responsibility?**
- \* Will the art world continue to trust these institutions?**

Unfortunately, some commercial companies are contributing to environmental destruction. Their actions lead to high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and the loss of forest land. These activities endanger various living species and negatively impact ecosystems. Burning fossil fuels accounts for about two-thirds of all greenhouse gas emissions.

These emissions are causing climate change, which is already devastatingly impacting the planet. Climate change is melting glaciers and raising sea levels, impairing agricultural yields, and increasing the spread of diseases. Another major problem caused by large companies is deforestation. Deforestation causes species extinction by destroying the habitats of plants and animals. These compa-

nies release pollutants into the air, water, and soil, causing health problems for humans and animals and damaging ecosystems. For example, oil spills caused by BP and Exxon Valdez have recently been shown to have a devastating effect on marine life. Of course, these international companies are just a few that caused the destruction. Looking at the NRDC's "*Toxic 100: The World's Worst Corporate Polluters*"



report, one can see the top 100 most polluting companies. In addition, the RAN's "Banking on Destruction: How Banks Finance Deforestation" report also highlights how significant banks around the world finance deforestation projects.

This article does not cover international environmental issues and their causes, as it is beyond my expertise. Instead, I will discuss the contradiction behind the support of companies and artistic projects that I find interesting. It's important to note that companies causing environmental destruction is just one aspect of the issue. On the other hand, there is a phenomenon called "art washing," where companies do the opposite of what they claim to do. It's a way for companies to hide their harmful activities through sponsorships, as noted by Osman Erden in his article "The crisis created by İKSV, the harmlessness of art, the laundering with art" on [politicallyol.com](http://politicallyol.com). This paradox has been a topic in contemporary art for a long time. It's confusing how commercial companies sponsor exhibitions promoting ecology while pursuing projects harming the environment. It's a contradiction that delivers two opposing messages. They support environmentalism and sustainability by sponsoring related exhibitions and events, indicating their concern for the environment and desire to protect it. However, their actions that harm the environment demonstrate a lack of genuine commitment to environmentalism, and their use of art to improve their public image further highlights this disconnect.

There is a clear contradiction when it comes to companies sponsoring ecology-based exhibitions. Such exhibitions usually highlight the significance of nature conservation and the importance of sustainability. However, it's often the same companies that support these events that are responsible for environmental destruction. This behavior is hypocritical and raises doubts about the sincerity of these companies towards the ecological cause.

The sponsorship of art by companies that harm the environment is called "green washing". On the other hand, Green laundering is when a company tries to portray itself as environmentally friendly to improve its public image, but in reality, its activities are harmful to the environment.

Certain companies sponsor artistic projects related to environmentalism to appear committed to sustainability. However, their actions suggest otherwise. Supporting art while being harmful to the environment is a serious problem that the art world is aware of. Companies engaging in green laundering are periodically exposed to this contradiction.

In recent times, numerous organizations have sponsored contemporary and modern art museums or exhibitions. However, some critics believe that this trend puts pressure on the exhibitions to promote a positive corporate image, which in turn leads to a decline in the quality of the artwork displayed. Mobil Oil sponsored several events in Cameroon, Nigeria, and New Zealand during the 1980s to improve its reputation in those countries. While some critics perceive this as a dishonest tactic, others argue that sponsorships do not affect the content of the exhibitions. In Turkey, on the other hand, many writers and artists have expressed similar views, stating that festivals can be enjoyed without paying attention to the sponsors' logos.

Hyundai, a sponsor of exhibitions at prestigious venues such as the Tate Modern, the Los Angeles Museum of Art (LACMA), and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, has faced criticism. Though the company's support of cultural events has been praised for promoting Korean culture and art, some have raised concerns about its environmental impact. Hyundai was ranked as the most polluting company in the world in the Carbon Disclosure Project of 2015. The question remains: How is the situation in Turkey evolving when it comes to environmentalist actions and art washing?

The answer is simple: "Not different at all!" Koç Holding is involved in projects that harm the environment, including mining and oil drilling. This makes them a prime example of companies that prioritize profit over sustainability. Despite this, they



Billie Grace Lynn's life-size inflatable "White Elephants".



BP ended 26-year sponsorship deal with Tate in 2017 after a series of protests



Ebru Özdemir, the CEO of Limak Holding, allegedly slaughtering Akbelen Forest, is member of SAHA and WWF

support artistic projects like the Istanbul Biennial. It's a well-known fact that Koç Holding uses art to improve its image and divert attention from its environmental record. Sabancı Holding is another Turkish company that engages in damaging projects such as construction and coal mining. They also support the Sakıp Sabancı Museum and other artistic activities.

The recent focus in Turkey has been on the situation in the Akbelen Forest. This forest is located in the İkizköy area of Muğla's Milas district and spans over 1,200 hectares. It's home to various types of trees, such as pine, oak, alder, and chestnut, as well as a range of animals including bears, deer, wild boars, foxes, and rabbits. Unfortunately, since 2021, the forest has been under threat due to plans to open a coal mine. If the mine is fully operational, approximately 4,000 hectares of the forest and thousands of trees could be lost. Moreover, the coal mine could potentially alter the region's climate and destroy habitats for the forest's animal species.

The proposed coal mine project in İkizköy received a strong response from the local community. Residents of the vil-

lage expressed their worries regarding the potential environmental and social consequences of the project, and took action by organizing petitions and demonstrations in an effort to halt the project. The local community, environmental NGOs, and activists are actively protesting against Limak Holding's plan to open a coal mine in the Akbelen Forest due to their concern for the environment. In contrast, Limak Holding argues that their project will not cause any harm to the environment or human health and emphasizes the potential benefits to the economy and job creation. It is our greatest desire that the environmental struggle ends successfully. But, what insights can we gain from the profile of Ebru Özdemir, the Chairperson of Limak Holding's Board?

Can we separate Özdemir, a supporter of artistic projects and member of the SAHA group, from the issue of art laundering that we previously discussed? Absolutely not. Furthermore, a contradiction reported in the media has left many people astonished. Ebru Özdemir, Chairwoman of Limak Holding's Board of Directors, is also a member of the Board of Trustees for WWF Turkey's branch. This is quite ironic since Özdemir's com-

pany and YK Energy, a joint affiliate of IC Holding, have been cutting down trees in order to expand their mining area. Despite being environmentally friendly and supportive of artistic projects, local citizens who wish to prevent this tree massacre are being attacked by law enforcement.

There are several companies in Turkey, such as Koç, Sabancı, and Limak, which support the arts, but at the same time, they are involved in projects that harm the environment. Many other companies in the country also fall under this category. The art world faces a crucial issue: how should it react to these companies that sponsor the arts while damaging the environment? Is it ethical for such companies to sponsor art? Will the art world ignore this contradiction, or will it bring it to light? Does sponsoring artistic events erase these companies' environmental destruction record? On the other hand, shouldn't arts institutions that receive sponsorship from these companies also bear some responsibility? Can they claim ignorance about who is on their board of trustees or whom they support through their projects? Obviously, this cannot be acceptable. Will the art world continue to trust these institutions? These are important questions that need to be addressed.

It's evident that answering these questions isn't straightforward, as they're complex. Nonetheless, it's crucial for the art community to know which environmentally harmful corporations support cultural and artistic initiatives, and the potential issues they may cause.

The topic of corporate art sponsorship is multifaceted and does not have a simple solution. While it can offer crucial financial backing for museums and exhibitions, it can also create conflicts of interest and showcase art that may not be of the highest caliber. It is vital to acknowledge the potential drawbacks of corporate sponsorship in the arts and to scrutinize company-sponsored exhibitions with a critical eye. When perusing an exhibition, a thoughtful and observant viewer should take note of any sponsor logos, or perhaps consider the lessons learned from the Gezi Park Resistance.



# Turkey's Art Scene Amid Disasters

## What's Next?



Fırat Arapoğlu



Cihat Aşkın



Ayça Atikoğlu



Kemal Aydoğan



Yahşi Baraz



Saruhan Doğan



Aydın Dorsay



Cem Erciyes



Mustafa Horasan



Osman Nuri İyem



Hasan Bülent Kahraman



Yekta Kopan



Beral Madra



Ferit Odman



Tilbe Saran



Yusuf Taktak

In light of the recent disasters in Turkey, the growing economic crisis, and the uncertainty, autumn has arrived – known as the most important season in the arts and culture arena. We've contacted some of the most influential figures in the art world and asked for their predictions regarding the upcoming season.

By **ŞİLAN ÇETE**  
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As the country continues to face numerous problems and uncertainties, including recent earthquakes, election process and its aftermath, deepening economic crises, immigration issues, and now a housing crisis, autumn has arrived. Despite these challenges, autumn is known for being a vibrant season for the world of culture and arts. Considering all of this data, we have asked important names in the field to interpret the near future during the culture and arts season. From the answers we have received, we conclude that it is necessary to remain optimistic, not give up the fight, and look to the future with hope, despite all the negativity in the country.

### Fırat Arapoğlu

Curator, Art Historian

General elections had a significant impact on politics, which in turn affected contemporary art events. It has become apparent that the AKP is an authoritarian party-state that seeks to suppress opposition by any means necessary. Moreover, the government is very skilled at consistently doing the opposite of what it claims to do. For instance, despite his previous statements, during the second round of the presidential election, the president visited the Istanbul Modern Art Museum on May 19, 2023: "Throughout their campaign, they resorted to any means necessary, from setting our streets ablaze to hurling insults that were well beyond the bounds of decency and humanity. They also threatened our artists who dared to express dissenting opinions. By placing them under immense peer pressure and creating an atmosphere of fear, they attempted to intimidate these individuals into submission. Their

true intentions were made clear through the tension they created. Unfortunately, they did not give up this rude attitude towards works that were directly for the benefit of the country, the nation and even our artists." It was during this visit that these actions were brought to light. During this visit Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, Fahrettin Altun, İbrahim Kalın, Bülent Eczacıbaşı, Ferit Şahenk and Serdar Bilgili were also accompanying him.

Freedom of expression remains a contentious issue in Turkey, which is having a negative impact on the country's contemporary art scene. Recently, there has been a debate over the appointment of Iwona Blazwick as the curator of the Istanbul Biennial, with some disregarding the decision of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts advisory board to recommend Defne Ayas as the curator for the 2024 edition. The debate centers around censorship and artistic freedom. Blazwick reportedly canceled the Wojciech Pędzich exhibition during her tenure as the director of Whitechapel Gallery, citing concerns about potential political sensitivities. This has raised concerns about whether Blazwick will be able to uphold the principles of artistic freedom and independence while curating the Istanbul Biennial.

Moreover, critics believe that Blazwick's appointment as curator is a continuation of the Istanbul Biennial's shift towards an increasingly conservative and government-friendly approach – as has always been the case in recent editions. The criticisms agree that choosing a curator who can work closely with politics undermines the biennial's reputation as a platform for critical and progressive art. Expecting İKSV – or any other institution in Turkey – to be transparent is only a utopia in the political, eco-

conomic and cultural climate we are in.

The economic crisis in Turkey and the continuous depreciation of the Turkish Lira against the euro and the dollar are important issues that can affect the 2023-2024 season. These factors are likely to reduce people's purchasing power, which, in turn, will impact the production, distribution, and consumption of art. The increase in costs of exhibition areas, personnel employment, and art production materials are among the direct factors that will be affected. These factors will make it challenging to organize large-scale events, which is evident from the recent activities of museums and the scale of the events.

The reduction in the number of international visitors to Turkey will also significantly impact the situation. Due to the ongoing economic crisis and political instability, international tourists have been discouraged from visiting the country for a long time. Consequently, decreasing funds for contemporary art in Turkey is possible. The government's view of contemporary art has always been problematic in Turkey, regardless of the financial crisis. However, given the current situation, there is a high likelihood of further cuts in funding for the arts. Additionally, the private sector may also be selective in providing financial support, making it even more challenging to organize large-scale art exhibitions.

In addition to these economic factors, the political climate in Turkey directly influences contemporary art events. The government suppresses all social opposition and this is reflected in the arts. Artists who produce works criticizing the government or academics, critics and writers who express their opinions always live under the fear of being arrested, prosecuted or lynched. This situa-

tion has created an environment of fear and self-censorship in art.

### Cihat Aşkın

Violin Virtuoso

Turkey has recently been hit by awful earthquakes, complex election processes that deeply affected every segment of society, a deepening economic crisis, the depreciation of the once solid Turkish currency, the heart-breaking immigrant crisis and its repercussions, and incessant housing problems. Despite all these difficulties, autumn is quietly approaching. Although autumn is known as a vibrant and creative season for the arts and culture scene it is worrisome to welcome this time under clouds of despair. However, even behind this dark sky, stars can shine. Large productions become challenging in an environment where despair reigns due to economic struggles. However, art defies all these difficulties. As in every era artists never stop expressing their creative minds despite all the uncertainty. The power of art touches people's hearts, reflects their emotions, and revives hope. Even though dark clouds surround, the sun can shine again – thanks to art.

Playing my violin allows me to express my deepest emotions and connect me with others. Through music, walls can be broken down, hearts can be softened, and hope can be restored. I hold on to my work and music as a light source even during difficult times. I want to be a beacon who carries the message of hope through music, even in the darkest times. I believe that art has the power to nurture hope, even amid despair and economic struggles. My hope lies within the strings of my violin. Through its



voice, I can express my deepest emotions and reach the hearts of others. Music can break down walls, soften hearts, and restore hope. That’s why I cling to my work and music more strongly, even in times of hardship. I strive to be a beacon of light, illuminating the path with the radiance of music, even amidst the darkest of shadows. Art has the power to nurture the seeds of hope that lie deep within our hearts, allowing them to flourish and grow.

## Ayça Atikoğlu

Journalist

Ali Uğur, a music teacher, had enough of people solely associating Hatay, a city rich in culture and history, with the famous dessert künefe and baba ganuş. As a result, he established the Hatay Academy Orchestra three years ago. The orchestra is composed of musicians, teachers, and students who have graduated from conservatories. Life, not blood, is what connects them. Despite the pandemic, they have managed to do an incredible job in the past year and a half, even though they did not have a proper rehearsal venue. One and a half of the three years have passed with the pandemic. The group has completed two projects with the support of the European Union. Their repertoire includes Baroque pieces and works by Mozart and Neşet Ertaş. Although they perform folk songs in Arabic and Kurdish, all of their songs are arranged symphonically. Unfortunately, they lost three members in the earthquake and the rest of the group was forced to disperse to different cities as they became homeless. After the earthquake, a CRR concert was organized in Istanbul by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The Hatay Academy Orchestra, who were invited to perform, initially struggled to perform due to the emotional impact of the disaster. However, as they continued to play, they began to recover and heal through the power of music. Despite the sadness they carried, they shone brightly on stage with their entrusted instruments. The orchestra dreams of having a cultural center that can withstand natural disasters, as they never had one before.

The Atatürk Cultural Center, known as AKM, was established in 1946 during the reign of Lütfi Kırdar. Unfortunately, it burned down just a year after its opening in 1969. It was then reopened in 1978. AKM has hosted numerous concerts, films, plays, and ballets that have left unforgettable memories in the lives of many Istanbulites. Over the years, AKM has welcomed countless artists who have significantly impacted the century, including Rudolf Nureyev and Maurice Béjart.

The cultural center, which had been closed for a total of 21 years during its 53-year history, reopened for the third time this year after being closed for 13 years. However, one important aspect was overlooked in the new AKM: acoustics. The acoustic issue summarizes the new AKM’s shortcomings – while the venue is stylish, it does not prioritize sound quality for artistic performances.

Previously, each group had their rehearsal hall. However, the new building has only one rehearsal hall for the opera and symphony. Last season, the opera singers did not use the hall, but they will be using it this season. As a result, there is a question as to who will be using the hall in the morning since there is a recital taking place in the evening. Another issue is that only one toilet is reserved for artists in the building, which can cause problems. Additionally, the lighting in the saz opening area is inadequate, and it is difficult to read the notes. The majority of the building is reserved for non-art related functions, such as offices and restaurants, leaving the darker areas for artists. As the new season approaches, it is my hope that the Hatay Academy Orchestra will be able to address these issues and make necessary improvements to the AKM.

## Kemal Aydoğan

Founder of Moda Stage, Theater director

The state of the economy in Turkey is causing many social problems, likely leading to severe depression for the entire society. The ruling approach that prioritizes economic success over everything else is not supportive of activities that are deemed ‘useless’, such as art. It is not difficult to predict that this approach, which regards all non-economic activities as a burden, will be detrimental to the art community and those who support it from the right and liberal

front. The economic difficulties faced by art consumers are expected to significantly impact art in the winter months, resulting in a decrease in the number of people attending art events. Although art businesses owned by capital may try to appear successful, the general unhappiness is likely to affect them negatively. The future of art will depend on the artists and art institutions that truly believe in the power of art and are dedicated to it. It seems that those who still have hope for the world will face those who have given up in this competition.

## Yahşi Baraz

Founder of Galeri Baraz

Today, Turkish painting is facing several challenges and problems. In order to evaluate the situation correctly, I would like to comment on a wide range of topics. Before delving into the current state of artistic activities, it’s essential to acknowledge the realities of the country. Self-criticism is a prerequisite for development, which is why I should start my speech by drawing attention to Turkey’s political situation and socio-economic data. These factors determine a country’s place in the world, and their development in areas such as science and art. Societies that can solve their problems economically can later bring their presence to the agenda in other areas because priority is given to maintaining physical existence and basic needs.

Natural disasters, including earthquakes, can cause immense damage, especially in underdeveloped areas. The inability to heal these wounds is often a result of economic collapse and lack of development. It is easy to see art’s dire situation in such circumstances. However, I have hope that enlightened individuals will create works of art that will be remembered throughout history and support the cause of enlightenment. It is their responsibility to do so.

Various issues, ranging from gender equality to the potential impact of refugees on the future, require thoughtful discussion as they are all part of life. While our country grapples with its own problems, the Turkish art market is also facing challenges. The economic crisis and cultural corruption have prevented the formation of new collectors, and galleries have blurred the line between “painter” and “painting”.

Determining the correct hierarchy of art concepts can be a difficult task. However, the primary responsibility falls upon art critics. Without Western-style, ethical art critics who can write and convey the unadulterated truth impartially, it is impossible to determine the truth of the matter objectively. Otherwise, personal relationships may influence art criticism, leading to biased reviews. Therefore, it is imperative to have principled art critics who can provide a factual and objective assessment of art, free from any external influences.

There is an issue with the limited number of museums in Turkey, which are unable to fulfill their missions and support artists by purchasing their works. To gain more attention and recognition for Turkish painters, museums and art institutions should consider inviting important foreign artists and organizing exhibitions of successful individuals from around the world. This initiative may attract foreign collectors’ attention and boost Turkey’s art industry. It is worth noting that while there were once nearly thirty active art magazines in the country, today there are only a handful.

I want to reflect on the current state of galleries and art auctions. Recently, some galleries and auction houses have been selling very poor-quality works under the misleading title of ‘museum works’. This trend has been particularly noticeable since the first Contemporary Istanbul exhibition in 2006, which attracted significant attention from the West. However, over the years, this interest has declined.

The art scene in our country has been lacking new and similar quality organizations, resulting in a significant decline since 2017. Foreign gallerists have stopped participating in our art fairs. Their main reason is that they were not finding what they expected. However, if foreign galleries had constant contact with Turkey, it could integrate us into the Western art environment. The scarcity of works worth exhibiting in the fairs and the fact that they were always the same created boredom among foreign gallerists. Additionally, Turkish collectors and museums’ lack of purchases also caused foreign gallerists to lose interest in our art fairs. As a gallery owner, it is my duty to share my experiences with younger generations.

Therefore, I engage in visual and written archive work besides my primary profession. This year marks the 10th death anniversary of the renowned painter Burhan Doğançay, and I am currently working on a book dedicated to him. While our years of friendship have been influential in writing this book, I believe the focus should be on his examination and portrayal of society’s perspective, which is particularly relevant now. The past shapes the future, and I hope this book will serve as an example.

## Saruhan Doğan

Collector, Economist

The art market is often assumed to suffer during economic downturns, but the 2008 crisis proved otherwise. The art market is largely driven by high-income buyers who are less affected by macroeconomic factors. Therefore, art sales will not decline this season despite any negative economic news. I hope my belief proves to be true. Exhibitions, galleries, museums, and institutions are all doing their best, but it seems as if a sense of detachment from life surrounds us. This might be attributed to our current political and economic difficulties. Despite all the efforts of some individuals who seek to demonize our joy of life, good things are still happening in the art scene. For instance, the exhibition in Feshane demonstrated that the public still follows contemporary art with interest. However, there is a sense of dead soil that has been poured over us, even the biennial could not bring any vitality. This is not a critique of the art or the work being done. Unfortunately, the passing of Esat Cavit Başak has gone unnoticed and unnoted by many, except for a select few. He had excluded himself from the art scene, whatever it was, but he remains a very important loss. Today, the younger generation may not even know his name. This is what I mean by dead soil.

The way contemporary art is perceived by the masses is changing and this is an important issue that needs to be considered. With the rise of social media and our decreasing attention spans, there seems to be a reduction in the amount of attention given to art. People want to be entertained immediately and if something doesn’t immediately grab their attention, they move on to the next thing. This can be attributed to the decrease in art criticism and publishing channels. It’s unfair to expect art to thrive in an environment where curators and critics have fewer opportunities to voice their opinions and make a living. It’s almost considered a ridiculous dream to pursue these professions.

## Aydın Dorsay

Director of Borusan Sanat

During times of uncertainty in the field of culture and art, just like in any other field, we strive to make our work compatible and healing in the face of the difficulties we encounter. We are exploring new ways to move forward amidst these changes by working together. We are committed to improving our work and making it sustainable. As an institution that values its principles, we endeavor to act with this dedication in all our work under Borusan Sanat’s umbrella. As the season begins, autumn is a time when we are active and excited for the new season ahead. Every year, we carefully prepare innovative programs that offer content that appeals to our different senses and emotions. In our work, we prioritize emphasizing music’s healing, unifying, and sustainable power. In the realm of culture and arts, implementing programs that complement each other while respecting equal opportunities will be productive soon. Creating space for young talents who shine in their respective fields is crucial by giving them opportunities to showcase their works and perform their first shows. We place great emphasis on these initiatives in the field of culture and arts. Continuously presenting new music to the audience in both classical and contemporary realms will help us sustain the continuity of music, and hence culture and art.

## Cem Erciyes

Doğan Books Publishing Editor

As we move into autumn, it’s becoming increasingly clear that Turkish arts and culture sector has been long suffering. There are two main contributing factors: economic struggles and political tensions. Sadly, the situation was further exacerbated by a

natural disaster earlier this year. While new books, exhibitions, films, and concerts are set to debut in September, there’s a palpable sense that something is missing.

I had hoped the election results would bring joy and hope to Turkey’s arts and culture scene. Had the opposition candidate won, there would have been a sense of elation. Even amid economic and political crises, the hope for a better future would have motivated all artists and art lovers. Unfortunately, that was not the case. The government continues increasing pressure on elements representing the Western lifestyle and universal culture. This has resulted in countless festivals and concerts being canceled or banned throughout the summer. The wall built to block the entertainment center has grown higher. Every day, someone demonstrates in front of the Feshane, (one of the biggest contemporary exhibitions opened in recent years,) and tries to raid the exhibition. Authors face lawsuits and decisions are made to confiscate books. Meanwhile, ticket and book prices continue to rise as the exchange rate breaks records.

It is unfortunate to see that Turkey’s educated middle class is facing many difficulties. This group is the main supporter and promoter of arts and culture in our country. However, due to the restrictive political atmosphere that suppresses freedom of thought and expression, bans festivals and exhibitions, artistic production is also negatively impacted. As a result, the supply and demand of arts and culture is in decline. It is very unlikely that the arts and culture scene will bloom in the short run. (for the next year or two.) Moreover, the situation may worsen if the AK Party comes to power in Istanbul again after the municipal elections. This would result in blocking an important channel that brings cultural life to the city. Nevertheless, we shall always remain optimistic when it comes to art. Despite the atmosphere and agenda, artists will continue to produce, and writers will write. One day, their work will see the light of day.

## Mustafa Horasan

Painter

As you have mentioned, we are currently facing most dire times. However, artists continue to work tirelessly. Regardless of the fact that they have materials or not, even in the midst of nothingness, they will create something. Although this may not be ideal, the greater the value placed on the artist and their ability to improve in every sense, the higher the quality of the product will be. Despite the ongoing troubled times in this country, many artists have produced magnificent works even in prison or exile. The issue is that we don’t have a proper functioning system which adds value to artworks. I still believe an art market has yet to be established. Living abroad is a dream for many young artists. However, back at home, there is often a feeling of both hope and hopelessness about the future. Yes the season usually starts round in October but the questions is how will it start. Many galleries and art venues are either closing down or hosting exhibitions produced with low budgets. It is common now to witness some amateurs and semi-professionals who are financially well-off doing business. The current situation is not encouraging, and it is important to consider what can be done to improve it. We need to scale down on productions and scale up on ideas. We do not require any help, we are accustomed to get along. I hope we avoid the proliferation of cheap, sellable works. International connections are becoming increasingly vital, and every initiative counts. I wish all of my fellow artists the best of luck. Sometimes, we must find the silver lining and go with the flow in difficult situations. Finally, I would like to mention the name of my last exhibition: “Ne gam baki ne dem baki...” meaning that nothing is permanent, everything changes and nothing stays the same, neither joy, nor sadness.

## Osman Nuri İyem

Director of Evin Art Gallery, artist

It is undeniable that these problems deeply affect the country as a whole. Unfortunately, there are even deeper divisions in the art world. The main reason for this is that our social structure does not consider art a necessity. While some view it as a source of pleasure, luxury, prestige, and investment, others see it as a corrupting force in society...



Our country's economic and social instability has inevitably made it more difficult for our art world compared to countries with stable conditions. Sadly, many artists and institutions in Turkey are forced to find alternative means to support themselves beyond their passion for art. This situation highlights the devotion and dedication of these individuals to their art despite the challenges they face. We can only hope that everyone involved in the arts community will continue to persevere through these difficult times.

## Hasan Bülent Kahraman

Curator

As autumn approaches, art events such as exhibitions, concerts, conferences and shows become routine worldwide, including in Türkiye. Fairs often accompany these events. However, it is important to note that art can be divided into high art and popular art. While popular art has an entertaining quality, it does not interest me. Unfortunately, capitalist relations tend to exploit the entertainment value of serious art, leading to a crisis in the world of high art. The concept of carnival and festival are valuable and unique, but the same cannot be said for fairs, which are often associated with commercialization. In Turkey, the cultural environment often leads to diluting art into mere entertainment, which is a worrying trend.

I want to talk about the contradiction that I mentioned earlier. It shows my expectation to achieve mastery in an honest, serious, and responsible art, regardless of the field. But the problem is that the art today lacks these qualities. This doesn't mean that high art is snobbish or condescending. In fact, that kind of attitude comes from a lack of knowledge about the subject matter. High art opposes this kind of approach and strives to maintain its integrity.

Turkey is not a place where democracy thrives. Local government's art events, which is handled by municipalities, never rise above a certain level. Anti-democratic attitudes are not only seen in bans on festivals and concerts, but also in a pervasive attitude that has infiltrated and poisoned all aspects of life. This anti-democratic understanding and practice violates rights in the broadest sense. A sovereignty that denies the right to speak and express oneself beyond the ordinary is also an anti-democratic attitude. Anyone who contributes to an environment where individuals are denied their rights on a small scale, and where everyone wants to have everything first with petty-bourgeois radicalism, is fueling the anti-democratic fire that the government (in the most abstract and concrete sense) has started. This means that the existence of art itself should be linked to the existence of democracy in the coming period.

There is a third element that needs to be addressed. In the past, some people were referred to as 'multicultural', and this characterization still holds true in everyday conversations in the foreign languages that I know. In my opinion, people who have reached a certain level of social status have an obligation to be cultured. However, unfortunately, except for a small circle, people no longer have any connection with culture. How many people around you read books? Do we even read ourselves? In the world of Netflix and TV shows, reading has become a lost art. To add to this, the ignorance that comes with this condition, and yes, let's not be afraid to use the word 'ignorance', is prev-



Feshane protests.

alent in people who have studied in the best schools in Turkey, are Westerners, know several languages and belong to high-income groups. While we have priority expectations from the 'people', the 12 million rural folks who have migrated to big cities in the last decade, the real issue is the ignorance adopted by those in the 'high' circles.

If we consider that this group is particularly interested in the arts and cultural activities, we can predict their approach to the presented work. The work of art is divergent. It changes as you relate to it. With that feature, it becomes independent from its creator. Let's define the viewing of the work as a kind of 'reading'. How will a society that does not read in general terms read a work of art? A work of art can only be reproduced through culture. A work viewed without reproduction is only an object of consumption, and our environment is extremely adept at turning everything into an object of consumption. I expect such an art environment, or rather I don't expect it.

## Yekta Kopan

Writer

At the outset, let me express what I intend to reiterate later: Art production requires courage, innovation, flexibility, and perseverance. This also means that artists need to be adaptable to changing circumstances. While we can say that art production has overcome numerous difficult periods in Turkey and around the world through new artistic expressions, looking at it through a narrow lens is short-sighted. Unfortunately, we cannot address our current challenges solely through the "power of art." This summer, budgetary constraints led to the cancellation of numerous stage performances and festivals, while some books were deemed objectionable. Artists also faced direct or indirect pressure, which triggered a self-censorship mechanism.

Unfortunately, attempts have been made to hinder solidarity and cooperation in the arts. The lack of a pluralistic, diverse, democratic, and supportive art environment makes it difficult to maintain a hopeful outlook for the future. Take the publishing world, for example. Instead of finding solutions to issues like increasing costs, the paper shortage, royalties for translated books, market competition, and taxation, publishers and authors struggle with censorship and confiscated books. Similar problems are also prevalent in other branches of the arts, from music to theatre, from performing arts to cinema. The sociological effects of an increasingly barren cultural scene are already visible, and this is a dangerous cycle. A barren cultural scene will

lead to deeper social problems, which in turn will weaken collective memory and deepen polarization. As we approach autumn, we will also celebrate the 100th anniversary of our Republic. While many events will be held and grandiose projects will be undertaken, it is important to acknowledge that the culture and art world is not in a good mood.

## Beral Madra

Curator

The most concerning issue in your question is the 'near future' concept! I consulted an artificial intelligence for an answer, but it wasn't convincing. In the current global order, the near future is the smallest unit of time, equivalent to the speed of light itself. Rapid scientific advancements, technological changes, political conflicts, and economic crises happen continuously and change our future in every possible way; meanwhile, the past is fading away at the same pace. Predicting the future, whether near or distant, is now more challenging than ever. Especially in countries like ours where democracy is compromised and idea of the future is bleak. In these conditions, we are left with the uncanny feeling and tension between 'hope and despair'. To overcome this feeling of uncertainty, we must rely on creative, cultivated minds capable of solving this problem.

Many people were left exhausted, frustrated, and hopeless by the unresolved issues of the 20th century, including colonialism, mass wars, nuclear threats, environmental pollution, issues of race, religion, gender, and class inequality. However, with the advent of the 21st century, people have entered with a renewed sense of optimism and hope, believing that these issues will be addressed due to the nature of progress. The impacts of the developments that took place in the first quarter of this century are still being felt globally, albeit in new forms that pose new challenges. Despite the efforts being made not to lose hope, with reliance on solutions offered by artistic, scientific and technological advancements, people still experience the uncanny and tense characteristics of these developments. Today's art production is remarkably versatile in terms of its political, cultural, and social definitions, and it is of vital importance in periods of social and political destruction. Societies that realize the strong reflection of hope in works of art and attach importance to art production in the context of relational aesthetics create free, independent, and effective spaces and systems within the neo-capitalist order. Turkey has 51 state universities and 25 private universities with art and design faculties. The systems and

functions of public and private institutions and organizations that cater to the needs of academicians who teach and produce at these universities and the creative masses who graduate every year must be continually updated.

It is important to note that there have been delays in the implementation of art and cultural policies by both the state and the private sector. However, despite the ongoing pandemic in Turkey, art production has continued with the support of both private and public initiatives. This is evident through the Istanbul, Çanakkale, Mardin, and Sinop biennials, the return of Feshane to its original function by IMM, and the presentation of 400 works of art by 19 curators to the public. These are indications that no force can hinder the production of art. Artists from all disciplines in the country continue to produce thought-provoking, visually stunning, and performative works that are unique to the present and future. It is my hope that those who reject these truths based on religion and medieval traditions will soon recognize the futility of their efforts. It's important for artists, art experts, galleries, art centers, museums, and collectors who are concerned about the negative impact of Turkey's current political, economic, and cultural climate on the art and cultural environment to take action. They should reach out to Chto Delat (What is to be done?) as soon as possible and work together with urgency, organization, solidarity, and resistance. One way to start this process could be to host a major international art and culture congress in October, coinciding with the centenary of the Republic. It would be great if existing NGOs could take on this task.

## Ferit Odman

Musician

Like many others, the arts and culture industry is currently facing enormous economic difficulties. As a musician, I have noticed that the budget I set aside for a concert, which is usually scheduled 2-3 months in advance, is often reduced by 30%-40% by the time the concert happens. The increasing costs associated with holding a concert, such as transportation and accommodation, backline rentals, and sound and lighting system rentals, have become so high that making any calculations in Turkish Lira is becoming difficult. Unfortunately, due to these financial challenges, many organizations may decide not to hold concerts in the near future.

Unfortunately, the art sector is often the first to suffer during economic crises. Even though the global art world is slowly recovering from the pandemic, the up-

coming season in Turkey will be challenging for all of us. Jazz clubs and festivals are also struggling, as small clubs are unable to bring musicians from abroad, and festivals will likely face the same issue. This will result in Istanbul moving further away from the global art scene. Although my words may sound a bit depressing, I hope it turns out that I was in the wrong and everything will go smoothly. After all, utopias are beautiful.

## Tilbe Saran

Actor

You did a great job summarizing the current situation in your question. We are feeling discouraged and exhausted due to the ongoing chaos in our country. Everywhere we turn, we see evidence of greed and the destruction of nature that cannot be undone. Our memories of the past are being destroyed, and the water crisis is staring us in the face. It's overwhelming. That's why art has the power to heal us and bring us together. We can create something beautiful and meaningful by working together with our minds and consciences.

## Yusuf Taktak

Painter

Is creativity at a higher level in a happy environment? I do not think so! Whenever I talk to my friends, they often express their frustrations about the lack of space and materials and talk about the impossibilities they face. Lack of cash is a common issue in any branch of art. In fact, the word 'distress' is an ordinary description for the artists of our country who are not supported by the state, cannot make regular sales, and whose social security is at the limit! Moreover, artworks that were once sold for a penny now remain unsold and depreciated due to auctions and the decline of the TL. You may have read about the lives of very important artists mentioned in world art history who spent their entire lives in poverty. There is even a consolation called 'becoming famous after death'.

In the tumultuous world of art, how much do the country's problems affect the creator? It may not be uncommon to say that the artist thrives on poverty and boredom. In fact, societal upheavals such as the epidemic, the economic and political crises, and the influx of immigrants may have inspired artists in search of a subject. This is because artists in our country are already experiencing various crises to their core, and they are often the first to feel the impact of such crises. I spend most of my time in my workshop, living a secluded life, a way of living that remains unchanged even during times of crisis and epidemics. However, I stay informed about current events by keeping up with social media, and this information often finds its way into my paintings when necessary. Unless I intend to narrate a story through my painting, the underlying message takes center stage indirectly, using symbolism and imagination. The reason behind this approach is simple - I am a part of this society and the world around me influences my work. I often compare painting to poetry in this context. During the Gallipoli War, Mustafa Kemal invited some writers and painters to the front and asked them to observe the defense of the homeland firsthand. It's impressive to think about how, even though the country was poor and occupied at the time, he still requested artists and writers to document it. For instance, İbrahim Çallı, one of the invitees to Çanakkale, created his masterpiece titled Topçular, inspired by the war.



# Turkey Determined to get Trojan Treasures Back

Historical works smuggled out of Türkiye 150 years ago are in the process of repatriation.

Located in the northwest of present-day Türkiye, the ancient city of Troy has yielded a multitude of treasures to archaeologists unearthing its secrets. But many of these artefacts have been smuggled abroad, with Ankara today is working to bring those pieces of historical heritage back home, AA reported.

According to Zeynep Boz, who heads the Anti-Trafficking Department of Türkiye's Culture and Tourism Ministry, told Anadolu that officials have long been working to repatriate these treasures, determined to accomplish the task despite reluctance by

many countries performing historical research on Trojan artefacts.

Speaking at the Troy Cultural Road Festival in Çanakkale province, home to the ancient city's ruins, Boz said negotiations between governments on returning historical artefacts take time, adding that this was why there was no exact date on their repatriation.

"But just as we managed to secure the return of a group of artefacts with origins in Troy from the US in 2012, we believe we'll also ensure the return of our artefacts in Russia, the UK, and Germany in the same way," she said.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CRIME

Officials are also working to beef up measures against more artefacts being taken abroad illegally, said Boz.

"We're engaged in various activities aimed at increasing awareness among our people and fostering a sense of ownership of our cultural heritage.

"Sometimes, these activities are directed towards our children, while oth-

er times they target adult groups," she said.

Underlining the importance of cooperation with destination countries to prevent trafficking, Boz said Türkiye had signed smuggling prevention agreements with the US and Sweden in 2021 and 2022, along with 12 others with various countries.

Besides the matter of historical heritage, the existence of an illicit market for artefacts poses a major crime problem as well, Boz stressed, adding that smuggling has been used to finance terrorism and organized crime.

Türkiye is working to bar this type of criminal activity by seeking the return of historical items, she added.

#### OVER 12,000 ARTEFACTS RETURNED IN 2 DECADES

Boz said that nearly 4,000 artefacts were returned to Türkiye in 2023 alone for a total of more than 12,000 in the last 20 years.

"We believe that in the near fu-



A general view from the second floor of the museum. (Courtesy of Troy Museum)

ture, we will secure the return of some valuable artefacts, a part of which has been subjected to extensive looting in Turkey, and we will announce this," she said.

She noted that the Culture Ministry had initiated a process for the return of works originating in Anatolia after some were stolen and lost at a warehouse of the famous British Museum, and put on sale online.

"Our discussions regarding the return of certain artefacts with the British Museum were ongoing. We are

deeply concerned about the current situation."

"The fact that more than 2,000 artefacts were taken by an individual working there and the delay in the necessary actions despite this being reported to the museum has greatly troubled us," she said.

"Currently, an investigation is ongoing in the UK, and a criminal process has begun. At this stage, we may not receive a quick response to our efforts, but I have no doubt that they will put it on their agenda eventually."

## Turkish Textile Biennial Discovering 'Slow Fabric'

Textile Biennial, curated by poet, artist and curator Nihat Özdal, with 57 participants from 17 different countries; can be seen in Izmir until November 24.

By ŞEBNEM KIRMACI  
sebnem@artdogistanbul.com

Nihat Özdal has made significant contributions to arts and culture scene over the years through his books, exhibitions and cultural events.

Unlike others, he avoids self-promotion and instead focuses on the value added by every task he undertakes.

Özdal, who was born in Halfeti, specializes in interdisciplinary studies in the fields of contemporary art, gastronomy, literature, scents, music, and museology. This year, he is curating an international Textile Biennial in Izmir with the same marketing-free approach. The textile biennial he is curating is an extensive exhibition with numerous exhibits in a challenging field. This is the first time a textile biennial is being held in Turkey.

Fabrics are essential part of our everyday lives, surrounding us from birth to death. The uses of fabrics are so diverse that it is a laborious effort to deal with the productions that combine such a widely used material with art.

Izmir International Fair hosts the International Textile Biennial held for the first time in Turkey. The exhibition, which opened on September 4, can be seen at the Atlas Pavilion. Textile Biennial, curated by writer and artist Nihat Özdal, with 57 participants from 17 different countries; it will last until November 24.

The theme for the biennial is *Slow Fabric*, chosen to reflect the messages that Izmir, the world's

first Cittaslow metropolis, will convey in the fields of art and textiles. This is the first biennial in Turkey that focuses solely on textiles; the event brings together artists who work with textiles and those who use textiles as a material.

As with any industry, the textile sector's emphasis on speed has led to severe environmental damage. The biennial aims to promote awareness about this issue and offer new perspectives on fabric, which is an integral part of our daily lives. Fabric is used as a metaphor to explore different themes and messages. Some of the biennial venues are historical buildings listed in UNESCO World Heritage candidate settlements such as Kemeraltı.

The biennial is hosting 57 artists from around the world, including countries like Argentina, the United States, South Korea, the Netherlands, Spain, Greece, Serbia, Italy, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Germany, Iraq, Cyprus, Ukraine, Syria, Iran, and Ireland.

Izmir has a rich history of weaving that dates back to 7,000 years according to archaeological records. It is home to several prominent textile companies, fashion brands, and textile fairs, making it one of the cities with the highest employment rate in this field in Turkey. The works of weaving are displayed at various locations including the Atlas Pavilion, the Pakistan Pavilion in Kültürpark, the Agora Ancient City, the Etz Hayim Synagogue,



Vahap Avşar, Tales of one thousand and one nights, Carpet collage 180x250cm



Tatiana Villani, Seed, Ceramics, faux fur, polyurethane foam, wood found on the beach, 18x33x27cm, 2023

and the Alga Chocolate Factory.

The exhibition has been organized by curator Nihat Özdal under 3 main themes, which are distributed across various Biennial venues. The works presented to the visitors revolve around the ideas of *Slowness and Time, Touch and Emotion, and Connection and Sustainability*.

The discovery of 8 thousand-year-old weaving materials at Ulucak Höyük in Izmir suggests that the city is the oldest textile center in history.

Fabrics contain a lot of information about societies' lifestyles, art, mythologies, and belief systems. It's interesting to note that humans are sent off to the other world by being wrapped in a fabric, just as they are brought into this world wrapped in one. Fabric is the only material that remains with us from birth to death.

According to Özdal, Izmir continues to be an important center in the textile industry, with

a strong archaeological image in textile history, and many fairs and companies operating in this field.

The International Textile Biennial provides a platform to explore the themes of slowness, touch, and connection in textile art. The slow textile movement is a philosophy that is rapidly gaining popularity today. This Biennial offers an excellent opportunity to delve into the theme of slowness and connection in textile art, and for the audience to experience the profound power of textiles.

The slogan of the biennial is "*Slow Down, Focus on the Touch!*" The handcrafted and meticulously created works of the artists at the Biennial will serve as a reminder to the audience of the significance and impact of textiles.

The selection that Özdal brought together within this framework includes works by many artists producing in this field, from Vahap Avşar to Neriman Polat.



Gül Ilgaz, What's left behind, Fabric, 2023

### PARTICIPANT ARTISTS

Carmen Imbach  
Meghan Shimek  
Rachel Hayes  
Şakir Gökçebağ  
Hye Ryung  
Taewon Oh  
Şükrü Karakuş  
Marina Velisioti  
Ana Vujovic  
Tatiana Villani  
Mustafa Boğa  
Eros Istvan  
Gea Van Eck  
Sedef Nur Merve Özbek  
Tolga Akmermer  
Sevil Duru  
Gül Ilgaz  
Nazan Azeri  
Tuba Geçgel  
Tuba Büyükdogan  
Gülçin Aksoy  
Suzan Batu  
Berna İleri  
Pelda Aytas  
Hediye Usta  
Meltem Şahin  
Vahap Avşar  
Jochen Proehl  
Tasnım Salihi  
Maria Sezer  
Nancy Atakan  
Neriman Polat  
Sibel Gök  
Gülden Ataman  
Onur Fendoğlu

Serap Kanay  
Nur Aydın Evrensel  
Jovita Sakalaskaute  
Ozan Alp (The Letter Atelier)  
Nadide Acar Karaca  
Elvan Özkavruk Adanır  
Fehmiye Dilek Himam  
Duygu Ebru Ongen  
Corsini  
Doğunun Cadıları Kolektifi  
(Şölen Kipöz  
Melis Baloğlu  
Derya İrkdaş Doğu  
Dilek Himam  
Elif Tekcan  
Filiz Özbengi)  
Özlem Kalmaz  
Ekinakis  
Yekatyra Grygrenko  
Yelis Özeryüksel  
Rami Alhajali  
Wafaa Wahb  
Nasrin Yousefi  
Angela Burns  
Jörn Fröchlisch  
Ebru Ceylan  
Kubilay Kiray  
Ayfer Güleç  
Hatice Gökçe  
Şıva Khayyat  
Feghhi  
Burcu Teoman  
Zehra Duyurucu  
Zeynep Balıkcı

### VENUES

Agora Ören Yeri  
Atlas Pavyonu  
Namazgah Hamamı  
Vakıflar Konağı

Ets Hayim Sinagogu  
Sabetay Sevi Evi  
Alga Çikolata  
Fabrikası



# Museums in an Age of Protest

The recent lockdown of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and a new protest at the Dinosaur Wing of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), have once again brought up the latest debates about protests and museums. When considering the history of protesting, museums seem to be the most popular stage for protests, and it appears they are changing and renewing their political views.

By HATİCE UTKAN ÖZDEN

Museums have taken on the responsibility of reflecting on everything that is happening in society. They have become a platform for various activities and cannot escape the latest events in the world. Instead of taking to the streets, activists have started to choose museums as their preferred location for protests. This has elevated museums to a new level of importance and meaning. Kristy Robertson, in her book *'Tear Gas Epiphanies'*, argues that museums become targets for various actions, both connected to and distinct from large movements, in a challenging environment. The interventions at and outside the museum range from awareness of anti-racism initiatives, battles over representation, resistance to gentrification, and climate change. After a decade, museums play a collaborative role in political action and social justice. In a way, maybe they are becoming part of society with these protests. Or is this a new phase for museums to understand and act differently?

People protest inside or in front of museums to bring attention to the climate crisis and social injustice. Despite some controversy surrounding these protests, there has been a shift in how people protest, with more peaceful and non-harmful means being used. For instance, a recent protest at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) aimed to raise awareness about the impact of the fossil fuel industry on climate change and extinction while not causing any damage to the museum's artifacts. Rather than damaging an artwork, causing damage, the protesting style has changed this time.

Suzanne Macleod in her article titled *'Civil disobedience and political agitation: the art museum as a site of protest in the early twentieth century'* (2006) focuses on two different kinds of political protests in museums. One of them is Mary Richardson's attack on Velazquez's *Rokeby Venus* in London's National Gallery in 1914 and the 'rushing' and occupation of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool by the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement (NUWCM) in 1921. According to Macleod, "in each of these cases, the museum was selected as a suitable site to make a political point, and in both cases, the protestors utilized the space of the museum to further a political cause. These examples may show that a museum as a space has always been the venue of protest, and disruptive protests are nothing new."

**DISRUPTIVE PROTESTS DO PAY OFF** Nan Goldin's protest was held at the atrium of an institution against the acceptance of donations from the Sackler family, who owns the company that makes OxyContin, a prescription painkiller that has contributed to the opioid crisis in America. The protest was led by Nan Goldin, who urged museum directors to remove all associations with the Sackler name. Her efforts were successful, as one by one, museums such as the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum, Dia Art Foundation, the Louvre, and lately, Victoria and Albert Dundee, dropped

the Sackler name.

The latest protest at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) is another example of the ongoing demonstrations against controversial figures. The museum's Dinosaur Wing is named after David Koch, a billionaire who owned oil refineries and was accused of funneling over \$100 million to climate-denial lobby groups. Koch also supported right-wing politicians who made climate change a divisive political issue. He served as an AMNH trustee until he stepped down in 2016, amid mounting criticism of the museum's association with him, although AMNH denied that this was the reason for his departure.

In 2019, Warren Kanders stepped down from his role as vice chairman of the Whitney Museum after the activist group Decolonize This Place protested his ownership of Safariland, a manufacturer of military and law enforcement supplies including gun holsters and tear gas. On the other hand, the same group also protested Brooklyn Museum for not employing African American curators and the news were all around. Years later Brooklyn Museum has changed and has become more diverse.

## TODAY'S PROTESTS

Recent protests have mainly focused on climate change. The first incident that sparked the movement occurred in Germany and was led by a faction of Extinction Rebellion called "Letzte Generation." On October 24th, 2022, two German protesters threw mashed potatoes at a Claude Monet painting titled "Grainstacks," which was valued at over \$110 million. Another incident involved a member of "Just Stop Oil" attempting to glue his head to the famous Vermeer portrait, "Girl with a Pearl Earring," at the Mauritshuis in The Netherlands. As a result, three people, including another member who glued himself to the wall and poured canned tomatoes on himself and his fellow demonstrator, were arrested in connection with the attack. On November 11, 2022, two members of the Norwegian climate activist group "Stopp Oljeltinga" attempted to glue their hands to the frame of Edvard Munch's "The Scream" at the National Museum of Norway. On November 15th, 2022, "Letzte Generation" poured what they described as oil all over Gustav Klimt's painting "Death and Life" at the Leopold Museum. They made this statement to show how new oil and gas wells are a death sentence for humanity.

To better understand the times we live in, we can analyze the paintings that are being targeted. For example, Munch's "The Scream" portrays the harshness and chaos present in our society, while Gustav Klimt's "Death and Life" provides an important perspective on the same subject. By looking closely at these works of art, we can gain a deeper understanding of our world.

Representatives from nearly 100 galleries, including the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the British Museum in London, and the Louvre Museum in Paris, have issued a joint statement warning that climate pro-



Şükran Moral, *Bordello Performance*—1997.



The courtyard at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. The institution closed its doors for the second time this year, citing ongoing concerns about climate protesters. Credit: Richard Perry/The New York Times.



Extinction Rebellion activists during a protest at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (all photos Elaine Velie/Hyperallergic)

tests put priceless artworks at risk. The statement was released on November 15, 2022.

The German National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) issued a statement saying that museum directors were becoming increasingly "frustrated" and "deeply shaken" by the threat to art.

Museums still do not know how to compete with these challenges, which is the main question.

Protests have a disruptive effect on museums and make them more aware of the society they are serving. Some museums choose to play it safe by closing their doors, like the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, while others understand that they need to explore alternative financing techniques to adapt to the changing times.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has released a statement urging museums to join the fight against climate change.

According to ICOM, museums should be viewed as "allies" in efforts to combat the environmental crisis that poses a threat to life on our planet. The statement calls on museums to recognize and share the concerns expressed by climate activists while taking steps to protect their collections.

The museum faces a dilemma: whether to allow protests or seek new ways of expression. However, they are constrained by budget, commitment, ambition, and staff shortages.

It's not enough for museums to only adopt new financial support techniques; they must also re-evaluate their openness to society and change how they interact.

## TURKEY'S MUSEUMS AND PROTESTS

Museum management in Turkey is quite diverse. While some museums are privately owned, others are partially funded by the government, and some are owned by government entities such as the Fine Arts Directorate, which operates under the Culture

and Tourism Ministry. Depending on how museums are managed, they may have a political stance and varying levels of connection with society. This is why it is rare to see museum protests or demonstrations in front of museums in Turkey, as funding sources influence their behavior. However, incidents of censorship are frequently encountered.

Istanbul Modern, which opened at Galataport in 2023 after renovation, seems inaccessible for protests due to its high level of security.

Curator Beral Madra wrote an article in *Tasarım Magazine* about museology and Istanbul. She believes that with its five-star hotels, skyscrapers, plazas, and galleries belonging to private and public institutions, Istanbul has become the center of an intense international communication network. However, the flamboyant architecture of these buildings is built on a very poor infrastructure and somehow affects the reality of culture and how it develops over time.

Madra also talks about the situation of historical museums, which are an important part of cultural identity. She points out that hundreds of thousands of tourists visit Turkish, Islamic, and state palaces like Topkapı Palace and Dolmabahçe Palace annually. However, except for a few museums that are maintained due to their contribution to the budget, most of these museums belong to the past century. Thus, they are considered dead museums that continue the concept of museology.

Madra's concept of a "dead museum" is now a reality. Since museums often focus only on tourists and are not actively engaged in society, they can be viewed as stagnant.

If we need to look at the museums from this perspective, in the 21st century, we need more democratic, transparent museums. Hence, these museums need a longer planning span. In her article titled *Museums of the Future*, "she said the institutions need to plan 30 years to maintain their visitors and the needs of the society."

Museums in the 21st century strive to embody democratic values, being open to society and facilitating community participation. Their mission, vision, goals, and functions should align with social studies and development efforts. Therefore, museums are expected to act as development agents, encouraging progress and becoming tools that reflect social development.

But there is a reality that we cannot escape; protesting in or outside a museum may mean as a social development. Because it means museum-society interaction and museums can change for society in a way that coincides with their aims.

According to Madra, they must personally participate in the process and request it from the museum. Hence, to become agents of development in society, they should be close to the communities they are serving. This once again leads to financing issues in museums.

One perfect example is Şükran Moral's *Bordello* performance. Moral sat at the door of one brothel holding a For Sale sign, then another for an Art Museum. She turns a brothel into a museum and a museum into a brothel. Maybe we did not see this protest art in a museum, but it is definitely about a museum.

However, this is still not what Turkish museums are staging. It is unlikely to see any demonstrations in front of the legendary Archeology Museum or Istanbul Modern. It is clear that museums in Turkey are not a place for public debates or protests. They are closed venues exhibiting artwork, and they are not meant to serve as a forum for political or social discourse.



# It is the Imperfections of Life That are Lovable

Bosco Sodi's art is inspired by the wabi-sabi philosophy of Japan. The artist believes that there is beauty in imperfection, and he incorporates this perspective into his works. In fact, he intentionally includes flaws in his art, which we find appealing. Recently, we discussed the exhibition "The Silence of Form" at the Sevil Dolmaci Istanbul. During our conversation, we delved into the philosophy behind the artist's work, which he describes as a piece of nature.

By HATICE UTKAN ÖZDEN

**There is a certain philosophy behind your artwork. Can you share it with us?**

The Wabi Sabi philosophy, which originated in Japan, greatly influenced my work. The philosophy is about embracing the uncontrollable passage of time, uniqueness, and the unrepeatable nature of things. The process of creating art is significant to me, and I do not have complete control over the outcome. Wabi Sabi is all about accepting the impermanence and imperfection of life and nature. I create artworks that mainly center around nature, using organic materials. The beauty of imperfection is what fascinates me, and I appreciate the beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete." The fact that one cannot control the outcome makes it all the more meaningful. Things are always changing, and we must accept that we have no control over them.

**Do you mean that you are uncertain about the final outcome?**

I don't worry about what the final result will be. Instead, I try to fully embrace the process of creation. The most important thing to me is that I can't replicate the outcome; this makes the process fascinating and appealing. Even if I control the size or shape of the painting, I still don't know what the ultimate result will be. It's impossible for me to create the same thing over and over again. It's impossible to replicate an artwork despite its value.

**So, your philosophy also makes your artwork unique?**

Absolutely! Every piece of work I create is unique, with no set rules to follow. I don't know how it will turn out in the end, so it's important to let go of the outcome. Above all, it's crucial that my work isn't repetitive - everything I create is one-of-a-kind.

**Given that your artworks are heavily influenced by nature, what is your perspective on the current climate crisis?**

I believe that the most crucial aspect of art is to address societal issues and create awareness about them. My work primarily focuses on nature and the organic nature of the material, which allows me to delve into the importance of nature. In my opinion, many artists overlook this aspect of their work. While there is a lot of political art, art that touches on issues of race and gender, there simply isn't enough art that raises awareness about nature, climate change, our relationship with nature, or even our relationship with each other as human beings.

**So, your work primarily focuses on nature and our relationship with it, correct?**

Yes, my work has a relationship with nature, and it has a correlation with nature. I delve into the relationship between us and nature. Many people say this to me: when they look at my works, they feel the nature and organic essence of nature. Because just like nature, my works are organic and spontaneous, giving you that feeling. My works also have a meaningful stance in terms of having a better relationship with nature, universe, and ourselves. And I think this very important for the present world that we are experiencing. It should be much more approachable by artists.

**Will we see your signature works at your Istanbul show?**

As this is my first show in Istanbul, my aim is to showcase a wide range of my work. The exhibition will feature both new and old paintings, as well as gold columns, which will help the viewers gain a better understanding of my art. Whenever I work with a gallery for the first time, I try to present the largest possible spectrum of my work, so that visitors can comprehend the essence of all my pieces and what they represent.

**You are from Mexico, which has a rich culture. Do you get influenced by other cultures?**

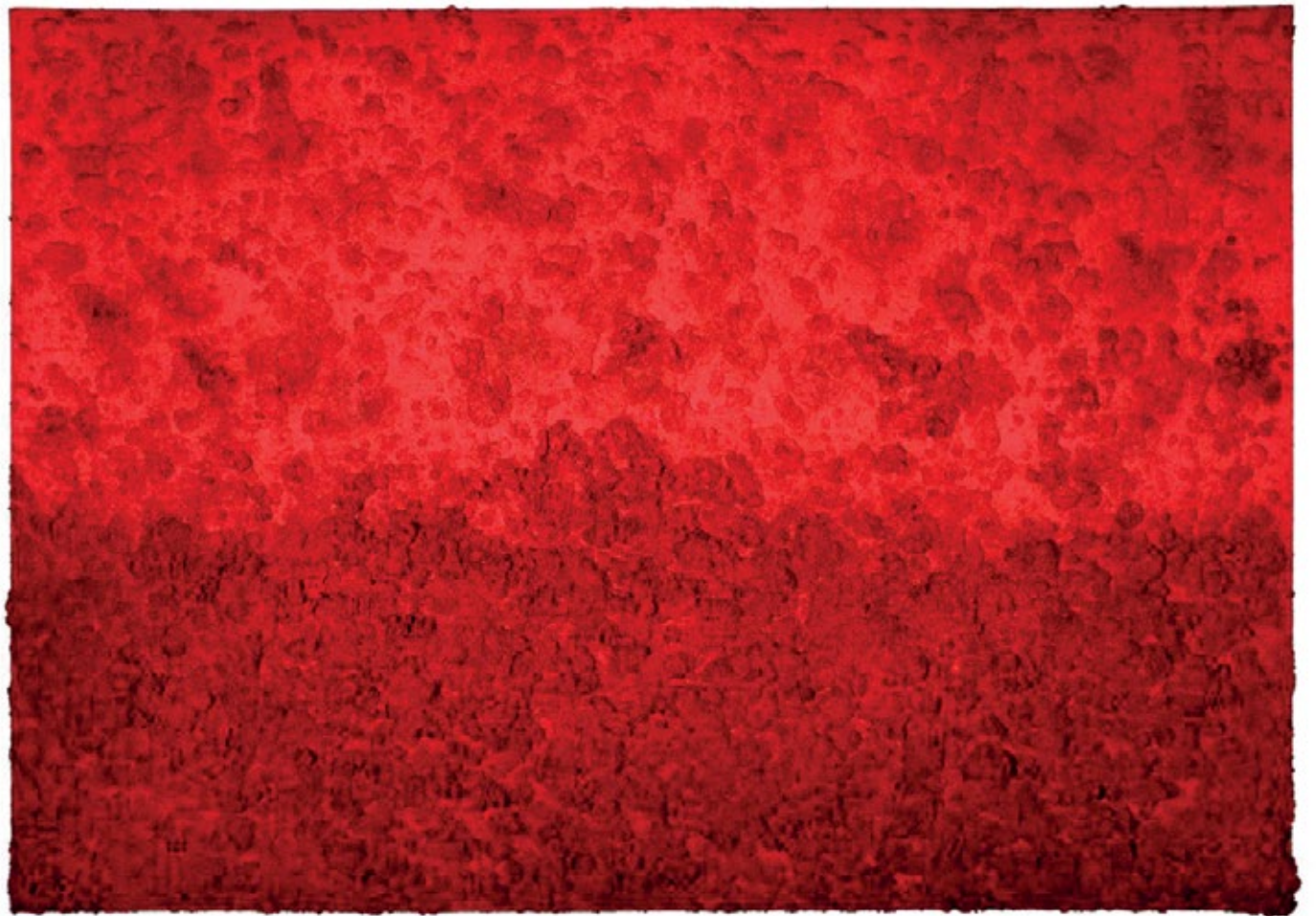
Mexico has a rich and vibrant culture that is hard to avoid being influenced by. It is similar to Turkey in that it has its own unique craftsmanship and a rich history. Whether consciously or unconsciously, one cannot escape the colorful culture and history that surrounds them. This can be both a positive and negative thing.

**Your exhibition in London, titled Yugen, explored philosophy. What will be the title of your upcoming exhibition in Istanbul?**

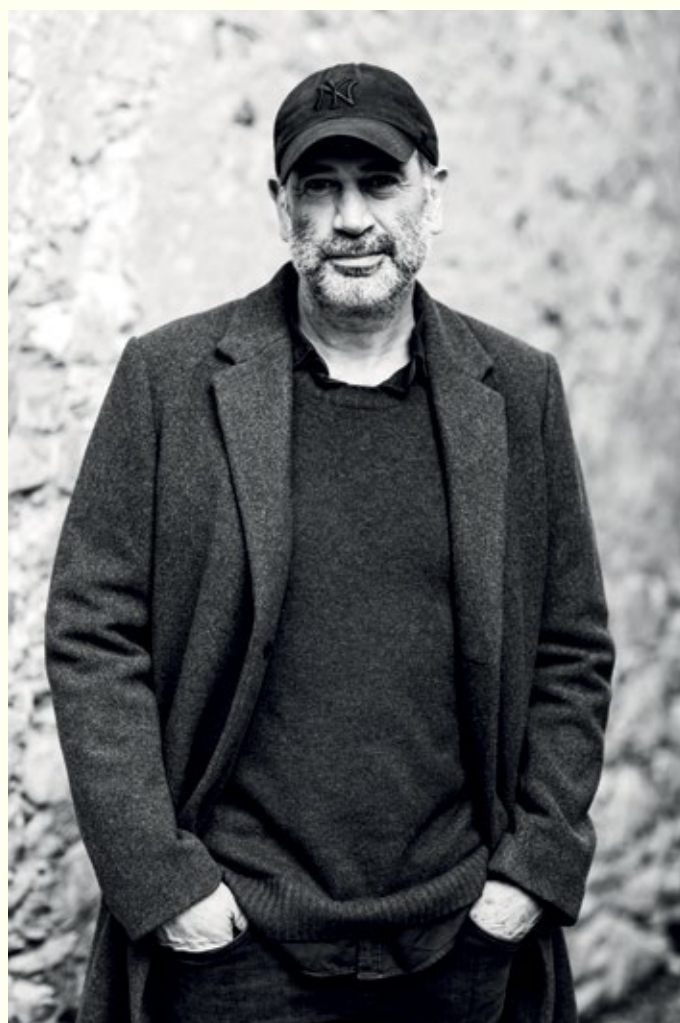
Yugen refers to the beauty that is beyond words. Istanbul has earned the nickname "The Silence of Form". I prefer to use titles that do not reveal too much about the show. I do not want the viewers to make assumptions about the paintings or the works. As humans, we can be lazy, so I choose abstract titles to avoid this.

**What does 'The Silence of Form' talk about?**

It discusses the quiet nature of my artwork. My pieces lack loud and flashy elements, and instead aim to be calm and understated. This is why I prefer to use abstract titles, rather than attention-grabbing ones. By doing so, viewers are less likely to form preconceptions about the work before seeing it.



Bosco Sodi, Untitled, 2023, mixed media on canvas, 200\*280 cm



**Could you please share how you got into art?**

When I was young, I was diagnosed with dyslexia, hyperactivity, and attention deficiency. My mother, who is a philosopher, enrolled me in art classes as a form of therapy to help me stay calm. It was during those art classes that I discovered my love for creating art. Art has a calming effect on me and allows me to connect with myself. It's like medicine to me and has become a necessity in my life. I consider myself very fortunate to have found this passion.

**Can we say that you are attempting to simplify the aesthetic by incorporating a language of minimalism and dematerialization?**

That's why I prefer to refer to my style as such. I work exclusively with natural materials, in contrast to American minimalism which often uses plastic. Additionally, I incorporate human-made materials into my work, which sets me apart from other minimalists. I focus on the process of creating with my hands and embrace imperfections, rather than striving for a perfect finished product like many other minimalist artists.

**As an artist working with raw materials, one never knows what the end result will be. Do you have a specific image in mind?**

The creation process is crucial.

Everything happens during the process. I can decide on the color beforehand since it depends on the pigments I use. However, there are times when I start experimenting with other pigments, and something entirely new emerges.

**What type of materials do you use? Are they created in-house?**

I prefer using sawdust because it's an organic material that offers a unique texture and appearance every time. Each type of sawdust varies depending on the tree it comes from, the pigments it reacts with, and the water or other materials it blends with. When I collect sawdust from carpenters, I'm always surprised by the type I receive. It takes me approximately 5-6 days to create a work, and I let it dry naturally. When the first crack appears on the painting, I know it's time to stop.

**You have studios in different places. How does traveling impact your art?**

I have a studio in Oaxaca and another one in New York, but my main base is in New York. My artwork is heavily influenced by weather, climate, and humidity. For instance, if I paint the same piece in Greece, New York, or Mexico, the outcome would be completely different due to the unique environmental factors in each location, such as the water and weather conditions.

**Although your works are intuitive, do they require understanding or emotional connection from the viewer?**

I aspire to create artwork that is as simple and elegant as a sunset or a beautiful tree. My approach involves avoiding the use of complex concepts, and I never sign my artwork on the front; my signature is always on the back. I prefer to keep my artwork as straightforward as possible, and this means avoiding complicated elements while I work.

**Will this be your first-time visiting Istanbul? Can we expect to see the city's influence in your Istanbul show?**

I have had the opportunity to visit Istanbul several times, and I absolutely adore the city. It's incredibly chaotic, but that's part of its charm, and there's an abundance of energy that's infectious. Although I don't consciously measure the influence the city has on me, I'm sure that I'm unconsciously influenced by it. Sometimes, I might see something that resonates with me and stays in my memory, and I may express that memory in one of my paintings.

**You have land art projects. Which do you prefer: gallery or outdoor work?**

I find the outdoors to be more exciting than staying indoors. Whether it's a forest, a beach or a desert, I always try to get as much freedom as possible. I prefer being in nature because it helps me understand how the world and other natural elements correlate with each other. Therefore, being in the desert or forest is particularly interesting for me because it is nature within nature. As my work focuses on light, shadows, passing time, weather, and changes, these environments provide a great source of inspiration.

**You just mentioned the passage of time. How does this concept influence your work?**

I am focused on the concept of time. It is fascinating to see how time changes and affects everything. This leads to imperfection, which I believe we should embrace. The process of change is inevitable, and it is what makes us human. We must understand that our time here on earth is limited, and by doing so, we can live a better life and create better relationships with nature. As once Joseph Campbell said; 'It is the imperfections in life that make it lovable.'

**How did you come to this mindset?**

I have a great passion for reading philosophy, and I firmly believe that our time on earth is fleeting. Therefore, it's our responsibility to leave the world a better place than we found it. As you pointed out, life's beauty and interest often stem from the unexpected twists and turns that arise.



# Sultans' Dreams: The Ottomans' Unfulfilled Museum Projects



The Janissary Museum in Sultanahmet.

As noted by Zonaro in his memoirs, numerous museum projects that were planned during the Abdulhamid era never came to fruition due to journals, financial difficulties, or earthquakes. These museums, which were once the aspirations of many, are now merely projects that have been filed away.

By SARO DADYAN

Since the beginning of the 1800s, the reorganisation of Istanbul, like European cities, has been one of the main agendas of the state. For many years, Ottoman administrators dreamed of constructing a capital city with organized streets and boulevards, replacing wood with masonry construction that would resist fires, and providing regular municipal services for more organized city life. The movement of change in the city was not planned, resulting in its spread over a long period of time and being limited to certain areas. While this unplanned transformation was not ideal for urbanization, it contributed to the city's appeal to architects and investors. The construction of buildings in various styles and at different times has created a multi-layered and colorful architectural environment in Istanbul, setting it apart from European cities.

In addition to many buildings with different styles and functions that were created by different architects throughout history, dozens of projects could not be realized due to unplanned urbanization movements and remained only in dreams. Projects that once adorned the dreams of sultans, state dignitaries and architects were forgotten on the dusty shelves of archives. Some cultural and artistic structures were part of these projects. Although many museum projects were prepared during Abdulhamid II's reign, none were realized.

Ayşe Sultan, the daughter of Sultan Abdülhamid, recalls with fondness her time at the Yıldız Palace. She recalls how her father had a private apartment where he kept family heirlooms, which he proudly displayed in showcases. This created a mini museum within the palace, which was truly remarkable. If we look at the watercolour projects currently exhibited at the Painting Museum in the Crown Prince's Office of Dolmabahçe Palace, we can see that Sultan II. Abdulhamid had a desire to establish a museum within the palace. Unfortunately, he was unable to bring this project to fruition.

It is unknown who prepared these projects, consisting of two drawings and dating back to the 1880s. The initial illustration displays the outside of the structure and outlines the various sections that the museum will include. The subsequent illustration showcases the internal layout of the museum, specifically highlighting the significant gallery that will house the portraits of the sultans.

According to the architectural drawing projects, this museum to be built within the Yıldız Palace was to consist of ten sections. The first section will feature precious and ancient coins, various jewellery and jeweled items; Precious metal and marble objects will be exhibited in the second section, sultan portraits in the third section, valuable European porcelains in the fourth section, and diplomatic gifts sent to Sultan Abdulhamid from all over the world in the fifth section. In the sixth section, works of antique value made of bronze and silver will be featured, in the seventh section distinguished examples of traditional Turkish arts, such as carpets, rugs and miniatures will be exhibited, in the eighth section there will be Saxon and Northern European porcelains, in the ninth section calligraphic works and Bohemian crystals, and finally in the tenth section. On the other hand, there would be ceramics and valuable items from China and Japan.

Apart from this project, which is not yet known why it could not be realized, as Ayşe Sultan painfully mentioned, all the valuable items and family heirlooms that Sultan Abdulhamid II brought together during the looting of Yıldız Palace were also destroyed and an important memory was lost. After this museum project (architectural drawing), the author of which is unknown, it is understood that Sultan Abdulhamid wanted new museums to be established within the palace and in Istanbul, and he had projects prepared one after another.

The individual who was responsible for designing the majority of these projects is the same person who arrived

in Istanbul to construct the Agriculture and Industry Exhibition Palace. The palace was planned to be constructed in Şişli in 1893, and the architect behind it was Raimondo D'Aronco, an Italian.

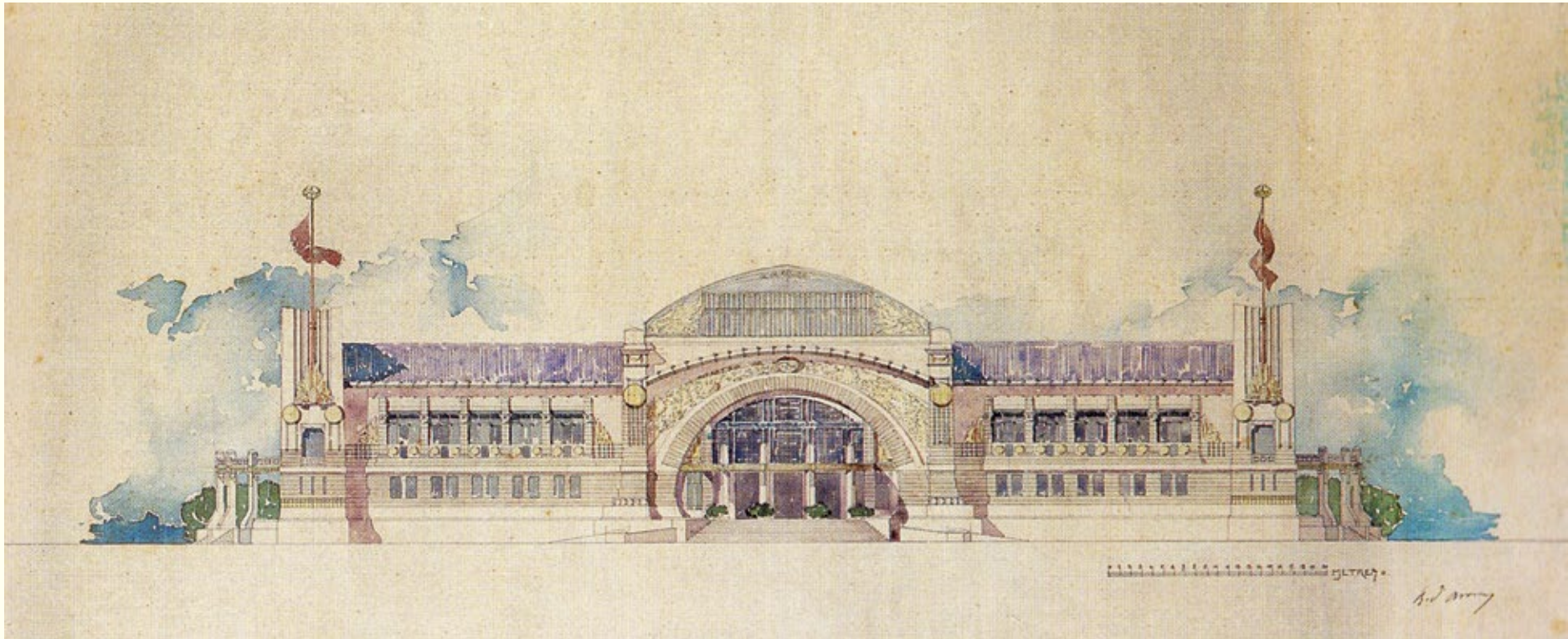
Unfortunately, his first project in the Ottoman capital was not realized due to the devastating earthquake that hit Istanbul on July 10, 1894. After that, Italian architect Raimondo D'Aronco was commissioned to design the latter projects. Although D'Aronco was unable to build the exhibition palace in Şişli, he remained in Istanbul for many years and became one of the most productive architects of Abdülhamid Istanbul. It is evident from a letter he wrote on August 14, 1914, that D'Aronco intended to go to Italy for the house he had built in Turin, but his departure was delayed due to the museum project he was requested to work on. D'Aronco writes in his letter:

*I was supposed to leave at this hour, but I faced some issues and setbacks that will keep me here for another 15 days. Just when I was about to ask permission from the sultan to leave, he urgently asked me to do a museum project. This has happened five or six times before and I'm not sure what to do. If I oppose it, the house's implementation might be delayed even more.*

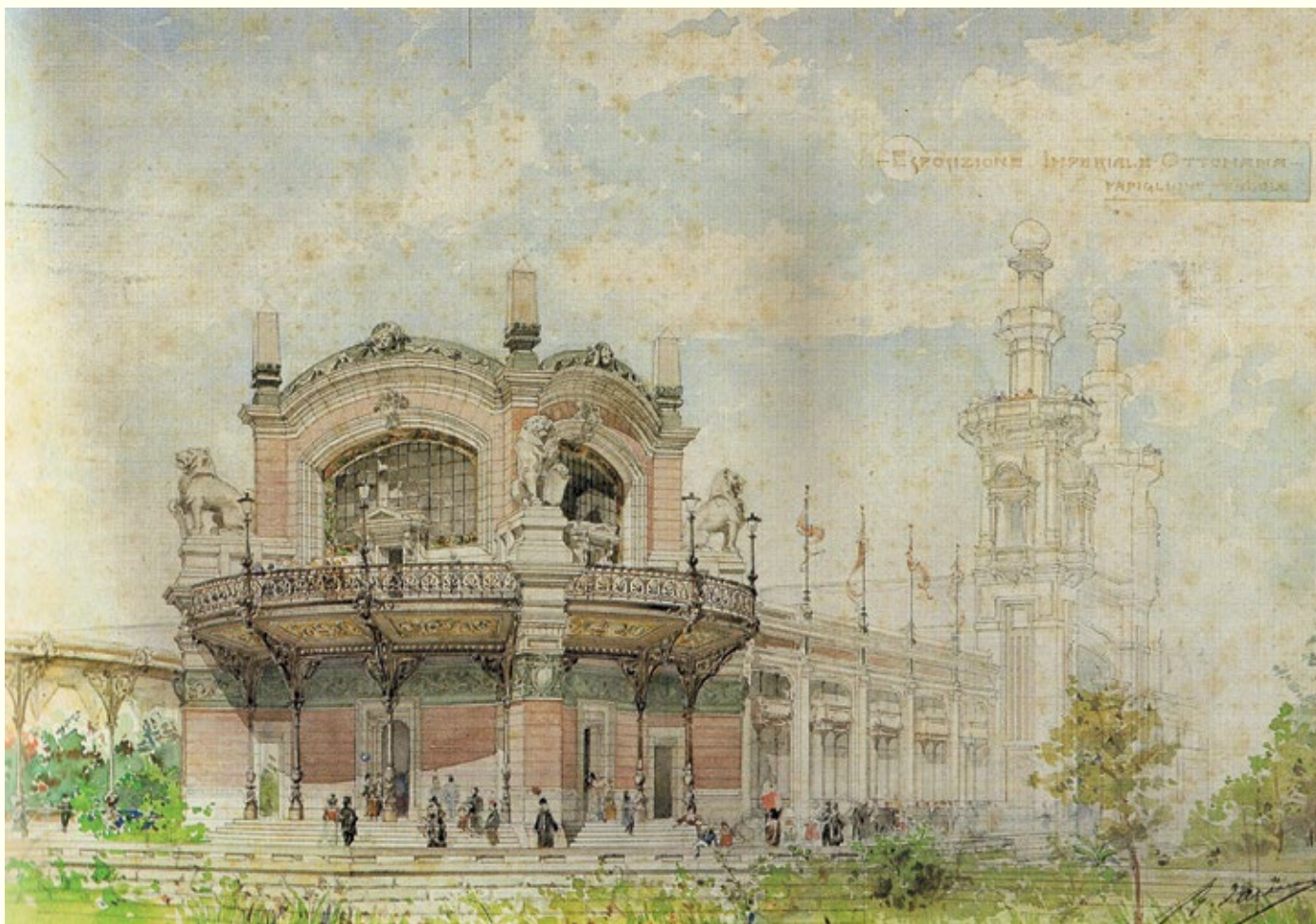
Among Raimondo D'Aronco's architectural projects preserved in Udine is a museum project dating back to 1896. Although it is not recorded where this museum was planned to be built, it is known that D'Aronco also worked for the Weapons Museum that was planned to be built in Nişantaşı between 1900–1904. When we look at the projects prepared for the Weapons Museum, it is seen that all the projects are prepared in a single prototype, and this museum project dated 1896 has a different structure from the others. Therefore, this project may have been prepared for the museum planned to be established in Yıldız Palace.

A second museum proposal and the idea of establishing a Weapons Museum came from Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, who also reorganised the Military Museum and established the





The Weapons Museum planned to be built in Nişantaşı is one of the projects prepared by D'Aronco.



D'Aronco's Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition Center Project.

Janissary Museum in Sultanahmet. Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, who has published many works on the history of war, saw how antique weapons and military materials were exhibited during his visits to Germany and that these works were used as propaganda material. On his return to Istanbul, he convinced Abdülhamid II for the establishment of a new weapon museum, while establishing a commission to construct the museum and he began gathering scattered old weapons under one roof.

The commission first opened an exhibition of antique weapons collected in the Silahhane of Yıldız Palace. They were considering constructing a large, detached building for the Weapons Museum or repairing one of the old buildings and allocating it to the museum. As it can be understood from the projects of architect Raimondo D'Aronco preserved in the Udine State Library, the construction of an independent Weapons Museum apart from the exhibition in Yıldız Palace was planned, and Nişantaşı was chosen as the venue. In his writings, D'Aronco stated the museum was planned to be built in Nişantaşı. He designed multiple architectural projects between 1900 and 1904, including one for a museum in Nişantaşı. However, none of these projects were ever realized.

As per the recollection of Fausto Zonaro, the painter of the palace during Sultan Abdulhamid's reign, the Weapons Museum received project proposals from multiple architects, including D'Aronco. After due consideration, Vedat (Tek) Bey, a prominent figure of the National Architecture movement, was selected to execute the project. As seen in a photograph preserved in the Rare Works Library of Istanbul University, Antoine Perpignani, the architect of the French

Embassy, was one of the individuals involved in the Weapons Museum project.

The office of Perpignani, who has designed and built many housing projects, especially in the Beyoğlu region, and many of the buildings he built have survived to the present day, was located in the Saint Pierre Han in Galata. The stamp on the photograph of the project indicates that Saint Pierre Han is the address of Perpignani. As seen in the project, Perpignani had prepared a project in Art Nouveau style in accordance with the tastes and preferences of the period. Painter Fausto Zonaro writes the following in his memoirs



Architect Raimondo D'aronco

about the Weapons Museum, which could not be realized:

*I received a call from His Majesty and went to meet Mahmud Şevket Pasha, a distinguished officer, at the Chief Clerk's office. We were both summoned to declare our will. After waiting for a while, the Chief Clerk informed us that the mansion on the Ortaköy slope would be overhauled and turned into a museum for ancient weapons.*

*Pasha was in charge of the technical discipline as the manager, while I took care of the aesthetics as the manager. The architects of the city were to compete for the design of the museum building. But, before that, arrangements had to be made*

*in the mansion under consideration.*

*Five local architects presented their designs, with Vedat Bey, the architect of the Ottoman Post Office in Istanbul, emerging as the winner. His design for a useful public structure would enrich the capital city. However, the project faced delays due to concerns about the cost. Nonetheless, I believe that the most important thing was to start the project. The Turin Armory, which was initially located in one or two rooms of the Royal Palace with only a few weapons, is now a vast building and one of the most interesting arsenals in the world. If built, the Istanbul Arms Museum, located next to the Sultan's palace, could become one of the leading arsenals in the world."*

Vedat, the architect, had a project that Zonaro had praised as the chosen one to be built. However, it failed to enrich the capital city as Zonaro had hoped. He mentioned that there were two lands under consideration for the Weapons Museum. The first one was the Armenian Cemetery located behind the Topçular Barracks, and the other land is unclear. Zonaro also writes about this failed project saying that:

*During our recent commission visit to the proposed site for the impressive Weapons Museum building, we examined two potential locations. One was the Armenian Cemetery located behind the barracks on the right side of the road leading to Nişantaşı, and the other was opposite Taşkılla, currently being used as an armory, on the stony road overlooking the entire Nişantaşı area. Despite being late, I walked slowly to enjoy the breathtaking view. However, I was surprised to find the door to the Weapons Museum closed. Initially, I thought it was closed due to it being a Friday, but that was not the case. I wondered why the door was closed at that time.*

*Feeling anxious, I retraced my steps and went to Lieutenant Mustafa, who was in charge of the relevant commission. As I entered the hanagar, the Lieutenant signaled me to keep quiet and revealed that His Majesty the Sultan had received a confidential report from a journalist, warning about a possible uprising in the museum, which was linked to the Young Turks. All the antique weapons that we had sorted and cataloged were stored in a warehouse, and the museum was closed. One of the commission officers was sent to Germany for some official work, while His Excellency Mahmud Şevket Pasha was appointed as a governor in Anatolia and had already left. As a result, the Museum of Ancient Weapons was disbanded and never mentioned again.*

As noted by Zonaro in his memoirs, numerous museum projects that were planned during the Abdulhamid era never came to fruition due to financial difficulties, or earthquakes. These museums, which were once the aspirations of many, are now merely projects that have been filed away. If these projects had been completed and the envisioned museums had been constructed with the collections in question, today we would undoubtedly have many other museums with a rich history, similar to the Archaeology Museum. This would have also given us the opportunity to view equally well-preserved and rich collections.



# Istanbul Theatre Festival

This year Istanbul Theater Festival starts with Pina Bausch's legendary classic *Café Müller*. The festival starts on October 25 and continues until November 25

## ARTDOG İSTANBUL

Organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSVA) and supported by Koç Holding Energy Group Companies the 27th Istanbul Theatre Festival opens its curtains on 25 October with a packed program.

The festival will host 20 theatre and dance performances from Turkey and abroad from 25 October to 25 November during Işıl Kasapoğlu's final year as curator.

The festival unites directors and choreographers who have made significant contributions to contemporary theatre and the artists who are revolutionizing the future of performing arts. The program showcases 11 productions from Turkey and an additional 9 productions from Germany, England, Denmark, France, Georgia, Ireland, Israel, and Greece.

The festival offers its audience diverse staging styles and genres. Attendees can enjoy various performances, from documentary theatre to classical plays, contemporary dance to mask theatre, puppet cinema to site-specific works, and dance theatre to performative installations. The festival also showcases the works of young-generation writers, directors, and actors, presenting original and new texts in its local productions program. Alongside the upcoming talent, experienced actors such as Ercan Kesal, Nesrin Kazankaya, Bülent Emin Yarar, Çiçek Dilligil, Okan Bayülgen, Deniz Türkali, and Meral Çetinkaya also grace the stage with their presence.

The international dance program features some amazing performances. Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch will present Pina Bausch's masterpiece, *Café Müller*, which is a legendary choreography. There is also a thrilling double bill by celebrated choreographer Hofesh Shechter, called *Double Murder*. Additionally, Uppercut Dance Theater of Denmark will perform *Benched*, a brutally honest tale about finding one's place in life through bodily movements.

The upcoming international program will feature renowned writer and director Wajdi Mouawad's play *Soeurs*. Mouawad was previously a guest at the festival in 2017 with his play *Seuls*. Familie Flöz's *Feste*, credited with rediscovering mask theatre, will also be presented. Anestis Azas' *Republic of Baklava*, which critics have praised as the *pioneer of the new generation of Greek theatre*, will also be showcased. Additionally, *Brokentalkers' Masterclass*, one of Ireland's bravest and most innovative theatre companies, will be performing.

## INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS AT THE FESTIVAL

Pina Bausch is widely regarded as the pioneer of 20th-century dance theater, and her influence has been invaluable to both enthusiasts and audiences of this art form. *Café Müller* refers to a performance comprising four pieces that Pina Bausch created in collaboration with three choreographers whom she invited in 1978. The performance named "still staged" was designed by Pina, and it is inspired by her childhood memories of her father working in his own café in Germany during and after World War II. The show is a work that confronts memory with reality in the pursuit of dreams, and it takes place in a simple space consisting only of tables and chairs. The high tones make the audience so captivated that it almost physically affects them.

The festival program includes eight international productions, except for *Café Müller*. Among them, Wajdi Mouawad is a leading star in the festival.

Mouawad is a Lebanese-Canadian artist who previously appeared at the Istanbul Theater Festival in 2017 with *Lonely*. Mouswa is known for his political works. He wrote, directed, and starred in the play. Since the film adaptation of his play *Fires* was nominated for an Oscar, Mouawad has become a well-known name in the theater world and among wider audiences.

The writer is also known for his powerful, poetic texts. He has been the artistic director of La Colline Theater in France for some time. His



Terrorism



Benched, Photograph:Raphael Frisenvaenge Solholm



The Republic of Baklava, Photograph: Pinelopi Gerasimou



Café Müller

play titled *Sisters*, written in 2015, will be staged at the festival. The play is the second part of the trilogy that the author calls *DomestiK*, inspired by Mouawad's sister Nayla and the actress Annick Bergeron, who plays both women on stage. The play essentially deals with being bilingual and the importance of one's mother tongue. Mouawad delves deep into the issue of 'being an exile' on the axis of these themes.

Israeli-British choreographer Hofesh Shechter is presenting his show, *Double Murder*, at the festival. Choreographer Hofesh Shechter, combines *Clowns* and *The Fix* in the same play and titles it as *Double Murder* and he is presenting two distinctly contrasting pieces for our times.

One half of the evening is *Clowns*, a sarcastic nod to our ever-growing indifference to violence; originally created for Nederlands Dans Theater 1 and later produced as a film and broadcast by the BBC to great acclaim. In a macabre comedy of murder and desire, *Clowns* unleashes a whirlwind of choreographed anarchy, testing how far we are willing to go in the name of entertainment.

As an antidote to *Clown's* murderous, poisonous energy, Shechter's new creation, *The Fix*, brings a tender, fragile energy to the stage. It offers a raw and compassionate moment to balance the forces of aggression and violence that press on us daily. A shield to protect us from the noise of life outside, and a place that allows the performers to be fragile, be seen for their utmost human qualities. Violence, tenderness and hope are all laid bare through Shechter's achingly beautiful, cinematic lens. Performed by his inimitable dancers and accompanied by the epic sounds of a Shechter-composed score, *Double Murder* explores painful truths and delves into our deepest emotions.

*The Wedding* by Familie Flöz, is a mask theater from Berlin and stands as another international highlight of the festival. A wedding is taking place in a stately house by the sea. In the dimly lit alleyway behind the house, there is great excitement. There are deliveries, cleaning, tidying, guarding and garbage disposal. From the janitor to the cook, from the cleaning lady to the manager, everyone is doing their best to make the celebration in the impressive estate an unforgettable experience. In the shadow of the festive villa, the servants try to secure their place in the strict pecking order. Condemned to stand in the background, they fight for their dignity and the respect of the strong and rich in the hustle and bustle of the hectic wedding preparations.

*The Republic of Baklava* by Anestis Azas' play tells the story of a Greek man and Turkish woman. Azas staged *The Republic of Baklava* for the Athens Epidauros Festival 2021 to mark the 200th anniversary of Greece's sovereignty. The fictional plot tells of a bi-national couple, a Greek man and a Turkish woman, who decide to create their nation-state, using their home and private business as headquarters. In a series of absurd and comical situations, the characters are confronted with the contradictions of contemporary Greek society since the revolution, the problem of national identity, and the utopian reality of a future, global, digital nation, taking us on this journey into a special European future.

**TURKISH PRODUCTIONS AT THE FESTIVAL**  
*On the Brink of Lysistrata* is an inter-genre play by director, Barış Arman. The play is an interpretation of Aristophanes' classic text with BBT. In this contemporary adaptation, the director urges both actors and the audience to interrogate identity, sexuality, power, status quo, and their representations.

*Freak (Çirkin)* is a play that offers the audience a unique and innovative theatrical experience in a different setting. The play is written by Firuze Engin and directed by Güray Dinçol and it delves into the surreal betrayal story inspired by Anatolian traditions and tales, while combining narrative theater and interactive installation.

The play is about a character Shiva (The Freak) and a chicken. Shiva has lived for thousands of years, and the chicken, cursed with him and sentenced to immortality travels through space and time.

Performances will take place for a month in 15 different venues on both sides of the *Bosphorus*; *Alan Kadıköy Theatre*, *Atlas 1948 Cinema*, *Büyük Zarifi Apartment*, *Caddebostan Cultural Centre*, *DasDas*, *Fişekhane*, *Galatasaray High School*, *Harbiye Muhsin Ertuğrul Stage*, *Hope Alkazar*, *Iş Towers Hall*, *Metro Han*, *Notre Dame de Sion French High School*, *Saint Benoit French High School*, *Süreyya Opera*, and *Zorlu Performing Arts Centre*.



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Nejad Melih Devrim, Untitled, (detail) 1978-1986

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